



YEAR 3—The God Who Pursues Relationship: A Story of God's People

Module 1—Genesis Part 1

Lesson 3: God's People Rebel—Genesis 3

BIBLICAL REFLECTION

(A theological and biblical reflection on today's Scripture passage.)

INTRODUCTION

It can be difficult to engage a narrative we've heard about since we were little children. Many of those who aren't even Christians have heard at various points in their life the story of humankind's rebellion. Adam, Eve, and the fruit they ate is a staple to the storyline of our world.

It is imperative, as with all narratives in the Bible, that we avoid the temptation to read the narrative with an "I already know how this story goes" mentality, as opposed to an openness to read the narrative afresh.

God gave humanity the ability to make decisions for themselves. God wouldn't and didn't create human beings to function in robotic nature, pre-programming them to make certain decisions. We are not computer software-like—binary in nature. Rather, we are more like a free-form sketch that an artist continues to draw as the picture comes to mind. We, therefore, were created to love God back. We were created with the will or ability to choose for ourselves who, why, and how we would love. It is essential to our faith that the people in our churches know that humanity was created with the ability to make the right choices and that God loved us so much that when we were created we were created with a free will.

"Satan" is one of the few words in the English language that has ancient Hebrew origins. We know that the serpent was called "crafty," most likely meaning astute or sneaky. This word crafty is also to be understood as the opposite of naiveté. We know that this serpent is to be understood as a wild animal. We know from the Genesis 3 narrative that the serpent distorted the truth, tempting Adam and Eve. This story contains many fascinating elements such as a piece of fruit and a talking serpent. However, the focus of this story is on the fact that humanity believed the lie of the serpent and broke God's heart. They choose to usurp God's authority by deliberately disobeying God's command not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

GOD'S STORY

The Lord was moving about the garden. Because of the sound of the Lord as He walked in the cool of the day, (3:8) Adam and Eve hide. (More on Adam and Eve's hiding in the next two sections below.)

Did God really walk in the garden? Most likely God did not literally walk in the Garden. It is more likely that the "sound" Adam and Eve heard was the presence of God. Heightened by their decision to sin, it was as if Adam and Eve really heard the sound of God's footsteps.

When Adam and Eve chose to exercise their free will and usurp God's authority the world was no longer whole as God had created it. The relationship that God had desired from humankind was short-lived. Instead of choosing to love God, humankind chose to love self. This is a daily struggle for us today. It's a Me vs. God mentality. We are bombarded by temptation and things that draw our attention away from God. It is God's plan for us to choose God over self. We see in today's story, Adam and Eve chose self over God.

OUR STORY

When Adam and Eve learn of their nakedness (3:7-10), they are overwhelmed with feelings of shame. Shame is the very emotion that drives Adam and Eve to put on clothes. Their eyes are open to their nakedness, but also to their naked self—the real self—their now true identity.

From this naked self, Adam and Eve feel for the first time in human history what shame feels like. Adam and Eve are now painfully aware of the feelings that have arisen from their collision with an improper, dishonorable act of rebellion.

This feeling of disgrace drives Adam and Eve to take cover and hide; not because they had no clothes on, but because their now true heart was exposed. Shame is personal and it can only bring regret into reality.

OTHERS' STORY

This shame, and the regret that comes with it, causes Adam to hold both God and Eve responsible for the disobedience (3:12). Adam declares it is God's fault since he made the women from his rib and put her with him. He also blames Eve for being the one to pass it on. Eve also blames someone. She blames the serpent. In both cases the natural tendency to feel shame produces the byproduct to blame others and attribute fault with everyone but self.

We learn to blame others from a very early age as young children. I can remember numerous times when I would blame one of my brothers for something that I did—but only after I caught and felt shame. Our disruptive desire to blame others, deflecting responsibility for our own actions, is a natural act in a broken world.

THE WORLD'S STORY

We live in a broken world no doubt. The war, injustices, violence, racism, slavery, crime, jealousy, hatred, and so on that can be seen throughout civilization is a direct result of the fall of humankind (3:15). There are three levels in which humankind will battle with evil: a personal level, a societal level and on the world at large. Conflict of all kinds will keep the world from peace.