

03

SESSION THREE

Human Rebellion

SESSION SUMMARY

In this session, we will look at humanity’s “fall into sin.” We will see that our rebellion against God begins by distrusting the goodness of His Word. Sin ruptures our relationship with God and with others, and then leads to devastating consequences in the world around us. Only God can save us from our sin and its consequences and empower us to battle sin as we live in His kingdom.

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 3:1-24

THE POINT

Sin corrupts the goodness of God's creation.

INTRO/STARTER 5-10 MINUTES

Option 1

In the previous sessions we learned that once God created the world, He created human beings, male and female, in His image. But after preparing a place for both Adam and Eve to enjoy, we witness in this session that a rebellion would take place, and as a result, God would exile them from the garden of Eden.

- **What if Adam and Eve had never sinned when they lived in the garden of Eden?**

Challenge students to really think about this. While they're thinking, encourage them to refer to the specific curses God placed on Adam and Eve after they disobeyed (Gen. 3:16-19).

Option 2

Separate students into three-person teams. Each team will need at least one boy and one girl. Assign each student one of three roles: talk show host, Adam, and Eve. Lead the talk show host (radio or TV) to prepare some questions to interview Adam and Eve. Instruct Adam and Eve to study the passages from today's session to prepare to answer the host's questions. (They should not work on these together.)

Allow students a few minutes to conduct their interviews. After each team has had the opportunity to present, discuss some of the highlights of the story as mentioned through the interviews.

HIS STORY

15-20 MINUTES

THE POINT

Sin corrupts the goodness of God's creation.

CHARACTERS

- **The Triune God:** Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- **Adam and Eve:** the first humans created by God in His image
- **Satan:** disguised as the serpent in the garden

PLOT

In the previous sessions we learned that God created the world and human beings, male and female, in His image. As a Father providing good things for His children, God gave Adam and Eve a good world to take care of and enjoy. Everything He made—sun, moon, stars, sea creatures, birds, trees, and fruit—all of it was good and all of it was for them. More importantly, God gave Himself in relationship and fellowship to the first people.

All was good, and all was well! In fact, as we've seen, God overlooked all that He had made and declared it to be "very good." It's hard to gain an accurate picture of this time given that the world we now know is not the way it was intended to be. But in the first two chapters of the Bible, things were exactly as they were meant to be. That is, until sin enters the stage in human history.

So what went wrong? What happened in the garden that would forever shape the world and humanity as we know them today? Let's turn to Genesis 3 and see exactly what happened and the damage sin caused to the good work of creation.

SIN LEADS TO A DISTRUST OF GOD'S WORD

As we begin to read the opening verses in chapter 3, we see that a drastic change is about to take place between humanity's relationship with their Creator. And at the heart of this change lies an issue of trust—trusting the goodness of God and His Word.

As we are about to see, human rebellion leads us to distrust the goodness of God's Word. This is at the heart of human sinfulness, so it's no surprise that Satan (disguised as a serpent) chose this line of temptation in the garden of Eden. Let's read:

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. (Gen. 3:1-7)

The serpent begins by introducing doubt. Did God really say...? He's not denying what God has said, of course, but he is making God's Word up for debate. Are you serious? Did He really, truly say that to you?

Notice also how the serpent twists God's Word. God told Adam and Eve that they could eat from any tree except one, but the serpent changes the prohibition: “Did God really say, ‘You can't eat from any tree in the garden?’”

TIMELINE

THE FALL

Sin enters the story and distorts God's good creation.

CAIN AND ABEL

The depth of humanity's fall is revealed in the heinous murder between two brothers.

NOAH

Judgment and graciousness are found in the flood.

99 ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES

Sin as Rebellion

Because the Bible portrays people as responsible beings, expected to respond in faith and obedience to God's revelation, the Bible often portrays sin in terms of defiance and rebellion toward God the King. Isaiah 1:2 is one of many passages that describes sin in terms of rebellion against God: “I have raised children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against Me.” Seen in this light, sin is personal and willful disobedience, the raising of a clinched fist toward the One who made us.

The serpent didn't first attack with a statement, but with a question. His goal was to lead Adam and Eve to doubt God's goodness. He followed the question with an outright lie: "You will not surely die." Sin begins with doubting God's goodness and ends with denying God's Word.

- **Of course, Adam and Eve aren't the only people who have doubted the goodness and truthfulness of God and His Word. When have you ever questioned the truthfulness of God's Word? (p. 22, PSG)**

In the end, the serpent wanted Adam and Eve to think they were missing out and that God was withholding happiness from them. And so Eve took the fruit, and Adam followed.

This was a simple act of disobedience that carried with it unimaginable consequences. What happened in the garden was not merely a mistake; it was a rebellion.

GOING FURTHER WITH THE STORY

"Sin lives in a costume; that's why it's so hard to recognize. The fact that sin looks so good is one of the things that makes it so bad. In order for it to do its evil work, it must present itself as something that is anything but evil. Life in a fallen world is like attending the ultimate masquerade party. Impatient yelling wears the costume of a zeal for truth. Lust can masquerade as a love for beauty. Gossip does its evil work by living in the costume of concern and prayer. Craving for power and control wears the mask of biblical leadership. Fear of man gets dressed up as a servant heart. The pride of always being right masquerades as a love for biblical wisdom. Evil simply doesn't present itself as evil, which is part of its draw. You'll never understand sin's sleight of hand until you acknowledge that the DNA of sin is deception. Now, what this means personally is that as sinners we are all very committed and gifted self-swindlers. ... We're all too skilled at looking at our own wrong and seeing good."

SIN LEADS TO BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS WITH GOD AND OTHERS

The fallout from Adam and Eve's sin began immediately. Their eyes were opened. Their rebellion caused them to have a new consciousness of their nakedness. Shame entered God's good world. The first couple realized that they were naked, and so they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.

And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that

you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" he man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." (Gen. 3:8-16)

Adam and Eve felt clothed before they exchanged the goodness of God's Word for lies. They had God's favor; they were unashamed, secure, and provided for. But when they questioned and doubted the goodness of God, they brought shame into our world. And with this favor gone, they felt naked.

Before their sin, Adam and Eve felt no shame, there was nothing to hide, and they could be completely vulnerable before God and with each other in complete safety. There were fully known and fully loved.

And even now, we long to be known and loved. But shame has infected all of our relationships. This is why you wonder: *What if someone I deeply care for learned how I really am on the inside? What if they knew the secret thoughts running through my mind every day? Would they still love me? Would they abandon me?*

God created us to be fully known and fully loved. But in our fallen state, we've convinced ourselves that the only way we can be loved is if we're not fully known. We believe it would be impossible for anyone to know the depths of who we are and still love us. That's why we hide.

But it's not just our relationship with God that has been broken. Our relationship with others has been shattered as well. The expression of sheer joy and excitement we saw in the previous chapter when Adam first saw Eve ("This one, at last, is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh") has been transformed into blame and enmity.

From this point forward, human relationships of all types will experience brokenness to some degree. Abuse, manipulation, and enmity have replaced the paradise that once characterized human relationships within the garden. But as we will see soon, there is hope yet for humanity.

TIMELINE

TOWER OF BABEL

Humanity's pride is relentless in seeking praise for itself; but God's glory will never be dethroned.

THE CALLING OF ABRAHAM

God establishes a covenant with Abraham.

ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

Abraham's faith is tested when commanded to sacrifice his son.

GOING FURTHER WITH THE STORY

Genesis 3:17-24 also reveals another relationship that has been distorted because of sin—the relationship between humanity and God’s good creation. Thus, our rebelling against God not only corrupted our relationships with God and each other, but it also shattered the perfect peace of God’s good world.

God called us to fill the earth (Gen. 1:28). But now this task will come through a woman’s pain and anguish (Gen. 3:16). God called us to subdue the earth. But now this task will come through toilsome work, fighting thorns and thistles. Only by the sweat of our brow will we be able to eat bread (Gen. 3:17-19). The work God gave us has been invaded by toil. The beauty of childbirth has been wracked with pain.

This passage ends with the reality of exile. God’s good world has been marred by human sin, and we are now separated from the perfection of the garden. Yet as we will see in the Christ Connection, all hope for humanity is far from being lost forever.

CHRIST CONNECTION

Even though this story is a sad scene of fallenness and judgment, there is a thread of mercy. Before casting Adam and Eve out of paradise, God clothed them with animal skins. God provided the covering for Adam and Eve’s nakedness.

Not only that, but in verse 15 God tells the serpent that the day is coming when a Son will be born through Eve, and even though the serpent will strike His heel, this Son of Eve will crush the serpent’s head. A Savior will come, and the serpent will be defeated. The evil unleashed in the garden will be eradicated when the Son of Eve arrives.

God’s initiative here points forward to His Son’s atoning work, when through His own sacrifice, He will take away the guilt of our sin and cover our shame with His righteousness.

Because of sin, Adam and Eve were banished from paradise. Their sin separated them from God’s presence with no way back in except through the angel’s sword. But the day would come when the sword would fall on the Son of Eve on the cross. The Son would be banished by the Father so that we might be reunited. He would face the sword so that we could return from our exile.

When God’s own Son was born into this world, He undid everything that went wrong in Genesis 3. He answered the question that Satan put in our hearts: “Is God good? Does He intend good for us? Can we trust Him?” He answered that question with the nails in His hands and a spear through His side—with His becoming sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21).

YOUR STORY

10-15 MINUTES

GROUP QUESTIONS

God's Story has always been designed to connect with your story. It is because of His Story that our stories make sense, have meaning, and carry on into eternity. Use the questions below to help think through how His Story connects with your own.

- **Are you more likely to see your sin as a “mistake” or “failure” or as an act of rebellion? What is the difference and how does it impact our perspective?**
A rebellion is an active and willful action on the part of someone, not merely a passive failure on their behalf. While our sins are, in one sense, mistakes and failures, they are much more than that as well.
- **What are the signs that our relationship with God has been broken? What are some ways we hide from God?** *Signs might include a lack of affection for God, a love for the things of this world, as well as actions and attitudes that are contrary to God and His Word. Allow students time to think of specific examples of what those might be, as well as ways we tend to hide our sins from God.*
- **Take a moment to list different ways we can see the brokenness of human relationships in our world. How does the gospel provide an answer for these realities?** *Students answers will vary with the first question, possibly ranging from divorce within the home to countries at war with one another. Look to the Christ Connection to help answer the second question, pointing to the fact that Christ is going to restore that which has been broken.*
- **How has sin affected the different spheres of society: family, government, church, the environment? How can we as Christians battle the effects of sin in these areas?** *Help students think through different examples where sin has taken place in these areas—broken families, corruption of government, etc. The goal is to help them see that sin's effects are far reaching, and that Christians should be vigilant about battling against sin in these areas.*

HIS STORY
God's Story of
Redemption
through His Son,
Jesus Christ.

YOUR STORY
Where your story
meets His.

YOUR MISSION

10-15 MINUTES

HEAD

The historical reality of the fall of humanity is essential to understanding ourselves and the world in which we live. It gets to the root of why things are the way they are—why brokenness and suffering plague both the human race and the world that we inhabit. Every worldview tries to explain why things have gone wrong, but only the Christian worldview gives the correct answer: we rebelled against our Creator long ago.

- **Why is it important to be able to make sense out of the brokenness of our world?** *Apart from the Bible explaining to us how and why the world became broken, we would be at a loss for rightly understanding why things are the way they are.*
- **How does the fall of Adam and Eve shed light on your own personal sins and temptations?** *Answers to this question will vary, but may include: doubting God's Word, doubting that God wants what is best for us, and so forth.*

HEART

The fall of humanity into sin teaches that all things have been affected by the fall, including our very own hearts. Because of the fall, humans now have an inclination to the things that grieve the heart of God. And because our hearts have been affected, we are in need of new ones.

- **What is the connection between your heart and behavior?** *The heart, representing the center or essence of a person, is what leads to that person's behavior. Thus, if one has a covetous heart, that may result in the physical act of stealing. The heart is the root, where the behavior is the fruit of one's life.*
- **When it comes to resolving conflict in relationships, why is it important that both parties look inwardly, to their own hearts, to see how he or she might be sinning against the other person? Is this hard to do? Explain.** *Answers to this question will vary.*

HANDS

The fall of humanity forever altered the course of human history, disrupting our relationship with God, with others, and with the good world He created. Nevertheless, God is still at work to remake that which has been broken. As we've seen throughout this session, God is on a mission to restore what has been lost through His Son.

- **How might God use His people in the mission to restore all things to Himself?** *Answers to this question will vary.*
- **How can you trust in God's Word this week? How might that affect different areas of your life?** *Answers to this question will vary.*

► ADDITIONAL INFO

LEADER PACK

For this session, Items #4 and #5 can be used during group time. Item #4 can be used as either a visual illustration or even an object lesson to discuss the different relationships that have been affected by the Fall. Item #5 is an artistic poster referencing Gen. 3:15, the first signs of the gospel where God promises that a Seed will crush the head of the serpent.

SOURCES

1. Paul David Tripp, *Whiter Than Snow* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2008), 32.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Check out the following additional resources:

- Leader Training Videos
- One Conversations
- Midweek Studies
- Circular Timeline Poster
- App (for both leader and student)



Additional suggestions for specific groups are available at
GospelProject.com/AdditionalResources

And for **free online training** on how to lead a group visit
MinistryGrid.com/web/TheGospelProject