

WARM-UP

- Are you the type of person who tries to figure new things out alone, or do you immediately call for backup? Why?
- What is one time that pride caused you to do (or not do) something? What did you learn from this experience?
- Was there a time you broke someone's trust, or a time you stopped trusting someone? What happened?

WORD

*¹Now 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?'" ²And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³but 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.'" **GENESIS 3:1-3***

(Read also **GENESIS 3:4-8, 21.**)

The garden of Eden is an important starting point. When God created the world and everything in it, it was all working according to His original design. He created everything good, righteous, and holy. But when the Fall happened, mankind lost the holiness they were created with. Today, let's talk about how holiness was lost and God's plan for its restoration.

1 | The man and woman sinned against a holy God.

*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. **GENESIS 3:6***

In the pivotal moment when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, they broke trust with God. They trusted the word of the serpent over God's words and became selfish, wanting to be like God. It started with unholy and selfish desires, which later manifested in their disobedience. How do the *desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, and the pride of life* (1 John 2:16) still cause people to sin today?

2 | Humanity lost its holy state.

*⁷Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. ⁸And 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. **GENESIS 3:7-8***

The impact of the first man and woman's disobedience was tremendous. Mankind lost its holiness because they no longer set themselves apart for God alone. As humans followed their sinful desires and chose to be independent from God, it resulted in fear, guilt, and shame. Humans and the rest of creation became corrupted and subject to death and decay. Ever since then, all of humanity has inherited a sinful nature

and has become unholy. In Romans 5:19, how does Paul explain the sinful nature that came through Adam and Eve? What struggles did you encounter in the past against your sinful nature as you followed God?

3 | God revealed His plan to restore the holiness of humanity.

*And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them. **GENESIS 3:21***

(Read also **GENESIS 3:7-8.**)

In the aftermath of Adam and Eve's disobedience, God revealed His plan to restore mankind. Adam and Eve tried to hide their sin. They covered their nakedness with leaves. They blamed God, each other, and the serpent. But none of this would erase their shame and guilt. So God clothed them with garments of skin, shedding the blood of an innocent animal and foreshadowing the sacrifice that would be made by Jesus on the cross for the redemption and salvation of humanity. These garments represent righteousness, which can only come from God. We can never make or earn our own righteousness. God clothes us with it so that we can stand before Him and draw near to Him in His holiness. How should we respond knowing that God planned to restore us from the beginning?

APPLICATION

- How does knowing how bad our situation was because of our sin help you grow in your appreciation of the gospel? What mindsets will be changed or affected by this truth?
- What are some ways that you try to atone for your own sin? How can you respond to God's great mercy?
- All pain, shame, and hatred rife in the world today is a result of sin. In the midst of difficult times, list some practical ways you can take part in God's plan to set apart a people for Himself.

PRAYER

- Thank God for His ultimate plan to make people holy for Himself.
- Ask God for the strength and grace to continue to live in Him and in the righteousness He has clothed you with.
- Pray for someone you know who needs to understand the restoration of God. Ask Him for the words to say and opportunities to encourage this person.



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