

The Book of Genesis

Lesson 3: The Fall -- Genesis 3:1-24

Everything was good. That is how we left it. A garden full of life, a man and a woman without shame, work that was joy, and a God who walked with them in the cool of the day. And then, into that good world, slides a question. Not a command, not an attack, just a question, soft and reasonable: “Did God actually say...?” It is the most dangerous sentence ever spoken, and it still hangs in the air today.

Watch how it works, because it will work on you the same way. The serpent does not deny God outright; he just bends His words a little and hints that God is holding out, that the boundary is not protection but deprivation, that God cannot quite be trusted with our happiness. And the woman looks at the tree, and suddenly it does look good, and pleasing, and desirable. The fruit has not changed. Her heart has. She takes, she eats, she gives, and in a single quiet moment the world breaks.

Notice what happens next, because it is painfully familiar. Their eyes are opened, but not to glory; to shame. They sew fig leaves. They hide in the bushes from the God who loves them. And when He asks what happened, no one says, “I did it.” The man blames the woman (and, just under the surface, blames God for giving her). The woman blames the serpent. Sin always points a finger somewhere else. We have been hiding and blaming ever since.

And yet, right in the middle of the wreckage, before a single curse is spoken over the man or the woman, God makes a promise. He tells the serpent that one day an offspring of the woman will crush his head. It is the first whisper of the gospel, spoken over a ruined garden: a Deliverer is coming. The story of the fall is the most honest diagnosis of the human condition ever written, but it is not hopeless. There is a thread of grace running through the dark, and it leads all the way to a cross. Read it slowly, and look for the promise hidden in the judgment.

Group Discussion: The serpent begins not with a flat denial but with a question: “Did God actually say...?” He twists God’s word and quietly suggests God cannot be trusted to want our good. Why is this such an effective strategy, and where do you see the same approach at work in our world today?

Personal Reflection: After they sinned, Adam and Eve hid from God and then blamed others rather than owning what they had done. When you sin, what is your instinctive response: to hide, to make excuses, to blame someone else, or to come honestly into the light? Why?

Read Genesis 3:1-24

Study Questions

1. The serpent opens with, “Did God actually say...?” (3:1) and then flatly contradicts God’s warning (3:4). How does this reveal the way temptation typically works, by casting doubt on God’s word and on His goodness?
2. Where in your own life do you hear a version of “Did God really say...?”, a place where you are tempted to doubt that God’s word is true, or that His commands are for your good? Be specific.
3. Eve saw that the tree was “good for food,” “a delight to the eyes,” and “to be desired to make one wise” (3:6). Compare this to 1 John 2:16. What does this teach us about how sin presents itself and how it gains a foothold?
4. What good, pleasant, or desirable things most tempt you to step over a boundary God has set? How does sin disguise itself as something harmless or even beneficial in your life?
5. As soon as they ate, they felt shame, hid from God, and began to blame others (3:7–13). What does this reveal about what sin does to our relationship with God and with one another?
6. When you have done wrong, do you tend to cover it up, minimize it, or shift the blame? What would it look like this week to stop hiding and bring your sin honestly to God in confession?
7. In the middle of judgment, God promises that the offspring of the woman will crush the serpent’s head (3:15). Why is this called the first promise of the gospel, and how is it fulfilled in Jesus Christ?
8. We all live in a world still marked by the fall, with its pain, broken relationships, and death. Where are you most feeling the weight of living in a fallen world right now, and how does God’s promise of a Redeemer give you hope in it?
9. Paul says that through one man, Adam, sin and death entered the world (Romans 5:12). What did the fall actually bring upon the human race, and what does Scripture teach about when a person becomes guilty before God? In other words, what do we inherit from Adam, and what do we not?
10. Look back over the whole chapter, from the first question of the serpent to the promise of the coming Deliverer. Name one specific way God is using this passage to form you, to make you more honest about sin and more hopeful in Christ.

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: Romans 5:12–19, sin and death through Adam and life through Christ; 1 John 2:15–17, the desires that draw us into sin; Ezekiel 18:20, the soul who sins is the one who bears the guilt; Galatians 4:4–5, God sending His Son in the fullness of time; Revelation 12:9 and Romans 16:20, the ancient serpent finally crushed under the feet of God’s people.