

Genesis 3:16: Consequences For Eve

Instructions for Reversing Sin's Curse

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Modern feminism began in England (in the tribe of Ephraim, we would say).

Back in 1792, Mary Wollstonecraft wrote what she called 'A Vindication of the Rights of Woman'—a challenge to the prevailing attitude of the time that women existed only to please men. It was probably a good thing that she wrote it because that was not a very good attitude to have. In it she called for women to be granted the same freedoms as men in politics, education, and work so they were able to do a lot of the things that men took for themselves as their own little kingdom to do. However, that did not actually get much traction because the fledgling feminist movement soon focused on women's suffrage. The right to vote went to a political entity, and the more universal rights and freedoms for women got kind of put to the side.

But, having achieved the right to vote, early in the twentieth century, the women's movement began to surge and it especially surged with the publication of a French woman's book. Simone de Beauvoir's wrote a worldwide bestseller called *Le Deuxième Sexe* (*The Second Sex* in English) in 1949. Her premise in all of this was that liberating women is liberation for men too. It actually worked quite well for her and her compatriots because, as a result of this book, a lot of liberal *men* joined the feminist movement because they wanted to be liberated just like women.

In 1963, Manasseh gets into it. An American named Betty Friedan wrote a book called, *The Feminine Mystique* which, as its basic theme, said domesticity for women was bad—Get women out of the house! She called domesticity the conditioning of women to accept dependence on men and to have passive roles.

Well, already, at least from World War II, women had been flooding into the workforce and it has only increased year by year pretty much since then. In 2012, women comprised nearly 47 percent of the American workforce. So it is nearly equal.

In 1966, Friedan and others with her founded the National Organization for Women called 'NOW' (Rush Limbaugh calls them the 'NOW gang' and then he calls them 'the NAGs' and 'the feminazis'). A lot of other women began forming other groups to fight for women's liberation. This is when the women's movement became what people thought as militant. They marched; they agitated; they sued to overturn laws and practices that they felt subjugated, demeaned, and restricted their sex in way or another.

They had a lot of lawyers that would fight for contract and property rights in the courts. They fought for more freedom in labor with the unions—who were their natural partners in all of this—and, of course, in Congress. They also focused on two aspects of sex: Contraception (which is obviously a sexual matter) and abortion (which is really a sexual matter—and a matter of murder, obviously).

But they attacked abortion from the sexual side and by the late 1960s and early 1970s, actually ended up putting all their eggs in one basket (no pun intended) and really forced the abortion issue. So *Roe versus Wade*, which was a landmark abortion case in 1973, gave feminism an impetus that is still visible today. You cannot help but turn on the radio or the television or look through the Internet, and abortion is still a huge topic getting a lot of pushback from conservatives these days.

But what happened in the abortion fight is that the feminists distilled abortion down to a matter of a woman's choice and totally disregarded the natural rights of the unborn. So they forgot about that and just said that a woman has a right to use her body in the way that she chooses, no matter who it affects one way or another. By the time it got to the Supreme Court, it was being treated as a First Amendment issue rather than a crime. It was treated as whether it was a right or not, rather than whether it was actually good or not.

So the murder issue was totally suppressed and the Supreme Court ruled in the feminists' favor. This major plank of feminism became the law of the land and it has been killing babies ever since. The latest figure I heard—the one Drudge put up—was 55 million. It is actually 56 million (where Drudge got his fact was a million off). That is just tragic. That is a whole generation of children killed in the womb.

Now these 'gains'—if you want to call them that (some of them were; some of them were not)—came in tandem with the sexual revolution, which was pretty much right through the 1960s, and also the same time as the civil rights advances. The economic conditions of the United States began to change quite a bit. This was especially true with inflation so that you pretty much needed two incomes to live to the level that people thought that they should live. This put more women out into the workforce.

So these factors (the economic factors, the sexual factor, the gender factor, the civil rights factor) have led up to—if you really take a step back and look at what is going on—absolute social chaos. That is what we have to live through today.

But the feminists were not done in 1973. They just kept on going. By the time you get to

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the 1990s (it actually started in the 1980s with the Reagan revolution and conservatives coming to the fore), militant radical feminism and the NOW women and the other left-wing women's groups found themselves losing a great deal of popularity. They started getting really bad press because people were tired of their agitation, their militancy, and their in-your-face style.

What they realized in their little smoke-filled rooms, when they were planning what to do next, was that stressing equality had caused a great deal of polarization and exacerbated distrust between the sexes. So, because their shrill demands were producing so much resentment, they decided to take a new angle so that they would appear a lot more mainstream, that they would kind of sidle over toward the middle.

What they did was they decided to emphasize the differences between men and women. So they encouraged books like John Gray's, *Men are from Mars and Women are from Venus*, where the author looks at men and says these are men's strengths and men do well in these; and then here are women and they are different from men, they have all these other virtues and strengths, and this is what they are really good at. But it is really, on the whole, another feminist thrust to get their ideas out there. So this led the way to "raising consciousness" (a phrase I hate) about distinctively feminine strengths and virtues. And it has worked.

During the time between the early 1990s and today, women have actually surged tremendously past men in many places. As a matter of fact, when I was doing some research about women in the workforce, I found out that women still are only 47 percent. Did you know that in management, professional, and related higher-up positions, women comprise 51.5 percent? They have gone past men in terms of leadership in business.

The same is true in education. There are still more male professors, but women are very quickly catching up. Women are the majority now of new acceptances into college. They are catching up with men in the Master's and Doctor's programs. I read an anecdote from a registrar at a major college who said if we were not hampered by all the laws that make us accept people equally into the college, it would be 70-30 (women over men). It is because the girls are ready for college. They are not playing video games. They are not out there with their pants halfway down trying to act cool. They are in there studying, making the grades, doing the papers, going to the community things that help them develop social skills and whatnot. They are the ones that are ready for college; the boys are not. So they have really come a long way.

Now some of their victories have been worthwhile. Women should not be treated as

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inferior. A female may be physically weaker than a male and, in some cases, unable to do certain jobs because it just requires a man's strength and whatever other abilities to do it. But, as we know, many women are far more intelligent and more capable to do other things than men can. It is just the way it is. Men have strengths, women have strengths, and it should not be a matter of inequality. It should be a matter of what works the best.

Spiritually, male and female have equal potential. That is very clear in God's Word. In I Peter 3:7, the apostle calls married couples "heirs together of the grace of life." I do want to go to Galatians 3 and show that Paul states this very clearly. I specifically wanted to come to Paul because he is the one that gets the most grief about the way the Bible treats women. But he was not that way. This is very clear in this passage of Scripture.

Galatians 3:26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

Feminists get all upset about the word "sons" here, but they should not because it is just using the male to mean 'all of us.' It was very common in Greek and a lot of other languages to use the male to mean 'everybody.' We still do that. The word 'mankind' does not leave out half of humanity—'mankind' is everyone.

Galatians 3:27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

So if you are a woman who is baptized, you have put on Christ; if you are a man who is baptized, you have put on Christ—it does not matter.

Galatians 3:28-29 There is neither Jew nor Greek [it does not matter what your ethnicity is], there is neither slave nor free [it does not matter your condition, in terms of your economic status], there is neither male nor female [it does not matter what gender you are]; for you are all one in Christ Jesus [you are all the same before Him, it does not matter]. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

So those things make no difference. We are all equal in God's eyes. This is a foundational truth to our understanding of what we are going to be going into today. We have got to start here: that in God's eyes we are all one, we are all equal; it does not

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matter if we are male or female. He has got the same goal for everyone. He wants us all in His Kingdom. We should not get our panties in a twist because we are one or the other or that we have not been treated one way or the other by someone else. By God you are treated the same way, in terms of your potential.

You are not necessarily treated the same way in how you have to get there. We all have our own road to get there. We all have to do certain things to get there. All of our lives are different. But in God's eyes, He is trying to bring us all to the same place. Christ died for a woman's sins just as much as He died for a man's sins. So let that be the foundational truth that we start with in this.

We are not saying men are better, we are not saying women are better, or that either one is inferior in any way. We are just saying they are different—God made them that way—but they have equal potential. So men and women should have equal rights under the law. I think it is very clear that they should be able to have the same legal status in the world (Why not? This is very clear from what we get out of God's Word). Women should be able to buy and sell property, run businesses, make contracts, pursue education, hold jobs at equal pay as men (Why not? If they can do the work, they should be able to get the pay).

Look at Proverbs 31 and just look at what that ideal woman was doing. She was buying land, she was running a business, she was taking care of her house, she was doing this and that and the other thing. She was doing a whole lot more than probably anybody would really want to do. But, under God's way of life, she should be able to do those things. So there should not be any problem there.

However, having said that, rights and legalities are not as important as spiritual development because the goal is more important than all these other little things. What God wants us to do and how God wants us to get there, what God wants us to learn, the character that God wants us to have when we come out at the other end are far more important than any of these things. What we are going to see as we go through what we go through today, is that the spiritual development that God wants from us is enhanced by following the God-ordained gender roles.

Many people today hate the phrase "gender roles." They think it is awful and demeaning that a woman should have a role and that a man should have a role. Of course, what is demeaning about it is they think the man's role is what will dominate the woman's role, and there is some truth in that. But that does not mean that it should. Even though the man's role does dominate, it does not mean that it should. God did not set it up to dominate.

Anyway, the biblical reality is that God gave women a different role from what He gave men. If you are going to be a Christian, you have to accept that because it is all through the Bible. There is nothing that says otherwise. It is by rebelling against what God set out that we have reaped the whirlwind in this day and age. I should back off what I just said because it is not just a modern problem that we can lay at the feet of feminism. As a matter of fact, we can trace this modern problem all the way back to the Garden of Eden—which is where we are going to be the rest of the sermon. And it was not all Eve's fault.

Many people blithely read through the story and think that Eve was the problem. Eve was not the problem; Eve was *part* of the problem. See what the apostle Paul says: He lays the fault on Adam and Satan (let us not forget Satan, but we are talking about Adam and Eve). Obviously, Satan was the one that was really at fault. But Paul lays more blame on Adam because he did not fulfill his role, his responsibility, as her husband. He should have spoken up, but he did not. Paul tells us, in I Timothy 2:14, Eve was deceived into transgression but Adam *chose* to sin—he rebelled. He knew what God had said and he took of the fruit anyway.

What we are going to be focusing on is God's words to them afterward (commonly but incorrectly called curses). But what He does, in speaking to them, is He predicts the ongoing battle of the sexes, for one. Today, we are going to dig into just one verse—Genesis 3:16—which is God's response to Eve after she ate the forbidden fruit. We will see that instead of really cursing her, He reveals to her the consequences of her actions and gives her the means—the key—by which she can make the best of her situation in this world of sin.

So there are those two things there: He reveals the consequences to her of her actions, and gives her the means, or the key, by which she can make the best of her situation in this world of sin.

To begin with, we are going to be spending a lot of time in Genesis 1. We need to lay some foundational principles so that we can get a running start into what really happened there when God said to her, "This is what's going to happen because you've done this." This is a section of Scripture that is just chockfull of principles. We need to get them.

Genesis 1:26-28, 31 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in His own

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image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” . . . Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

As the first mention of mankind, and the first mention of male and female in regard to mankind, the law of first mention suggests that what is said here is vital to our understanding not only of humanity, but also of the sexes throughout God’s Word. This sets the foundation for how we are supposed to look at man—mankind, humanity—and how we are supposed to look at male and female. This is the situation in which they are first brought up. Obviously, the most important principle is mentioned first, in terms of humanity and male and female (mostly humanity here, but it applies to both obviously).

The most important principle is that mankind—people—are made in the image of God. That is the first principle that we have to understand when we are thinking about human beings and when we are thinking about individuals—male or female. We are all made in the image of God and this person and that person and this other person and that person are also made in the image of God despite one being male and the other one being female, or this one being Russian and that one being Zimbabwean or whatever. We are all made in the image of God.

What we can say is that when God was planning humanity, He used Himself as the template and He said, “I’m going to make a bunch of creatures—physical, carnal, fleshly creatures—that are going to look a lot like I look like, and they’re going to have a lot of the same traits and attributes and abilities that I have.” And so, we look as He looks and we share many of His attributes.

He even gave us a spirit. He breathed into Adam the breath of life and gave him a spirit that enabled him to communicate with God and with other human beings, especially his wife, who was created after him. This spirit also gave him mind and understanding. He could have smarts. He could make things. He could have language and do all kinds of neat things to make his world better.

Ultimately, He went way beyond just the flesh in making man like Him. He said, “I want these creatures to have the potential to really be like Me, ultimately be like Me—not just flesh, but Spirit—and live forever and enjoy all the things I enjoy in My Kingdom.” So we have scriptures like I John 3:2 which say that we do not know what we are going to be

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like, but when we see Him, we are going to be just as He is.

So this principle of being in the image of God goes from the simplest thing about form and shape all the way to, ultimately, character and eternal life and spirit essence and all that sort of thing. So it is a huge foundational principle to remember as our baseline for how we look at any other person, or humanity as a whole, that God made him or them in His own image and they all have that same potential. This should ratchet up the way you treat other people.

“This person is made in the image of God just like I am made in the image of God, and he has the same potential that I have, and she has the same potential that I have. Well, then, we’re all pretty equal and we shouldn’t try to kill the other person, or dominate the other person, or steal from that other person, or lie to that other person or whatever because we’re dealing with somebody whom God has invested a great deal of time and creativity and will ultimately want to share His Kingdom with.”

Obviously it will not be the same position as you. But, who knows, that Joe Blow down the street that you think is just a crumb may end up in a higher position than you in the Kingdom of God because he has the potential. So that is the first baseline understanding of humanity that we have to have, and of the opposite sex as well (because God made them male and female).

The second principle that comes out of this also appears in verse 26, and that is that God gave humanity dominion. We could call it ‘stewardship’ or ‘governorship’ or ‘rulership’ or ‘leadership’ over the earth and its creatures—the fish, the birds, the cattle, and the creeping things. So God gave mankind not only a lot of His attributes and His looks, He also gave them power—power to govern, to help, to build, to establish things, to make things better. We often read that God put man in the Garden of Eden to tend and keep. This is all part of the dominion thing. He was supposed to tend it, cultivate it, make it nice; but he was also to keep it as well so it would prevail, it would be prolonged, it would be safe, and everything would go well.

So God gave man dominion. This tells us that not only do we have this responsibility, but that people in general (as it is given to all humanity) have a God-given, dare we say, inclination to dominate and control. It is part of our DNA.

God, at the very beginning, said: “I want you to control all of this creation that I’ve made—all of these animals, all of these plants. I want you to work with the ground, work with the stone, work with the metals, work with all these things, and create a great civilization on earth.” So He gave us dominion over all of these things. But remember

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what God gave the dominion for: fish, birds, cattle, and the earth. Did you realize that there is something missing from that list? Other people. God did not give us dominion over other people, but we have this inclination, this tendency, this desire from God to control things around us. It is not a bad thing.

God is sovereign. That is what He does. He is the great governor of the universe. He does this for everything. But He is also kind and loving and patient and all those other things that we tend not to be. He has the right, as God, to do all that controlling and governing and whatnot, but we do not. And so, we tend to exercise that dominion in areas that we are not given dominion over—and mostly, it is other people.

Now we could go to Romans 13 just to pick up the principle that the authorities that are on earth are given by God. God does give certain people authority to govern, to rule, and to make laws in our normal living here on earth. But those are given by God. Our problem is that we often take authority when it is not given.

The third principle is that God made humanity in two flavors: Male and Female. That is from Genesis 1:27. It is very clear that He created man and that He created him male and female. But we need to remember that He made both in His own image (principle number one). One is not more of Him than the other; one is not less of Him than the other. It is just like He took all of His attributes and He said, “This one’s for men, and this one’s for women” and voila—male and female. So we can speculate that He divided His traits and attributes pretty much equally between them.

Women tend to be kind and nurturing and all those wonderful things. Men are brawny and strong and they like to do a lot of that dominating and whatnot. Well, we can say that God is kind and caring and nurturing. God is also strong and is a very dominating figure. That is just the way it works out.

Men are usually physically superior in strength and stature. Women (Peter calls them “the weaker vessel”) are smaller. They cannot do all the heavy lifting as men can. But put them in front of a math test and it is probably a flip of a coin to see which one is smarter. There are a lot of things that women just seem to be able to do well and men can do pretty much equally. It is just one of those things. But they are both made in the image of God.

But we find, as we move through this, that God gave some of His attributes to Eve and some of His attributes to Adam so that he could understand that he was incomplete without her. It says very clearly in Genesis 2:18: “It is not good that man should be alone” [as only half there]; I will make him a helper comparable to him.” The first thing

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He says about Eve is that she is a ‘helper’ and she is ‘comparable.’ She is to be alongside him as a helper, not that she is subservient—she is engaged in the same tasks as he is. And they are comparable—they are equals.

So God made her out of one of Adam’s ribs, and then when he saw her he said: “This is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called Woman because she was taken out of Man. Therefore [kind of an aside from Moses] a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh”—a huge principle, not just for men and women, but for Christians (the people of God) because we are in the process of becoming one with Jesus Christ, our spiritual husband.

So we are exposed to this one flesh idea really before we get out of Genesis 1. It is in the idea that God created both male and female in His image and they both make up man. And then, by the time we get to the end of chapter 2, this is pounded into us “Look, a man leaves his father and mother, he’s joined to a female, and they become one flesh.” They are finally unified and complete in each other.

That is an incredible principle that is given to us right away and it is foundational for understanding what goes on in chapter 3 when we get to what Eve did and her punishment, and what Adam did and his punishment. What happens here is that they forgot about the other person. They did things without the other person. They did not understand the completeness in one another and they sinned.

So, combined as one flesh, united, male and female are whole. In that form, as man and wife—as married—they have many advantages over people who are alone. God said very clearly, “It is not good for man to be alone.” He meant it. This was not something He just threw out there. He says it is much better for a man to be married and have his ‘better half’ because it is not just addition there; when they are together, there is multiplication. It is so much better for a man and wife to face life together.

So there are a lot of advantages to this state of marriage. And is not marriage the bedrock, foundational issue of our times? The feminists are trying to get rid of marriage. Homosexuals are trying to get rid of marriage. Secularists of all kinds are trying to get rid of marriage. Satan wants to get rid of marriage.

Marriage is that state of being in one flesh that makes the Kingdom of God possible in many cases. I am not at all stating that it is not possible to make it to the Kingdom of God as single. But I am stating that God made the married state to make it easier, better. You get help. Did He not call Eve a “helper comparable”? And what was He talking about? It was not just their day-to-day life together; it was their march toward the

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Kingdom of God. That is always first on God's mind. So marriage has a huge position in the life of a Christian.

Now I am not stating everybody should just go out and get married willy-nilly. It should be a person who is comparable and will be a help. But some people do not seem to need it. Some people seem to do quite well alone, and more power to them. God is speaking in generalities here when He says it is better for people to get married and go along this path toward the Kingdom.

We still have another principle here in Genesis 1 that we need to get to. That is the fourth one: "Be fruitful and multiply." On its face, this concerns procreation, but deeper within it are a slew of major topics that we cannot get into. But "be fruitful and multiply" contains the underlying ideas of marriage, family, child-rearing, government in the family, work (work supports the family, supports the kids), interpersonal relations (obviously, male and female having to get along with one another to be able to produce children and to rear them; the stewardship of the house; one's economic circumstances). This principle of "be fruitful and multiply" begins to encompass just about everything.

We can even expand it out because the family expands into clans, the clans expand into tribes, tribes expand into nations, and nations expand into the entire world system. That is exactly what God says: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth." He understood that this thing was going to encompass the whole orb that He had created for man's home. For now, we will confine the "fruitful and multiply" principle to marriage and sexuality and family relations and gender roles.

But what we need to understand is that God looks on fruitfulness and multiplying as the ultimate human good. Wonder why? Because re-creating Himself is the ultimate divine good. That is His purpose. And so He says: "Okay, you people out there—you male and you female—I want you to do what I'm doing. I'm here re-creating Myself. Go ahead and procreate yourself. And by doing this, you will learn so much."

Ask any parent if he has ever learned a lesson from rearing a child. You learn so much through not just having children, but rearing them and bringing them to maturity. You almost think, in a sense, that it is more for the parent than for the child. The child will learn those same lessons when he gets married and has children. But that is what God is getting at here.

God's command, setting man adrift into the world, is "be fruitful and multiply, and you'll start learning." That is what He wanted: He wanted men and women to learn to live

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through this “be fruitful and multiply” command.

I do want to add to this. The words ‘dominion’ and ‘subdue’ appear again in Genesis 1:28. What you get out of this is that God is hinting at the idea that if humanity is going to be fruitful and multiply in a way that is good and godly, they need to have everything under control (‘subdue’ ‘have dominion’). That means ‘keep things in line,’ ‘make sure things go right,’ ‘do everything in the right way.’ So God wants man to control situations and, especially though, He wants people to control themselves—self-control.

Finally, in Genesis 1:31, the point I want to pick up here is that God pronounces everything *very good*. This is a big clue that the way He set things up was the way that He wanted them to go. Right now, sin is not in the picture—this is before sin. This is the way that He felt was best—without sin—to work in the world. Men and women were supposed to use these principles: They were all in the image of God; they would have dominion over all these animals and plants and the earth; they (male and female) were both in the image of God and were to be one flesh—they were to be united—and take those advantages and use them for godly gains; and they were supposed to be fruitful and multiply. All of this was very good. This was the way God intended humanity to go. So this is the way that it would work best for human beings. But it did not happen that way, did it?

Sin entered the world very quickly. And when sin entered the world—when Satan shook the tree and the fruit fell to the ground as it were—everything changed. Most specifically, man’s nature changed because he allowed Satan’s broadcast to be on ‘10’ in his mind (if you know what I mean, he turned the volume way up and listened to Satan and it was drowning out what God wanted). I do not know if you like that analogy, but it is, basically, that the world has listened to Satan far more than it has listened to God, and so man’s nature changed.

It means, once the nature changed, that everything became a lot more difficult because now people had to contend with contrary and destructive attitudes and desires. Those were not there before. They did not have to worry about people competing with them. They did not have to worry about another person taking something from them, or doing something to them, or deceiving them in any way. They did not have these things crowding their minds. They did not have to wonder about the other guy because everybody was walking in the same direction. But when sin entered the world, all of these things made life so much more complicated and difficult.

Now, fortunately, God’s ends could still be achieved. He knew that they could still be achieved even with sin in the world, but it was going to be excruciatingly painful and

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sorrowful to reach the same conclusion with sin. In fact, we could say that except for the intervention of God—specifically, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit that was given later—it would have actually been impossible. But God did intervene. God did promise a Savior and God did promise the Spirit. Right at the beginning, it was just specifically for individuals—specifically, men like Noah, Abraham, and on and on through the Old Testament. But we could see that things would be much worse with sin in the world.

Let us go to Genesis 3. I want to just pick up Eve's sin because I want to get on to what we are talking about here. Obviously, what is in Genesis 3:16 can be gone through fairly quickly, once you have these foundational principles, and I hope that they will be clear. But I want to show here, verses 6-11, the immediate effects of sin.

Genesis 3:6-11 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself." And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?"

We see sin's immediate effects here in these verses. The Hebrew says that as they munched on this fruit, it opened their eyes. What it means is that they became aware of things—ideas, desires—that they had not thought of before, that they had never considered in their innocence. The big shock, it shows here, is their realization that they were naked. This did not affect them before. They never thought of it.

Why would their nakedness affect them like this? Suddenly their nakedness became shameful, something they wanted to hide. They even wanted to hide it from each other who were one flesh. They felt exposed to each other. They felt vulnerable to the other. They had something to protect now. It was theirs. They felt insecure. And so they clothed themselves. They hid from God.

Certainly they did not want to be exposed to Him who is holy, righteous, without any

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flaw whatsoever, and perfect. Of course, we have examples like Peter who said, “Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man.” He was expressing the same sort of thing that Adam and Eve did when they saw that they were naked. They saw that they were just wholly evil in comparison to God and it shamed them. It made them feel guilty.

But what is most significant, in the way that they covered themselves up from each other, is what they saw in their own guilt. Of course, they saw the potential for evil in themselves, but I think, more importantly, they saw potential for evil in the other person. It made them defensive and suspicious. They did not know what that other person was going to do. They did not know what they were thinking. They did not know what they would say. They were already beginning to think of each other as the enemy.

God comes up, walking through the Garden. Of course, He knows what has happened (God is omniscient; nothing goes past Him without His notice). So He comes up and asks them questions, and their actions and their words just telegraph their guilt to Him. But His words in response: “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I told you not to eat of?”—they were rhetorical questions. He already knew the answers to them, but He wanted them to think about that. He wanted them to understand that He already knew what was going on, and that they should fear Him because He was God and He was now their Judge.

But He wanted them to start thinking about how they got into all of this. “Who told you that you were naked?” Of course, nobody had actually told them. But He is trying to get them to understand that it was that serpent who had started this process; that a foreigner, an alien, had come into their little group and implanted sin—an idea—that it changed all the dynamics now between them and God and between each other. Things were different now.

God wanted to especially pin Adam to the wall. He said, “Have you eaten of the tree that I specifically told you? The first instructions out of My mouth: ‘Don’t eat of this tree.’ Did you tell your wife about that? Did you warn her when she plucked the fruit? Did you say anything?” Obviously, no, he had not. Now let us read their excuses:

Genesis 3:12-13 Then the man said, “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.” And the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

Their excuses together show what went wrong. Adam’s response is evasive and, in fact,

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he takes almost no responsibility at all. He points the finger at “the woman You gave me.” It was her fault and it was God’s fault for even making this woman. He comes across as totally passive. It was all her fault.

God though—like I said, He nailed him to the wall—said, “You’re the one who disobeyed the word that I spoke directly in your ear about eating the fruit of this tree.” So the only way he can make himself feel any good is by minimizing his part in all of this. Like I said, he was just sitting there and she did everything.

Eve’s response is more truthful and much more direct. But instead of blaming Adam for anything, she totally ignores him. Adam speaks as if the problem is the other person that God had given him, and Eve speaks as if the other person were not even there. How many women have you seen doing what Eve did and ignoring the person who had part of the culpability in the problem and shutting their ears instead of solving the problem? Now that is obviously a stereotype, but I am just saying it is very similar. We see it all the time in sitcoms and whatnot; hopefully, we do not see it too much in our own relationships.

But what we see in all of this—in his reaction and in her reaction—is that sin has infiltrated the principle of one flesh. It has already made them enemies, pitting one against the other. Their unity and their completeness in the marriage bond had begun to break down already. They were already at odds. He blamed, she ignored.

I can summarize the problem: Sin had begun to undermine their relationship. And if God had left it untended, there would be separation and divorce, and possibly even murder. You see murder in the very next chapter. It did not take long for that to show up. God’s purpose to re-create Himself through many sons and daughters would have failed, right there at the beginning. But God does not fail.

Let us look at Isaiah 55. I want you to notice this. I am sure it is a principle that you are all aware of, but I want to read it. And I want to read it in a specific way to make it apply to this situation more closely.

Isaiah 55:10 For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater . . .

He is saying these processes, once God starts them, work to produce the fruit that He wants to be produced.

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Isaiah 55:11 . . . so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

He was not going to allow this to stop Him in His plan to reproduce Himself. If these two could not get along because of sin, He was going to figure out a way to make it work. Of course, He already had a plan for how it was going to work because He knew sin was going to come in (it says Christ was “slain from the foundation of the world”). They already knew what it was going to take: There was going to have to be a Savior to come and sacrifice Himself to pay the penalty for their sins and to justify them before God so that then they could, with God’s Spirit, start the process of growing in the grace and knowledge and the character of Jesus Christ. So He knew all that beforehand.

Isaiah 55:8-9 “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

He is saying here He has this planned out already. He knew what was going to be necessary to make this situation work—that sin was going to come in, He already had it worked out.

Isaiah 55:7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.

What He knew He would have to do is, He knew He had to begin this process of bringing them back to Him, of making things begin to work right even in the presence of sin. His goal was to bring humanity back from this low point to Him so that He could pardon them and give them what He wanted and His purpose continue.

Now, if you remember, I did a sermon on Genesis 3:15 and it showed that it is the ‘Protoevangelium’—the first announcement of the Gospel. It tells us, in verses 14 and specifically verse 15, what God would do because of this problem with sin. He says, “I’ll send My Son. He’s the woman’s Seed. He’s going to bruise the head of the serpent. That’s what I’m going to do to turn this around.” So we know that He sent His Son to pay for the sins of the world. But that is not the end of it, even though it is the most important part. There are still two sinful people standing in front of Him. And so He turns to Eve.

Genesis 3:16 To [Eve] He said: “I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”

This verse, and also the verse before, and the verses after about Adam—these are called judgment oracles in theology. It means it has two parts. The ‘judgment’ part is that it pronounces a punishment for her guilt, for her sin. That is part of it. The other part—the ‘oracle’ part—is that it foretells its effects. So it pronounces punishment, but it also *foretells* the effects of her sin. What God does here, in verse 16, is announce two major results of her sin:

1. Because she had sinned and changed her own human nature by listening to Satan, sin is going to make her job as a woman, a wife, and a mother that much more difficult; and

- 2) The conflict between herself and her husband would become the norm in human society.

The New Testament ideal which we see in Ephesians 5 (where the husband sacrificially loves his wife as Christ loved the church and where the wife recognizes the husband’s loving leadership in the family and voluntarily submits herself to it) attempts, with the Holy Spirit, to take us back to pre-sin conditions. That tries to take us back to Genesis 1 whereas most of the time we are still in Genesis 3. So we can truly achieve that only through the Holy Spirit; and because we are human, we are not going to be perfect at it.

Now this verse—Genesis 3:16—has two parts, each of which contains two clauses. The first part of course concerns childbearing. Notice that it begins with God saying, “I will greatly multiply.” What we can take from this is that God had good spiritual reasons for inflicting pain in a woman’s childbearing, that it was not done willy-nilly—that there was a good reason for it—and that He did something to Eve’s body at that point to make it more painful, which all the women in the world since have regretted.

Now this “sorrow” here has less to do with grief than it does with hard work—with labor. Specifically, it is talking about the labor of childbirth—‘travail,’ as the older word says. But it can mean just plain old hard work. It is difficult. He says, “I’m going to make your conception” (another bad translation; it should be ‘childbearing’)—even though it specifically means conception, it is a word that means the whole process. It is talking

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about the carrying of a child, the birth of a child, the raising of a child all the way up through his maturity. So He is saying that the whole process is going to be difficult. Without sin it would have been a breeze. But sin is in the world and so it is much more difficult.

One commentator writes: “Sorrow is the state of birth travail, which is at the same time labor, pain, difficulty, and danger.”

So, evidently, childbearing without sin would have been less work and less painful. It does not mean that it would have been painless or effortless—it would have just been less than it is now. But God ratcheted up the work and the pain for His divine purposes, which is not good news—it does not seem like—but it is good news because we are in a state where sin is present.

When a woman gets pregnant and has a child, she often endangers her own life. Normally, the feeling, the belief is that the woman would give her life to make sure that child was born. So she learns sacrifice through childbearing. And then, as the child grows, she constantly sacrifices for that child—sacrifices her time, her energy, her youth, her money. Whatever it is, she is constantly sacrificing for that little blob of ‘feed me.’

She learns that through the whole process. God wanted the woman to learn sacrifice and to be selfless by having to bring a child into the world and rear him in the world so that she could learn all these lessons.

Is it not interesting that the one thing that we get out of Genesis 3:6—about the way she looked at the fruit and everything—she was so totally selfish in taking that fruit. And God said, “Okay, you and all the other women in the world are going to learn how to be selfless because you chose to be selfish in this sin.” God wanted childbearing to be a struggle. He wanted it to be a difficulty to be overcome. He wanted to put her in a situation where she learned to overcome.

So in this process of birth, nurturing, and rearing children, God is setting into motion the process by which we overcome sin. He just puts it in the specific of a woman’s life. Her life is given to these children and to the family and to bringing all of it up to a point where she can send these creatures off into the world. She does this through struggle, pain, and relentless work. Note that Adam’s punishment is also hard work. So, men, you are not getting off. You are going to die in the traces.

So if the woman wants the great blessing of children, she will have to work for it, make

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sacrifices for them—even endure grief and pain. But that is the way character is built and that is what God wants.

The second part of the verse concentrates on the woman's relationship with her husband. The keyword here is 'desire.' A lot of people think it is sexual desire, but it is not. The words 'desire' and 'rule' are also there in Genesis 4:7. It is very clear that the meaning is 'desire for control' or 'desire for domination.' So if we can paraphrase what God is saying to her in the third clause, it is: "You'll desire to control your husband, but he'll have the upper hand." That is what it means.

He said: "Generally, in terms of the way things are going to work out, even though you're going to try to control the relationship, he's going to win. He's going to win because he's stronger than you. He's bigger than you, he can put you down. It's just as simple as that. He'll dominate you." And without the Holy Spirit, unfortunately, that is the way it often works out.

So He is predicting the battle of the sexes here and warning her that if she engages in it, she is likely going to lose and pay a terrible price. His advice is left unsaid, but it is obvious. His advice to her is: "Don't try to wrest control of the relationship from him. It'll just create conflict." In other words, cooperation will work a whole lot better than competitiveness in the long run (Honey catches more flies than vinegar). Paul gives the exact same prescription in Ephesians 5. He says:

Ephesians 5:22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

And then, in verse 25, he says:

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church.

What it does is, it cuts to the chase the two main problems—the woman's main problem and the man's main problem—which we saw in Eve and Adam in their very first sin. She tried to take control, she did not submit; he abdicated his responsibility, he did not show the loving concern for her to say, "Eve, don't eat it." So they both failed and that is the two biggest problems for men and women. Women do not want to submit; men do not truly love. That is the problem.

What we can say is that if the wife puts down her desire to control and the husband

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really loves his wife and sacrifices for her in a Christ-like way, things will be good, things will be a lot better. That is the correction for sin that God immediately told Eve, and then for Adam. This is the correction for sin: Submission, sacrifice, love, and a lot of hard work.

Let us finish in I Timothy 2. Paul is explaining gender roles in the church and he goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden as his example, and the proof is that God made Adam first and made him the head. He was given the headship. So he says:

I Timothy 2:13-15 For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. [And then he says] Nevertheless [even though she fell into transgression] she will be saved in childbearing [there is that word again, just like Genesis 3:16] if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.

We could say this is Paul's commentary on Genesis 3:16. How can her judgment be reversed? In essence, he says that beyond what Christ does (we are not even considering the fact that Christ died for her sins, and that is really how she gets salvation)—he is talking about her part in it—her (for all women) salvation will be accomplished by how she overcomes her human nature. Simple as that. That is how we all will have salvation (Men, the same way). We are going to have salvation by how we overcome our human nature.

But it says here that she does this through the toils of her life, which for most women is bound up in marriage and children. So how she lives her life with her husband, how she raises her kids—those are the things that God is going to judge her on because that is her life. And if she does it in the right and proper way, she is going to have salvation because she will have overcome and grown in character.

So if she acts in faith and love and holiness and self-control, she can reverse the curse of Eden and enter the Kingdom of God.