



OVERCOMING FEARS THAT RUIN RELATIONSHIPS

Genesis 3:6-19

“The woman saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves. When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the Lord God walking about in the garden. they hid from the Lord God among the trees. Then the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?” He replied, “I heard You walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked.” “Who told you that you were naked?” the Lord God asked. “Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?” The man replied, “It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it.” Then the Lord God asked the woman, “What have you done?” “The serpent deceived me,” she replied. “That’s why I ate it.” . . . Then He said to the woman, “I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy, and in pain you will give birth. And you will desire to control your husband, but he will rule over you.” And to the man He said, “Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat, the ground is cursed because of you. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it. It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat of its grains. By the sweat of your brow will you have food to eat until you return to the ground from which you were made. For you were made from dust, and to dust you will return.” (Genesis 3:6-19)

- **God created human beings with a need and desire for relationships (Genesis 2:18) so that we could have companionship and complete one another.**
- **Everything went well initially for the first man and woman (Genesis 2:21-24), because since there was no sin there was no sickness, strife, sadness, etc.**
- **Adam and Eve fell into sin because they wanted to be the “god” of their lives (Genesis 3:1-6), and we still struggle with a desire to be the “god” of our lives.**
- **When we allow sin to dominate our lives we often become driven by fear, which hurts and harms us emotionally and relationally.**
- **What can we learn from today’s Bible story about how to make our relationships healthier and happier?**

We Learn From Adam And Eve's Story That:

RELATIONSHIPS ARE HARMED WHEN WE GIVE IN TO SIN AND FEAR

- Adam and Eve had a great scenario in which to build a thriving relationship, but they blew it because they couldn't control their minds and desires.
- *"When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned."* (Romans 5:12)
- Adam and Eve compounded their problems by also giving in to fear.
- *"God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline."* (2 Timothy 1:7)

Fear Hurts Our Relationships Because Our:

● **FEAR OF EXPOSURE MAKES US DISTANT**

- Since we don't want others to see what we don't like about ourselves, we often keep people at a distance.
- *"They hid from the Lord God among the trees. Then the Lord God called to the man, 'Where are you?' He replied, 'I heard You walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked.'"* (Genesis 3:8-10)
- Fear always causes us to seek to hide from God and from others while transformation in any area of life, including our relationships, only happens when we own up to the fact that we aren't where and what we ought to be.
- **Our Fear Of Exposure Causes Us To Be Overwhelmed By Shame**
 - *"They suddenly felt shame at their nakedness."* (Genesis 3:7a)
 - When we have shame in our lives we are easily embarrassed, and we will do almost anything in your life to avoid embarrassment.
 - Shame makes us nervous and more self conscious.
- **Our Fear Of Exposure Causes Us To Try To Cover Up Our Sins**
 - *"So they sewed fig leaves to cover up themselves."* (Genesis 3:7b)
 - When we feel ashamed we try to conceal who we really are – our true selves.
 - Some people use humor to cover things up, while others try to cover up their insecurities by indicating they're doing well.
- **Our Fear Of Exposure Causes Us To Distance Ourselves From Our Savior**
 - *"Then they hid from God among the trees."* (Genesis 3:8)

Fear Hurts Our Relationships Because Our:

● **FEAR OF DISAPPROVAL MAKES US DEFENSIVE**

- Defeat and fear causes us to move from "covering up" to being defensive, from excusing to accusing in our relationships with God and others.
- *"The man replied, 'It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it.'" (Genesis 3:12)*
- Adam was laying the blame for his failure on Eve and on God.
- *"Then the Lord God asked the woman, 'What have you done?' 'The serpent deceived me,' she replied. 'That's why I ate it.'" (Genesis 3:13)*
- The more critical a person is the more you know they fear disapproval.

Fear Hurts Our Relationships Because Our:

● **FEAR OF LOSING CONTROL MAKES US DEMANDING**

- As a result of their sin, Adam and Eve lost control of everything, and the more "out of control" we feel, the more controlling we become.

- The Lord to Eve - “You will desire to control your husband, but he will rule over you.” (Genesis 3:16)
- **Adam and Eve’s story is where “the war of the sexes” began.**
- **It’s difficult to be in a relationship where there is a lot of castigating and conflict rather than cooperation and affirmation.**

We Learn From Adam And Eve’s Story That:

RELATIONSHIPS ARE HELPED WHEN WE LEARN TO LIVE IN GOD’S LOVE

- *“We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in His love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. . . . Such love has no fear, because (God’s) perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced His perfect love.” (1 John 4:16-18)*

We Learn To “Live In God’s Love” By Constantly:

● **SURRENDERING OUR HEART TO THE LORD**

- **The closer we get to God the more love will fill our heart for Him and others.**
- *“Surrender your heart to God, turn to Him in prayer, and give up your sins - even those you do in secret. Then you won’t be ashamed; you will be confident and fearless. Your troubles will go away like water beneath a bridge, and your darkest night will be brighter than noon. Then you’ll rest safe and secure, filled with hope and emptied of worry!” (Job 11:13-18 CEV)*

We Learn To “Live In God’s Love” By Constantly:

● **REMEMBERING THE WAY THE LORD LOVES US**

- **We Need To Daily Remind Ourselves We Are *Unconditionally Loved By God***
 - **God’s love for us is consistent and unconditional.**
 - *“My love for you will never end says the Lord.” (Isaiah 54:10)*
- **We Need To Daily Remind Ourselves We Are *Completely Accepted By God***
 - **The deepest wounds of our lives are those caused by rejection.**
 - *“God generously poured out the Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior. Because of His grace he made us right in His sight and gave us confidence that we will inherit eternal life.” (Titus 3:6-7)*
- **We Need To Daily Remind Ourselves We Are *Totally Forgiven By God***
 - **We don’t need to hold on to shame or guilt because we are completely forgiven by the Lord.**
 - *“There is NO condemnation for those in Christ Jesus!” (Romans 8:1)*
- **We Need To Daily Remind Ourselves We Are *Extremely Valuable To God*.**
 - **The value of something depends on who owns it and what someone is willing to pay for it.**
 - *“You’ve been bought and paid for by Christ’s death.” (1 Corinthians 7:23)*
 - The Lord - *“You are precious in My eyes, and honored, and I love you...” (Isaiah 43:4)*

We Learn To “Live In God’s Love” By Everyday:

● **OFFERING THAT SAME LOVE TO OTHERS**

- Jesus - *"I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other."* (John 13:34)
 - **Real followers of Jesus love everyone, regardless of whether they like them or not, because they've been unconditionally loved by the Lord.**
 - *"Accept one another just as Christ has accepted you."* (Romans 15:7)
 - **Loving other people with the "love of the Lord" transforms relationships.**
 - *"Love never stops being patient, Love never stops believing, Love never stops hoping, Love never give up!"* (1 Corinthians 13:7)
 - **Real love extends grace, expresses faith, expects the best and endures the worst.**
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- ***What is the Lord saying to me through this message?***
 - ***What are some action steps that I can take to strengthen or repair my relationships with the Lord and with others?***