

## Week 2: "The Fall of Humanity"

### Memory Verse: *God Disciplines His Sons*

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." Hebrews 12:1-2

### Day One

Sunday, October 27, 2002

### "The Fall of Humanity"

**Read:** Genesis 3 (p. 6) and Commentary (p. 7)

**Reflect:** It has been claimed that the average person lies or deceives 200 times a day (not being completely truthful to others or themselves). Think of the different ways you are tempted to hide the truth or hide from the truth each day.

How are these lies like "fig leaves"? (That is, how are they cheap coverings?)

**Dig:** Read the "Freedom Point" on p. 6 and note the various ways in which Satan twists the truth. Look up John 8 :42-45 (p. 1211) and study the way that Jesus describes Satan.

Notice the theme of nakedness and clothing in the Bible. Study how God weaves this theme together:

- Genesis 3:21 (p. 8) God had to shed blood to clothe them.
- John 19:23-24 (p. 1228) What did Jesus wear on the cross?
- Matthew 22:1-14 (p. 1109) People need a certain kind of clothing. What is this clothing?
- Revelation 21:1-2 (p. 1501) We are "dressed" at the end.

How does this theme tie into how God frees us from shame and spiritual

nakedness?

**Apply:** We are all fallen. This basically means that we are tempted to not trust God and to cover up our own shame. How does this play out in your life?

In prayer thank God for not giving up on us and freeing us from shame and spiritual nakedness. Ask him to "dress" you with his protection and righteousness today.

**Day Two**  
**Monday, October 28, 2002**  
**"The Deception of Eve"**

**Read:** I Timothy 2:11-15 (p. 1397) and Commentary (p. 1398)

**Reflect:** Think about times that you have been deceived. What feelings did you have? It is even worse to allow Satan to draw you into self-deception. How does deception steal our freedom?

**Dig:** Study the passage carefully from the first verse of chapter 2. What set of commands does Paul give (verses 8,9,12)? There is a rule of interpretation of scripture that calls us to discern the difference between a cultural form of a command and the underlying principle that is timeless. What might be the principles underlying these commands?

Our church ordains women to all offices of the church. For the biblical reasons and justification for this interpretation of scripture, you may phone the church at 245-7791 and ask for a copy of our study: "Women in Church Office."

**Apply:** The commentary today tells us, "deception is a major tool of Satan." Ask God to reveal to you today how Satan deceives you. What have you learned from the first two days of this study of the fall of humanity regarding the way that Satan twists truth? Can you see any of these patterns in your life?

Conclude with a prayer to "learn in quietness and full submission."

**Day Three**  
**Tuesday, October 29, 2002**  
**"The Sin of Adam"**

**Read:** Ezekiel 3:16-19 (p. 908) and commentary (p. 909)

**Reflect:** When have you been in an environment where you slowly got used to conditions that at first made you ill (either physically or emotionally)? How did you "wake up" to how really bad things had gotten?

**Dig:** On a piece of paper, write down the three reasons that the commentator gives for how difficult it is for us to understand the true nature of sin. Compare this to what the Bible teaches in Romans 3:10-18.

This text (Ezekiel 3:16-19) places the responsibility for sin squarely in our own laps.

How does Adam try to avoid that? (hint: think of how he responds to God's exposure of his sin in Genesis 3)

How does the commentator explain the difference between the way we usually think of freedom and the way the Bible describes freedom? (see second to last paragraph of the commentary on p. 909)

**Apply:** Where in your life are you blaming others for your condition when you should accept the responsibility?

Who in your life should you warn of the consequences of their sin so that their blood will not be on your hands?

Conclude with a prayer asking for forgiveness for blaming and the courage to confront others gently but firmly.

**Day Four**  
**Wednesday, October 30, 2002**  
**"The Personal Effects of the Fall"**

**Read:** Genesis 4 (p. 9) and Commentary (p. 10)

**Reflect:** Our church is a haven for broken people. Much brokenness is a result of faulty family relationships. What brokenness have you experienced because of your family relationships? Can you identify generational sins in your family?

**Dig:** The commentary today speaks of emotional and family effects of the fall into sin. See if you can make a comprehensive list of all those effects in the first human family as you read Genesis 4. What does this list tell you?

As you read of God's response to both Abel's and Cain's sacrifices, why did God

respond favorably to Abel and not to Cain? Is there any hint in the text that would help you answer this question?

How does the sin portrayed in Genesis 4 take away freedom?

**Apply:** Every recovery program begins with a recognition of the mess we are in. Anything less is denial. How does this day's study and the week's concentration on the effects of sin on the human race help you personally take steps to get out of denial?

Close with a prayer of confession followed by thanksgiving for God's forgiveness and rescue.

**Day Five**  
**Thursday, October 31, 2002**  
**"Meaningless Living"**

**Read:** Ecclesiastes 1 (p. 732) and Commentary (p. 733)

**Reflect:** What subtle messages do we receive constantly that this life is all there is? If you were going to die in the next few years and then there was nothing (no afterlife), how would you live your life?

**Dig:** The introduction prepared for the book of Ecclesiastes helps us to understand it. Read that introduction (p. 730) and then re-read chapter 1. How does this help you understand?

Frustration is a major theme in Ecclesiastes. What is God's role in this frustration? Look up Romans 8:18-25. Notice who subjects creation to frustration. What might the purpose be?

After this week's study, could you state how "sin" is more like a state of being than specific acts that we commit (or fail to commit)?

And therefore why the Bible calls our change being "born again"?

**Apply:** Make a list of the frustrations you are now experiencing in your life which would tempt you to see meaninglessness in your existence. Ask God to change your perspective on your frustrations so that they drive you to him instead of driving you to strive harder.

Thank him for the freedom he gives by relationship to him.