

STUDY GUIDE

The Chapel

"The Garden"

GENESIS 3:1-15

12/03/2017

MAIN POINT

Man's temptation and fall has consequences in our lives, and it is a lesson in how we can better face the temptations that come our way.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

From the following pairs, which unhealthy food is more tempting to you: chocolate cake or french fries? Pizza or ice cream? Potato chips or a smoothie? Chips and queso or donuts and coffee?

Think about the progression of your mind when you are tempted by unhealthy foods. What does that show you about the nature of temptation? How does it work?

What are some things that help you overcome the temptation to eat those foods? Do these principles apply to other kinds of temptation as well? Why or why not?

Temptation comes in all different shapes and sizes, and some are more destructive than others, but all are pleasing to the senses. The temptations we face are nothing new. Temptation has been a battle of every human who has ever existed.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GENESIS 3:1-7.

What do we learn about the serpent here?

Compare Genesis 2:16-17 with this passage. What did God really say? What did Eve change? What contradictions and lies did the serpent make?

Name one example of a way we change or redefine God's commands today. Have you ever considered those detours from God's Word as a ploy of Satan? Why or why not?

In his attempt to deceive and tempt, the serpent (Satan) directly contradicted God's words, cast doubt on God's sincerity, and

spoke partial truth. As this conversation unfolded, Eve's own doubts emerged in the form of her adding a harsh exaggeration to God's word. Eve belittled God's word by adding to it. Her addition to the word of God misrepresented God as a harsh taskmaster.

Do you think it is fair to say the aim of every temptation is to make you think you should "be like God" (v. 5)? Why or why not?

What was Adam's role in this? What changed between Adam and Eve in verse 7?

When Satan can't get us to undermine God's Word through outright unbelief, he will try to get us to undermine it through misplaced trust. One of the great dangers we face when handling the Word of God is the temptation to place ourselves in the seat of authority over it. Subtle skepticism can become outright rebellion. Satan implied that God is a liar. He undermined the character of God by leading Adam and Eve to believe that God was withholding goodness from them.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GENESIS 3:8-13.

How did Adam and Eve feel in relationship to God after giving into temptation?

What excuses did Adam and Eve give for their disobedience? Why do you think they did that?

When are you tempted to make excuses or divert blame onto someone or something else?

People still blame their sins on Satan, their environment, parents, friends, or someone or something else. While temptation comes to us from many sources, we alone decide to disobey God; thus we are accountable for our sins (see Rom. 2:3-11; 14:12; 1 Pet. 4:5).

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GENESIS 3:14-24.

What were the consequences for Adam for giving into temptation? What were the consequences for Eve? Name some ways we personally experience the effects of these curses even today.

What do these verses reveal about the relationship between God and Satan?

How was God already working out His plan for redemption (vv. 15,20-24)?

Sin drastically changed Adam and Eve's lives (and the lives of their descendants) forever. Their punishment included death. God sent them away. Their sin had driven a wedge between themselves and God. Their previous life was forever gone. Sin entered into the world and the consequence of sin entered as well: death. Still, God was already working His plan of redemption. The tree of life was blocked (life on sin-cursed earth will not last forever) and the Messiah would be victorious over Satan.

Read Matthew 4:1-11. Contrast how Eve responded to the serpent with how Jesus responded to the serpent. What does this teach us for our own lives?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What is the main takeaway for you from today's discussion about temptation?

In your own life, where might you be tempted to blur the lines of sin, to downgrade the issue, or even redefine it as something other than sin?

How will you arm yourself in advance to meet those temptations? How can we help each other?

PRAY

Thank God that His grace through Jesus' death and resurrection covers the ongoing curse of Adam and Eve's sin. Ask Him for His strength to stand strong in the face of temptation.

COMMENTARY

GENESIS 3:1-24

The woman's claim goes beyond anything recorded in God's instructions to Adam. Therefore it seems that Adam had given his wife an additional command beyond what God said, or else Eve herself exaggerated the command as Satan tempted her to view God as selfish and overly restrictive. The serpent, recognizing the woman's confusion, found a point of attack. Knowing that the woman would not die by merely touching the fruit, he boldly contradicted what she had reported to be God's command. He then skillfully lied by distorting God's word, implying that God had prohibited people from eating the fruit only to keep them from becoming as knowledgeable as He. The woman was now fully deceived.

Since the woman did not die when she touched the fruit—in contradiction to what she had thought God said (v. 3.)—she ate it. Though Adam was with her at the time, he did nothing to stop her. Perhaps he wanted to eat of it as much as the woman did, but fearing the consequences, used his wife as a “guinea pig” to make sure it would not cause instant death. As the serpent had indicated, the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew, but instead of producing godlike power, the knowledge brought only a sense of human inadequacy, fear, and shame.

God took the initiative in reaching out to sinful humanity. This pattern—humanity sinning, then God seeking out sinners—becomes the primary theme of the rest of the Bible. Its ultimate expression is found in Jesus Christ, who came to seek and to save people alienated from God because of their sin; in Him God once again walked on the earth in search of sinners.

When Adam heard God, he was afraid. Rather than walking with God as righteous men of later generations would do, Adam hid from Him. Through the use of two direct questions God brought Adam to accountability for his sin (v. 11). God does not overlook sin, but He can be gently firm in confronting it. Adam answered neither of God's questions. Instead he sought to shift the blame for his sin first to the woman, and then to God. The woman passed the blame to the serpent and admitted that prior to eating, she was deceived (v. 13).

Though accountability began with God's confrontation of Adam, judgment began with the serpent. Because of the serpent's key role (being used of Satan) in bringing sin into the human experience, it would be permanently consigned to the position of ultimate shame, under the foot. Hostility between the first woman and the serpent would be passed on to future generations. This verse is the first foretelling of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Even though the woman had been deceived into eating the forbidden fruit, she was still held accountable for her act. Two penalties were imposed; both struck at the heart of a woman's roles in life. More than would have been the case had sin not entered creation, bearing children would add to the sum of anguish in the universe. Marriage would also be marred; though the woman's desire would be for her husband, sin would mar God's plan for marriage and create tormenting inequality and subjugation. The latter is a description of the ravaging effect of sin on a husband-wife relationship, not a prescription for abusing one's wife. Because Adam listened to and obeyed his wife's voice in preference to what God commanded (2:17), a curse would strike at the heart of a fundamental relationship in his life as well. Adam's relationship with the ground would now be forever damaged by sin. All the days of his life he would experience painful labor as he worked to bring forth the fruit of the earth.

The new name Adam gave his wife emphasizes the woman's life-giving role that counteracts the curse of sin, which is death (v. 20). Yet the divine order calls for a reciprocity exhibited in male servant leadership and female submission, both of which are modeled in Jesus Himself. By making clothing out of skins, the Lord God graciously provided for humanity's need in a way superior to what Adam and Eve had done with fig leaves. Because of sin, people now knew good and evil experientially (v. 22). Since the gift of life was directly tied to obedience, man's sin meant that the penalty of death must be enforced.