

GENESIS 2:4–3:24

Eve: The First Woman, the First Loss, the First Promise

Lesson at a glance

This first lesson does a lot of work. It introduces the women to the shape of the study, introduces them to one another, and walks them through the foundational chapters of the Bible on what God made us to be, what went wrong, and what He has promised to do about it. Genesis 2 sets the dignity of every human being and the design of marriage. Genesis 3 tells the story of the unraveling and gives us the first promise of the Christ (3:15). The New Testament section carries this forward to 1 Timothy 2 and 2 Corinthians 11, where Paul appeals to Eve to instruct the church. Expect a fairly heavy lesson with a great deal of personal weight.

Goals for this session

Pray toward these outcomes through the week and in your time together:

First, that each woman would begin to see herself the way Genesis 1 and 2 see her, made in God's image, fashioned with care, called very good, and given a place of strength and dignity beside her husband and in her household.

Second, that each woman would recognize in Genesis 3:6 the same pattern of temptation she still encounters, and would learn to resist it the way the Lord Jesus did in Matthew 4.

Third, that each woman would hear, perhaps for the first time, the first quiet promise of the gospel in Genesis 3:15 and the first picture of substitution in 3:21, and would be drawn either to obey the gospel for the first time or to renew her walk in Christ.

Fourth, that the group would leave knowing one another's names, knowing one prayer request from each woman, and ready to come back next week.

Preparing to lead

Do the lesson yourself first, slowly, with your Bible open. The questions you have wrestled with personally will be the ones you lead well. The questions you have skimmed will be the ones that stumble you in the group hour.

Pray for each woman in your group by name early in the week, asking the Lord to prepare her heart. If one or two women have known wounds that this lesson may touch (a painful marriage, a lost child, a past abuse, a recent confession), pray specifically for them.

Read Genesis 2 and 3 aloud the day before you meet. Notice what stirs you. That stirring is often the Lord's leading on where to linger with your group.

Plan to start on time and end on time. Two hours in the books is less helpful than seventy careful minutes.

Sensitive topics in this lesson

Lesson 1 touches several tender places, sometimes all at once. Be alert and gentle on the following.

Identity and self-worth (questions 1, 21). Many of the women in your group have spent years listening to other voices, family, culture, media, define them. Make room for honesty without letting the conversation drift into self-pity. The aim is to let Genesis 1 and 2 do the defining.

Marriage and sexuality (questions 5, 6). Genesis 2:24 and 25 will bring up real material for some women, beautiful memories for some, deep grief or shame for others. Do not push. Let the text speak first, and let the women share only as they are willing.

Shame, hiding, and blaming (questions 12, 13). Some women will recognize themselves in Adam and Eve hiding in the bushes. Some will be in the middle of a season of secret sin or covered-up wound. Be ready to gently point to 1 John 1:8 to 9 and to James 5:16.

Broken relationships and authority (questions 15, 18). Genesis 3:16 names a difficulty between husband and wife that has shaped every marriage since. 1 Timothy 2 raises God's order for the assembly. Either question can become defensive in a hurry. Lead with what Scripture says, calmly and lovingly, and trust the Spirit, working through His word, to apply it.

The gospel call (optional application after question 17). Some of the women in the room may never have obeyed the gospel. Do not manufacture a moment, but do be ready for one. Have the names and phone numbers of the elders and the preacher in your phone if someone wants to take that step.

Suggested 60- to 75-minute schedule

Lesson 1 has more material than you can cover in an hour. That is by design. The questions are first for personal study during the week; the group hour is for sharing, going deeper on a few key questions, and building a discussion habit you will use for the next eleven weeks.

A workable rhythm:

Five minutes: welcome each woman, hand out lessons, give a one-minute orientation if anyone is new.

Five minutes: open in prayer. Read Genesis 3:1 to 15 aloud as a group.

Ten minutes: warm-up (each woman shares her name and one thing she hopes to receive from these twelve weeks). Resist the urge to shorten this. The group will not become a group without it.

Thirty to forty minutes: discussion. Choose six to eight questions in advance (see the next section). Do not try to do all of them.

Five to ten minutes: "Your response" reflection (question 21 and 22). Give the women time to write before sharing aloud. Some may not want to share, and that is fine.

Five minutes: closing prayer. See suggestion at the end of this guide.

Discussion priorities

If you can only cover a few questions, make sure these are among them: 3 (the "not good"), 5 (the creation of the woman and the poem), 10 (the three appeals and Adam's absence), 13 (hiding and blaming), 14 (Genesis 3:15), 17 (the garments of skin), 18 (1 Timothy 2:13 to 14), and 21 (your response).

Notes on key questions

These are not scripts, and they are not full answers. They are the points worth surfacing if discussion stalls, and the cautions worth keeping in mind if discussion drifts.

Question 1. Expect a wide range of impressions. Some women will be drawn to Eve's dignity in chapter 2; others will be struck by the speed of her fall in chapter 3. This question is mainly a warm-up. Don't stay long. Move on once every woman who wants to has spoken.

Question 3. Make sure the point lands: God's first "not good" is human aloneness. He made us for relationship, with Him and with one another. The marriage that begins here is His answer to that, but single women in the room should be reminded that the deeper answer is the body of Christ (Hebrews 10:24 to 25). Aloneness was never God's design for any of His daughters.

Question 5. Two points are worth surfacing. First, the woman is taken from the man's side, not from his head and not from his foot. The Matthew Henry quote in the callout captures this well. Second, Adam's first recorded speech is poetry. He recognizes her as family, not as property. Even before sin, the dignity of the woman is sky-high in God's economy.

Question 7. Genesis 2:24 to 25 paints a picture of marriage marked by permanence, intimacy, and openness without shame. Compare with Matthew 19:4 to 6 where Jesus quotes this passage as His authority on marriage. The contrast with our culture is obvious. Some women may need to hear that God's design for marriage is still intact even when human marriages fail.

Question 8 (sub b). It matters that we get God's word right because the very first human sin began with a small adjustment to what God had said. Eve added "neither shall you touch it" (3:3), which God had not said. The serpent's questioning of God's word in 3:1 finds purchase only because Eve's grip on the word had loosened. Compare Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:5 to 6; Revelation 22:18 to 19.

Question 10. The three appeals in 3:6 (good for food, a delight to the eyes, desirable to make one wise) match the apostle John's three categories of worldly temptation in 1 John 2:16 almost exactly. This is one of the great pattern verses in the Bible. Adam's presence in 3:6 ("who was with her") is often missed in Sunday school retellings. He was right there, silent, while the serpent worked on his wife. The passivity of Adam in the garden is its own kind of sin and is part of why Romans 5 lays the responsibility at Adam's feet rather than Eve's, even though she ate first.

Question 13. Blaming is the universal language of fallen humanity. Adam blames Eve and God in one breath ("the woman you gave me"). Eve blames the serpent. Neither owns the sin. This may be the most personally convicting question in the lesson. Allow real silence after asking it, and resist filling that silence yourself. Women who want to speak will.

Question 14. This is the heart of the lesson. Genesis 3:15 is the first promise of the gospel: an offspring of the woman will crush the serpent's head. Galatians 4:4 to 5 identifies this Offspring as the Christ. The entire long story of redemption hangs on this verse. Make sure the women see that the very first sentence God speaks after sin enters the world is a promise of rescue. Our God is a Savior before He is a Judge.

Question 17. The garments of skin are the Bible's first picture of substitutionary atonement. An innocent life is taken so that guilty people can be covered. The pattern runs through Abel's sacrifice (Genesis 4), the Passover lamb (Exodus 12), the Levitical sacrifices (Leviticus 1 to 7), and ultimately the Lamb of God (John 1:29; Hebrews 9:22; 10:10 to 14). The Optional Application after this question raises baptism into Christ as the obedient response to the gospel. If a woman in your group wants to take that step, do not delay her. Stop the discussion, get an elder or the preacher on the phone, and celebrate.

Question 18. 1 Timothy 2:8 to 15 is one of the texts that quietly shapes our practice of public worship. Three points are worth making clearly. First, Paul's reasoning rests on creation order and the events of Genesis, not on first-century culture (2:13 to 14). That is why this teaching has continuing weight for the Lord's church today. Second, Paul is addressing the assembly of God's people, not all male-female interaction in every setting. Women teach women (Titus 2:3 to 5), teach children (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14 to 15), and even instructed Apollos in private (Acts 18:26). Third, the role God has given the godly woman in the assembly is honorable, dignified, and necessary, even when our culture cannot see why. Lead with humility and with what Scripture actually says, and trust the Holy Spirit, working through His word, to do the rest.

Question 19. 2 Corinthians 11:3 reminds us that the same kind of deception that worked on Eve still works on the church. "Another gospel" today includes any teaching that subtracts from the necessity of obeying the gospel (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3 to 4) or adds new mediators alongside Christ (1 Timothy 2:5). Encourage the women to be alert to subtle drifts in what they hear, not just open denials.

Question 20. Romans 5:12 to 21 is rich. Two things to ground here: that Adam's sin brought death on all humanity, and that Christ's obedience opens life to all who are united with Him. The Bible does not teach that we are personally guilty of Adam's sin (Ezekiel 18:20), but it does teach that we live in a world

where his sin has consequences for all of us, and that we add our own sins to his (Romans 3:23). The second Adam undoes what the first Adam did, for everyone who is in Him.

Question 21. This is the personal application question. Do not steer toward a "right" answer. Give the women time to write, then invite any who would like to share to do so. If silence stretches, wait. Quiet women often share if you do not fill the air yourself.

About the Study Skills in this lesson

Three Study Skills appear in Lesson 1: Observation, Interpretation, and Application (the inductive method); Reading in Context; and Letting Scripture Interpret Scripture. These are foundational habits for every Bible study the women will ever do. Take a moment in the group hour to read at least one of them aloud and explain that these sidebars will appear throughout the next twelve weeks. The skills compound. By Week Twelve, the women will be more capable students of the Bible than when they started, even apart from what they learn about the women themselves.

A suggested closing prayer

Pray your own prayer, of course. The following is a sample if you would like a starting point.

"Father, we thank You for making us in Your image. We thank You for not leaving Adam and Eve in the garden, for the promise of a Rescuer in Genesis 3:15, for the garments You Yourself provided to cover their shame, and for the blood of Christ that covers ours. Thank You for the woman beside me tonight. Thank You for the courage she showed in coming here. Help us this week to take Your word seriously, to be honest with You about what is true, and to look more like Your Son by the time we meet again. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the offspring promised to Eve, who crushed the serpent's head on a cross and rose again on the first day of the week. Amen."

Looking ahead to Lesson 2

Next week's lesson is on Sarah, Genesis 12 and 15 through 21. Encourage the women to start the reading early in the week. Sarah's story stretches over ten chapters and twenty-five years; the lesson will be richer for the women who have read ahead. If you have time at the end of the group hour, mention one thing that anchors next week's lesson ("Is anything too hard for the LORD?" Genesis 18:14) and let it linger in everyone's mind through the week.