



October 22/23, 2011
Genesis 3:14-20
“Reverse the Curse”
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This study is the second in Genesis chapter three. Pastor Gary reminded us of the fact that Adam and Eve were created perfect and unspoiled, but they were given a choice. God let them know that they could obey him and live and enjoy his best or they could disobey and die. He gave them free will so their relationship would be based on love and not on law. In other words, they would be able to choose to love God because they wanted to, not because they had to.

So, out of all the trees that they were free to eat from, there was one (the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil) God commanded them not to eat. Unfortunately, they disobeyed God and did the one thing he had commanded them not to do: eat from the fruit of this tree.

A wicked, fallen angel by the name of Satan had a lot to do with that decision. He deceived Eve into believing that God isn't good and that God isn't true, so she ate of the fruit and gave to her husband to eat. As soon as they did their eyes were opened, they came under conviction, they felt ashamed and exposed, so they covered their nakedness and tried to hide from God. Well, the old saying proved true: “You can run, but you can't hide.”

God showed up, not as a fiery, angry, vindictive tyrant, but as a loving, tender, broken-hearted father who asks his kids a series of questions, and calls them to account for their sin. They don't answer very well, and we read that instead of repenting, Adam blamed his wife, and God for giving him that wife! Then, right on cue, Eve blamed everything on Satan. God didn't even ask Satan (the serpent) to give an account of himself because there was no one else on the planet to blame!

After the encounter, God pronounced the consequences upon the serpent (Satan), Eve and Adam, in that specific order. However, God started the questioning phase with Adam because God called Adam to account, since Adam was ultimately responsible for his family. It's interesting to note that God started the punishment phase in the order of their guilt: first Satan, then Eve, followed by Adam.

Our study begins in [Genesis 3:14-20](#), which can be a little controversial, especially since it relates to the roles of husbands and wives, as God pronounces consequences upon them for their sin. Everyone seems to love the first part because God addresses the devil, and everyone is happy about the fact that Satan gets his just reward. It's as though he was the school bully who beats kids up and takes their lunch money. There isn't a person alive who doesn't want to see the school bully get what's coming to him, and God gives it to Satan!

The first three words of punishment God speaks to Satan are: *"Cursed are you!"* God not only curses Satan, but he also curses the ground. He doesn't curse Adam or Eve, only in the sense that they suffer under the curse of sin, which results in death.

The Bible makes it clear in [Deuteronomy 11:26-28](#), Moses told the people of Israel: *"See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse - the blessing if you obey the commands of the Lord your God that I am giving you today; the curse if you disobey the commands of the Lord your God..."*

It is important to note - Praise the Lord - that God provides a reverse for the curse! Paul, in [Galatians 3:13](#), said, *"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.'"*

Satan

1. [Genesis 3:14-15](#) - *"So the Lord God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, " 'Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.' "* "
2. God's curse is divided into two parts.
 - a. The first part (vs. 14) is directed to the natural being - snakes.
 - i. God turned the curse of the serpent into a symbol, and a reminder of just how evil and deceptive Satan was.
 - ii. The snakes of the world are constant reminders of God's divine judgment upon Satan.

- iii. Most people have a dislike and fear of snakes, because God put this fear in us as a constant reminder of the evil of Satan and God's divine judgment upon him.
 - 1. Snakes apparently had legs or they walked upright, because God's curse not demands that they will forever "*crawl on their belly.*"
 - 2. We get the expression "Bite the dust" from God's judgment that they "*eat dust*" from that moment on.
- b. The second part (vs. 15) is directed to the supernatural being - Satan.
 - i. The Hebrew word for "*enmity*" is *eybah*, which means "hatred/hostility."
 - ii. This indicates to us that Satan thought he could team up with the woman to create an army against the Lord.
 - iii. It seems that he was thinking he could get Eve on his side, then, as she had children, they would form a force against God, however, God stopped that plan before it got started.

Women

- 3. **Genesis 3:16a** - "*To the woman he said, 'I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children.'*"
 - a. The woman's punishment centers on marriage and motherhood, which will bring a mixture of joy and frustration for women in the roles of mother and wife.
- 4. Motherhood/Children
 - a. Apparently childbirth was originally supposed to be a pain-free experience!
 - b. The Hebrew word for "*pain,*" which is used twice in the verse, can be translated "sorrow."
 - c. It would now be the case that having children would not only be physically painful, but raising children and investing in their lives, worrying about them, and crying over them would be emotionally painful, too.
 - d. Being a mother can be both rewarding and painful, and yet, children will be the longing of every woman.
 - e. A great deal of a woman's thoughts, joys, dreams, desires, fulfillment, as well as heartaches, pain, anxiety, frustration and sorrow will revolve around motherhood and children.
- 5. Marriage/Husband
 - a. There will be joy and frustration in marriage, just like the area of motherhood and children.

- b. **Genesis 3:16b** - “ *Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.* ”
 - i. This does not mean what you might think.
 - 1. This is the same Hebrew phrase found in **Genesis 4:7** - “*...it desires to have you...*”
 - 2. The meaning in this verse is that sin wants to master you, rule you, and dominate you.
 - ii. This verse literally reads: “*Your desire will be to rule over your husband, and he will rule over you.*”
 - 1. There will be a tendency for wives to repeat the pattern of Eve, which is to rule over their husband.
 - a. A few common ways women try to control their husbands include nagging, crying and sex.
 - i. A wife can wear down her husband by nagging.
 - ii. A wife can guilt her husband by crying.
 - iii. A wife can manipulate her husband with sex.
 - 2. God’s calling for men in this passage is to be loving, courageous and masculine leaders in their home, as well a spiritual leader who will love, protect and pray for their wives.
 - 3. God is calling men to take their wives with one hand and the sword of the Spirit in the other hand, which will enable him to slay the dragon in their home.
 - i. This is what she wants and what God wants, too.

Men

- 6. **Genesis 3:17-19** - “*To Adam he said, ‘Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, “ ‘You must not eat of it,’ ” ‘Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.’ ”*
- 7. Notice that God settles things by saying that he fashioned Adam from the dirt and now, because he sinned, he is going back to the dirt.
- 8. It’s important to see that God’s punishment upon men is not work, because God’s design for men was to work, which is why men instinctively get value from their work.
 - a. **Genesis 2:15** - “*The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.*”

- b. Work brings a sense of accomplishment, satisfaction and worth, which is why it's terribly distressing to a man when he is out of work, because he feels like he has lost some of his personal dignity.
- c. The punishment God gives is not work itself, it's the toilsome, painful part he adds, when he says, "... *through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life... [by] the sweat of your brow.*"
- d. The bottom line is that for men, their work will never be done.
- e. It was God's intent that work would be enjoyable and supplemental to the day, not today's all-consuming part of life that brings with it both fulfillment and frustration.

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [Genesis 3:14-20](#) to provide an overview for this study.
3. Read and discuss [Deuteronomy 11:26-28](#), concerning the blessing that comes from obedience and the "*curse*" that comes from disobedience.
 - a. Allow the people in your group to share examples of times when obedience was rewarded and disobedience brought a penalty/punishment.
 - b. Share other examples in Scripture that God is true to his word when it comes to obedience and disobedience.
4. Review and discuss God's punishment for Satan regarding the physical and the supernatural. (See #2 above)
5. Read and discuss [Genesis 3:16b](#). (See #5b above)
 - a. Women
 - i. Share your experiences about times when you recognized that you had attempted or succeeded in taking an improper leadership role in the home.
 - ii. Allow the mothers in your group the opportunity to share their perspective regarding both the rewarding and the painful aspects of motherhood.
 - b. Men
 - i. Pastor Gary said it's God's call for husbands to be the spiritual leader in their home.
 1. What would it look like for you to do as he suggested in his statement that men were called to take their wives with one

- hand and the sword of the Spirit (the Bible) in the other hand?
2. How have you been able to find the proper balance in your marriage concerning being the leader in the home?
6. God's curse on Adam included a change in the meaning and the purpose of work in a man's life. ([Genesis 3:17-19](#))
 - a. How has a correct understanding of the original purpose for work in a man's life helped you know more about the reason men get a fulfillment and a satisfaction from their work? ([Genesis 2:15](#))
 7. Read and discuss [Genesis 3:15](#) and [Galatians 3:19](#), focusing on the first Messianic Promise in the Bible and Christ being the "Seed" of the promise.
 8. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: understand God's desire for men to be the spiritual leaders in their home and marriage; remember to thank God for providing a "reverse for the curse!" ([Galatians 3:13](#)). NOTE: If you have single moms in your group, please remember to choose your words carefully when talking about men being the spiritual leaders in marriage and the home. Encourage these women to know that the Lord will help them as they lead their families.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).