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## Lesson 9 — THE CURSE



*And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."*

*[Genesis 2:16-17]*

If there is one reality in our world that remains universally self-evident, it is the curse of this present age. The human experience has been plagued by pain and suffering, toil and struggle, sorrow and sickness, hurt and heartache, evil and violence, and ultimately by death itself. As God's imagers, our moral conscience screams that something has gone terribly wrong and our spirit is grieved to the core at the present condition of our world.

For centuries, many have wrestled with the problem of suffering and evil — some even going as far as blaming God for even allowing such a world to exist. Sadly those who would hold God responsible for sin and death are in danger of rejecting the only ONE who can do anything about it. Only God has provided the permanent solution for our desperate condition and promised the ultimate redemption of the entire creation.

### **A Challenge of Authority**

When the LORD created Adam and placed him in the garden to work it, He gave only one prohibition. God commanded the man to abstain from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In order for God's image bearers to be truly "like Him," they had to be free. In order for man to be free, he had to be given the ability to make a choice. The tree of knowledge provided that choice, and Adam was responsible to obey God's word.

The LORD warned Adam from the beginning that failing to trust Him and choosing to disobey His word would result in the worst of consequences — death. Adam was created to live forever with God and partner with Him in the expansion of Eden throughout the entire earth. Death would be catastrophic to God's plan and Adam's purpose.

Furthermore, Adam was given the responsibility to be the representative head and spiritual leader and protector of the Garden, not the least of which included his wife, Eve. God gave the commandment directly to the man, which implies that Adam was responsible to communicate God's word and will to his wife. Eve had to choose to submit to the spiritual

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leadership of her husband and trust him to accurately represent God. Knowing that Eve had received God's commandment by way of "second-hand" testimony, the Serpent attacked the weak spot and challenged the authority of Adam and ultimately of God Himself.

The Serpent had one goal — to bring the curse of death upon mankind and his entire world. By rejecting God's word and taking Satan's advice, Adam and Eve signed their own death sentence and brought the entire creation under the curse. The rest, as they say ... is history.

## Eyes Wide Open

The moment Adam and Eve willfully broke God's only commandment and committed sin, everything changed. The one truth spoken by the Serpent was that their eyes would be "opened," knowing both good and evil, but they could not possibly have been prepared for what happened next. The moment Adam and Eve made their choice, their eyes were opened to see themselves — not for who they were but for who they had become — sinners standing guilty before a Holy God.

Read the following passages to discover the immediate consequences of the fall.

- ❖ Read Genesis 3:7-11 — What did Adam and Eve immediately realize in the wake of their sin? What kind of emotions did they experience?
  
- ❖ Read Genesis 3:12-13 — How do Adam and Eve respond when confronted with their sin? How does their response mirror our own human behavior to this day?
  
- ❖ Read Genesis 3:16 — What consequences did the curse bring upon women? Read 1 Timothy 2:11-15. What is meant by "saved through childbearing?"
  
- ❖ Read Genesis 3:17-19 — What affects of the curse were immediately felt by men? Why did God still hold Adam responsible for the fall of man [see 1 Corinthians 15:21-22]?
  
- ❖ Read Genesis 2:15. How do we know that manual labor and work is not a result of the fall but was God's good intention from the beginning?

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## The Wages of Sin

The most severe consequence of Adam's sin was the introduction of death into the world. Adam had been specially created by God. Having breathed His life-giving Spirit into him, God gave Adam life — immortality — creating him to live forever. As long as man remained in unbroken relationship with the LORD, then he would never die, but the moment that relationship was broken through sin, the inevitable consequence was estrangement from God and therefore imminent death.

- ❖ Read Genesis 3:20-24. From where did the LORD get animal skins to cover Adam and Eve and why was this so significant? How do we know that God originally intended mankind to live forever with Him in paradise?
- ❖ Read Romans 5:12-21. How has Adam's original sin affected "all men?" How is the redemptive work of Jesus directly connected to Adam's sin?
- ❖ Read 1 Corinthians 15:45-55. What does the Apostle Paul tell us about the difference between being "in Adam" and "in Christ?" Why is it necessary to receive imperishable, immortal bodies through Christ and His resurrection power?

## The Whole Creation is Groaning

The curse of creation reaches far wider than we can imagine. The Apostle Paul reminds us that the whole creation — the entire universe — has been fixed in a perpetual state of corruption and degeneration. The physical laws of entropy tell us that every physical process in the universe is winding down, losing energy, and slowly disintegrating. Our only hope is found in God's promise to recreate and make everything new one day!

- ❖ Read Romans 8:18-25. What effects does the curse have on our present creation? When does God promise to reverse these effects? What is the last part of our nature that will be redeemed in the end and how will it happen?