

Adam and Eve: The Rebellion of Mankind

Passages: Gen 1:26–31; 2:5–25; 3:1–24

Memory Verse

“For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.” (1 Corinthians 15:21–22)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
1. Adam and Eve’s rebellion was born out of a desire to be like God. 2. Sin separates us from God. 3. As punishment, the Lord cast man out of the garden. But even as He did so, He had already prepared a solution for our salvation in Jesus Christ.	1. God is just. 2. God is all-knowing.	1. Humility is an important aspect of obedience to God’s commands. 2. Learn how to mend our relationship with God.

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- A. Man’s Purpose
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- 1. Learning to Obey God’s Commands
- 2. Mending Our Broken Relationship with God

Memory Verse

Conclusion: We should learn from Adam and Eve and do our best to overcome the desires within us in order to avoid disobeying God, as well as accept God’s chastisement when we go astray. Then, we can instead be more like the Lord Jesus and can obtain life.

Spiritual Teachings

Introduction

Imagine that you get to spend one hour in a room with the smartest people in the world, such as Albert Einstein, Leonardo da Vinci, Galileo, or Isaac Newton. What would you want to learn from them? What would you ask them? (*Write their questions on one side of the board.*)

Now, imagine that you have the chance to spend one hour with God, where He'll answer anything that you ask. What would you want to know? What would you ask Him? (*Write their questions on the other side of the board and connect any common questions between the two sides. You may want to share your questions as well.*)

Sometimes we want to ask God questions that are for our curiosity, such as what happened to the dinosaurs, or ask questions about events in history. Sometimes our questions are more personal, such as why we suffer or struggle. But the most valuable questions, the questions that we should be asking God, are the ones that can propel our faith forward. For example, have you ever thought to ask God what your purpose is for Him?

A. Man's Purpose

To look at what God originally intended for man to do, we need to go back to the beginning and study Genesis. There were three purposes that God wanted man to fulfill.

1. Our first purpose

"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.' " (Gen 1:28)

In this passage, the Lord commanded man to be fruitful and multiply, and to have dominion over the earth. But what exactly do these instructions mean? The Lord wants us to grow as a family and as a nation. But there is a greater depth to this command: to grow as a family or a nation means taking on greater responsibilities, both as individuals and as a group.

Physically, we are responsible for taking care of our family, and ensuring everyone is healthy, whole, and happy. Spiritually, we need to help each other grow in faith, and also reach out and bring others into God's fold. To grow as part of God's nation, we have the responsibility of hearing and walking within God's word (Isa 2:2–3), while also bringing others to salvation. Moreover, the Lord commanded us to have "dominion" over the earth. He has given the earth to our charge, but this means that we also have the responsibility of taking care of God's creation.

2. Our second purpose

"Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it." (Gen 2:15)

From this verse, it is clear that even in paradise, God intended for man to perform some work. Earlier in the chapter, the Bible also notes that "the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no man to till the ground" (Gen 2:5). The garden of Eden was a space where God would dwell with man and walk with him (Gen 3:8). This made it a sacred space

where man could not only work to tend it, but also dwell with God. Today, this sacred space is in our hearts, and in the church. Therefore, our second purpose is to tend to the spiritual gardens in our hearts and in the church. We have the responsibility of carefully tending to both of these so that God's presence may dwell within us and among the members.

3. Our third purpose

“And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’ ” (Gen 2:16–17)

The last purpose that we were given was to obey the Lord's commands and keep them completely. God could have given Adam and Eve a hundred commands, or a single command. Either way, their purpose was the same: to wholeheartedly follow them. Because they didn't, the life they knew changed completely with the entry of sin into the world. Today, God has given us a fighting chance to dwell side by side with the Lord just as Adam and Eve once did. To seize that chance, we need to learn to follow God's commands as best we can in our daily lives.

B. The Rebellion of Man

To rebel against God means seeking to go beyond what God has already given us. What was it that Adam and Eve were seeking? How exactly did they want to go beyond what God had given them? We're probably familiar with the story, but let's read in detail what happened in Genesis 3:1–19.

First, let's list the main sequence of events that occurred.

The serpent...

1. **Questioned** God's command by quoting Him inaccurately (v. 1).
2. **Deceived** Eve by twisting God's words and deliberately misinterpreting the consequences (vv. 2–4).

Adam and Eve...

3. Were **tempted** to be equal with God (v. 5).
4. **Submitted** to the lust of the eyes (“pleasant to the eyes”), lust of the flesh (“saw that the tree was good for food”), and the pride of life (“a tree desirable to make one wise”) (v. 6; cf. 1 Jn 2:16).
5. Felt **shame** and **fear** for the first time in their lives, because of their realization and their disobedience (vv. 7–10).

The Lord...

6. **Confronted** their guilt and wrongdoing (vv. 11–13).
7. **Chastised** and **punished** the serpent, Adam, and Eve for their sin (vv. 14–19).

From this sequence of events, we can see that it began with a simple question from the serpent. The question may have been simple, but it led man to sin by tempting them to become equal with God. They wanted to become like Him. Let's read James 1:13–15. How does the sequence parallel the progression that James lists in these verses?

1. Tempted by desire: Adam and Eve were tempted to be equal with God.
2. Desire gives birth to sin: Adam and Eve submitted to their temptation and broke God's command.
3. Sin brings forth death: Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden of Eden and no longer walked with God. Sin became a barrier, blocking mankind from life.

From these verses, and from examining Adam and Eve's downfall, it's clear that sin is always born out of some sort of desire. In Adam and Eve's case, they desired to be equal to God. We need to learn to control and overcome our worldly desires so that we don't succumb to sin. This means learning to be satisfied with what God has already given us.

C. The Consequences of Rebellion

As a result of their disobedience, God gave different punishments to the serpent, Adam, and Eve. However, in all three, we can see that their disobedience affected not only themselves, but all of creation, including the earth itself. Let's first read the serpent's punishment in Genesis 3:14–15. Of the three, the serpent received the harshest punishment. He was the only one to be cursed directly by God, and his pronouncement was death: the serpent would bruise the heel of the woman's descendant, which is only a temporary injury. On the other hand, her descendant would bruise his head. Ultimately, the serpent would suffer defeat.

Let's continue reading the Lord's punishment for Eve, recorded in verse 16. Because of her disobedience, the joy of childbirth would now be marred by pain. And on top of this, the Lord pronounced that "[her] desire shall be for [her] husband, and he shall rule over [her]." The word *desire* here is also used later in Genesis 4:7, when the Lord warns Cain that sin *desires* to rule over him. Eve would no longer live harmoniously with Adam but would now try to control her husband. Their marriage would now be tarnished by a battle of wills.

Now let's move on to Adam. Let's read Genesis 3:17–19. Tending the garden of Eden might have been pleasant work to do, but now the earth would bring forth "thorns and thistles." Adam would now have to labor and toil over the earth. The Lord also announced the coming death that He already warned them of, if they were to eat the fruit: "For dust you are, and to dust you shall return." Mankind would now experience death.

Separation from God through Sin

While in the garden, Adam and Eve were able to walk with God every day, side by side. Upon being driven out of the garden, the most tragic loss they experienced was that they were no longer able to dwell side by side with their Creator in peace and unity. But why exactly is this the case? One of God's characteristics is His holiness. Because He is holy, He cannot abide sin. He is also just and will punish sinners. This means that we cannot be with God if we also have sin. Therefore, the worst consequence of their rebellion was separation from God, not just for themselves, but for all of mankind.

Our Basic Belief: Salvation through Jesus Christ

You may have noticed that the Lord made the first mention of Jesus Christ in the serpent's punishment. Let's read Genesis 3:15. The "Seed" of the woman is referring to Jesus Christ. From this, we can see that even before He cast them out of the garden, the Lord had already prepared a solution for mankind! The Lord added that the serpent would "bruise His heel," foreshadowing Satan's repeated attempts to defeat Christ during His life on earth. On the other hand, the Lord would bruise the serpent's head, which is a much more serious injury. This foreshadowed Satan's ultimate defeat in Jesus Christ's resurrection. This also means that Satan has already been defeated! We are simply waiting for the announcement in Jesus' second coming.

Let's read Romans 5:19. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous." Adam's disobedience made us all sinners, but the Lord's obedience would free us all of sin. 1 Corinthians 15:21–22 also says, "For since by man came

death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.” Adam may have rebelled against the Lord and disobeyed Him, but Jesus Christ overcame the death that Adam brought because He “humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross” (Phil 2:8). This is the very reason we are all here today, in this classroom: so that instead of dying, we can receive eternal life in Christ, who has already defeated Satan.

Check for Understanding

- 1. What are the three purposes of man?** To be fruitful and multiply, and have dominion over the earth; to tend and keep the garden; and to obey God’s commands.
- 2. The Lord commanded man to be fruitful and multiply. What exactly do these instructions mean?** Physically, we are responsible for taking care of our family, and ensuring everyone is healthy, whole, and happy. Spiritually, we need to help each other grow in faith, and also reach out and bring others into God’s fold.
- 3. How does mankind’s second purpose apply to us today?** We must tend to the spiritual gardens in our hearts and in the church, so that God’s presence may dwell within us, and among the members.
- 4. What is the first step of temptation?** When you are drawn and enticed by desire.
- 5. What particular desire tempted Adam and Eve to eat the fruit?** The desire to be like God; they were tempted by the pride of life.
- 6. Although He was casting them out of the garden, how did the Lord have mercy on man?** He had already prepared a plan and a solution for us, a better one than Adam: salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. God even mentioned this coming solution in the punishment of the serpent.

Life Application

1. Learning to Obey God’s Commands

As we learned from today’s lesson, desires give birth to sin, which leads to death. Therefore, it is important for us to avoid following the ways of the world, and instead, obediently follow God’s word, which leads us to life. What do you think is a key “ingredient” to learning to keep God’s commands, especially the ones that are more difficult for us to keep? (*Allow students to brainstorm.*) There are several factors, but a very important prerequisite to obeying God is humility.

When we find one of God’s commands difficult to follow, it is often because we have our own thoughts or desires that we want to follow instead. This is a result of a lack of humility. Our decisions are no longer about what God wants, but what we want. We have forgotten what God has given us and are instead caught up with our own selfish cravings.

One way to maintain our humility and counter our selfishness is by reminding ourselves of the “positives” behind God’s commands. Many of His commands seem quite strict or even negative to us. However, God’s intent behind all of His commands is for our own good! They are in place so that we can complete the work that He has given us and so that we can receive His blessings. Let’s list some commands that we struggle to obey and look for the “positives” about them. Why did God give us this command? Why should we obey it? In what way does this command benefit or help me?

(Teachers: Have the students draw the following table in their notebooks and help them to fill it in as a class. Examples have been added to help you get started. If you know of any particular problems that your students struggle with, then you may want to look up relevant verses ahead of time.)

Command that I struggle	The “positive” in keeping this command
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to obey	
<i>Listening to my parents and honoring them.</i>	<i>God has promised to bless me if I honor my parents (Eph 6:1–3).</i>
<i>Keeping the Sabbath from Friday night to Saturday.</i>	<i>This gives me time to put aside the things of the world and place my complete focus on God and His blessings. It allows me to distance myself from my problems and clear my mind for a day.</i>
<i>Fasting prayer.</i>	<i>This helps me overcome temptations (Mt 26:41) and strengthen myself spiritually.</i>
<i>Marriage within the Lord.</i>	<i>This will help me preserve my faith and relationship with God, and will give me not only a physical partner, but also a spiritual partner so that we can both support each other’s faith and help each other to avoid sin (2 Cor 6:14; Eccl 4:10).</i>
<i>Living in peace with others.</i>	<i>This helps me to avoid making rash decisions or mistakes against man and God (Ps 37:8), while being mad at others just wastes my energy! Living in peace will also help me see God (Heb 12:14).</i>

2. Mending Our Broken Relationship with God

Adam and Eve broke their relationship with God because they became convinced that their way was better than His way. However, their mistakes didn’t stop there. God gave them a chance to come forward. He is all-knowing and omnipresent, but the Bible records that God called out saying, “Where are you?” (Gen 3:9), and later, “Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?” (Gen 3:11).

Despite this chance to repent, Adam’s first reaction was to hide, and his first words were words of excuse. Then, when confronted with his sin, Adam passed the blame, saying, “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.” It was not simply Eve’s fault that he sinned; he was also blaming God for giving Eve to be with him! Adam didn’t realize that hiding our sins or passing the blame doesn’t fix our relationship with God. Let’s compare Adam and Eve’s actions to the actions that we ought to take in order to mend things between us and God.

	How did Adam and Eve act?	How should we act instead?
1.	They didn’t obey God’s commandment.	Obey God’s commands.
Questions to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have I ever disobeyed God because I thought His commands were “wrong,” “too strict,” or maybe “old-fashioned”? • Have I ever decided that following God’s will is too troublesome? • Do I tend to prioritize academics or hobbies over my church duties? • How can I remind myself to make decisions based on God’s will instead of my own desires? 		
2.	They tried to hide from Him.	Come to God in prayer with respect for His omnipotence and omniscience.
Questions to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have I ever tried to hide my sins from friends, family, or even from God? • Have I ever avoided prayers because I knew that I had done something wrong? • When I make a bad decision, is it always my first instinct to cover it up somehow? • What should my first reaction be when I realize that I have committed a sin against God? 		
3.	They tried to defend their actions.	Confess our sins with humility and accept that we

		made a mistake.
<p>Questions to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I immediately argue, get defensive, or become angry when someone asks if I made a mistake? • Do I constantly make up excuses when I am in the wrong? • What should my prayer be like when I have made a mistake against God? 		
4.	Adam blamed Eve, and ultimately blamed God as well for placing Eve in his life.	Repent by seeking to change our ways, rather than passing blame.
<p>Questions to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I make the same mistakes over and over again without fixing the root cause? • What is the content of my prayers? Am I always asking for blessings? Or do I spend time apologizing for things that I have done against God’s will? • What does it mean to truly repent? • Consider any sins that you have committed recently. How can you change your lifestyle to avoid repeating the same mistake? 		

When we are scolded or chastised for something we have done, it is normally our instinctive reaction to try to pass the blame to someone or something else. “It wasn’t my fault!” we might protest, or “It was because of this!” But when we receive chastisement from God, we should actually be giving thanks! Why do you think this is? Let’s read Hebrews 12:7–10.

This passage is teaching us that just like a parent who tells off their child, the Lord only chastises His own children. He disciplines those He loves. It isn’t because He hates us or wants us to suffer, but because He wants us to share in His holiness and receive His blessings. When we realize this, it is easier for us to accept that we have done wrong, and to seek to mend our relationship with God. Let’s read a testimony about a brother who was gently chastised by the Lord (his name has been changed to preserve his anonymity).

Testimony

Will was a good son and a good student, and he did quite well academically. He was elected as the head of his school's Maths Olympiad team and received great grades in all of his classes. In addition to this, Will had always thought he was close to God. He attended church every week and served in any way that he could. Will felt like nothing could go wrong, and that life was great! However, because he was so used to doing well at school and in church, his faith became a “habit,” and he spiritually went on autopilot.

As a result, Will paid less attention to what he was doing at church, and spent less and less time praying and preparing for his duties. He also began to feel a certain joylessness each Sabbath. That was when the wake-up call began. Despite Will's best efforts, he did poorly on a test that was on his best subject. At first, he thought this was just a coincidence. He thought that he must have misread a question or simply hadn't been on top of his game that day. But then a couple weeks later, his teacher told him that he would be replaced as the head of his school's Maths Olympiad team.

Will was crushed. He went home and felt a fear in his heart he hadn't felt before. So, he knelt down to pray to God. As he was praying, he began to reflect on himself, and his conscience was pricked. Will realized that he had been so proud of his own “success” that he had been irresponsible with what God had entrusted to him at church. He felt ashamed, and bitterly repented to God.

That day, Will made the determination that he would return to the basics in his faith. He would start with his heart by focusing on prayer, and on doing everything for God with a heart of servitude. Will realized that even though his studies were important, he shouldn't let them overtake God as a priority. God's discipline through the events that took place humbled him and made him realize what was most important in his life. Soon enough, Will found that once he changed his mindset, he was able to go to church with a heart of praise and joy.

– Anonymous

In this testimony, we can see a few key points that led to his return to God. He first had fear in his heart, then his first act was to kneel down to pray. And as he prayed, his conscience was pricked. These are indicators of someone who wants to mend their relationship with God. Have you ever felt these before? Based on Will's experience, what should our attitude be when God chastises us? What can you do to demonstrate true repentance for something you've done wrong recently?

Memory Verse

"For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive." (1 Corinthians 15:21–22)

Meaning

In this verse, Paul compares two sons of God: Adam, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Adam's disobedience to God's command brought death into the world, meaning all of us are born into sin. We had no chance of escaping it on our own, so God offered a solution for our sakes. Generations later, Adam's descendant Jesus Christ overcame death on our behalf. His resurrection paved the way to our own resurrection – through Him, we can overcome death.

Conclusion

Adam and Eve's rebellion against the Lord was born out of a desire to be equal to Him. We should learn from their actions and do our best to overcome the desires within us in order to avoid disobeying God, as well as accept God's chastisement when we go astray. Then, we can instead be more like the Lord Jesus, who was humble and obedient to God's commands. In doing so, we can obtain life.

Lesson 3 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What does the memory verse teach us about Adam's sin and God's solution?
Adam's disobedience brought death into the world, but God offered us salvation through Jesus Christ's obedience.
2. "Then, when _____ has _____, it gives _____ to _____; and _____, when it is full-grown, brings forth _____." (James 1:15)
desire, conceived, birth, sin, sin, death
3. Pick one of the three purposes of mankind and explain it in as much detail as you can, including how we should be enacting this purpose today.
See Spiritual Teachings, Section A: Man's Purpose.
4. What were Adam and Eve's reactions when God asked them about what they had done? Compare their actions to what we ought to do when confronted by sin.
They first tried to hide. Then Eve blamed the serpent, while Adam blamed not only Eve, but also God for placing Eve in his life. When confronted by sin, we should instead see and accept that we have done wrong, then confess our wrongdoing to God and seek to repent by changing our ways.
5. What commandments do you often resist? Why do you think this is? What personal desire of yours is conflicting with this particular command?
Personal answers.