

MULTIPLICATION & TEMPTATION // Genesis 3:1-21

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Series: Made to Multiply

All right, good morning, Two Cities Church, and good morning down in our Lexington community gathering. Guys, I don't know if you've heard of Jim Gaffigan. He's a comedian, and he talks about parenting. When he describes parenting, he says, "I often, while I'm parenting, I feel overwhelmed." He calls these times "being awake." Can any parents relate, right? It's a little bit overwhelming.

That's why we're having a parent-equipped night tomorrow night. Listen, we mean what we say when we say we want to partner with parents to raise a generation in Christ. We mean that we want to not replace you, but resource you and come alongside you. Guys, here's what we're doing. Tomorrow night, we're just going to be asking a lot of questions. We don't act like we have all of the answers, but we're going to dive into the fray and into the mess with you.

We're going to talk about screens, tablets, phones, and social media, and how it's all shaping and reshaping us and our student leaders. The leaders of our student ministry are going to be up here, and every day and all week, they're with middle schoolers and high schoolers. So we're going to talk about it together. Whether you have a middle schooler or a high schooler, whether you're a concerned grandparent, or if you have second graders on the device too much and you're like, "I don't know where this is headed," I want you to come. Margie and I are going to be here, and we're looking forward to learning alongside many of you tomorrow night.

Speaking of families, you can grab your Multiply moleskin. We're going to be in week five. The beginning of Genesis talks a lot about families, right? And we're talking about multiplying. There are two ways that a family multiplies. A family multiplies by children being born into that family, or, obviously, if not born into that family, the second way a family multiplies is children being brought into that family through foster care and adoption.

Guys, October 14th, that's going to be a week from this Monday, we're having an interest meeting, a foster care and adoption interest meeting. If you don't know this, Christians have always been on the front line of adoption. There is no group of people that adopts more children than Christians. Why? Because we have a theology of adoption. Here's what we believe: God did not just, if you're a Christian, save you and forgive you and promise to bring you to heaven. That'd be amazing. But it's not just that we're going to heaven as creatures of God; it's that we're going to heaven as sons and daughters of God. God adopted us.

When that gets in your bones and in your marrow, it changes you. So listen, if you're coming to this interest meeting, it doesn't mean for sure that you're going to foster care or adopt. You may

just be asking the question, or you may say, "I want to come because I want to help families who are doing that." Margie and I don't talk about this a lot, but we have been respite foster care parents for the last three years. I found it very meaningful. Our kids have enjoyed it. Addie's enjoyed being like a mini mom when we have a foster kid with us.

So listen, whether or not you are wondering, or you're struggling with infertility, like a couple I was talking to this last week, and they're wondering, "Maybe God's redirecting us toward adoption." Maybe you're thinking, "Could I do foster care?" Or maybe you're thinking, "Could we add another kid to our family?" This is an incredible opportunity. We just do this yearly. We have this interest meeting, and I hope you'll prioritize it.

Finally, okay? And then we're going to get to Genesis 3. I need to tell you that I'm really excited about something that's happening over the next, well, it's going to happen in just over four weeks. And I'm not talking about the election. I'm talking about Dr. Al Mohler's in town, okay? If you don't, yeah, the six of you who know who he is are clapping, but listen. I know a lot of you, like, you don't know who he is. He leads the Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. He is, in my humble opinion, the smartest evangelical in the English-speaking world.

When people who do know who he is, they're like, "How did you get him to come to Two Cities Church?" We're like, "Well, we booked him over a year in advance." We didn't even realize when we booked him that he was going to be here the weekend after the election. He's going to be doing two things, guys. You're not going to want to miss this. This is a clear-your-calendar event. You want to be here Saturday night. He's going to do an ask-anything, open-mic event in this room. It's going to be absolutely packed, and you want to be here for that.

Then he's going to preach. We're not telling him what to preach. We're not giving him a passage. We're just saying, "Bring a timely word from God's word" the Sunday after the election. He'll be here doing that. So with that said, we've got a busy next few weeks. Let's pray, and then let's get to work in Genesis 3.

Lord, I want to pray for families right now, whether they're struggling with infertility or maybe they're asking the question, "How can we come alongside families?" Or maybe they're asking the question, "Should we add another person to our family through adoption?" Whatever it is, Lord, as they're wrestling with that, we pray for other families in here who are just wrestling with the complexity of their kids and technology. Every generation is overwhelmed by raising the next generation because we raise the next generation in such a different environment than the one in which we grew up.

So I pray that we would come alongside to serve those families. Lord, I pray that in a few weeks, when Dr. Mohler gets here, he would bring a timely word that would encourage our church. In Christ's name, amen.

So here's the question that we're going to try to talk about today. It's going to take us a while to get there, but here's the question: What is wrong with the world? If you don't know this, and you

do know this, everybody asks that question all the time. They ask it when a hurricane dumps water over Western North Carolina. They ask it when they look around the world and see this group of people at war with that group of people. They certainly say it if you've ever been betrayed, if you've ever been let down, if somebody that you love dies or gets sick or suffers, or if you do something, every once in a while, you ask this question.

Here's another version of the same question: What's wrong with me? And that's not too far from what's wrong with the world. There are lots of answers. Let me tell you the common answers. Environmental destruction. That's one answer. That's what's wrong. We're just wrong in the environment. Another answer is political corruption. That's politics. It's politicians. It's all that's happening. Another answer is, oh, the tribalism of our day, right? We're like in our little silos on social media and factions.

Another answer is, oh, no, no, the mental health crisis. I mean, what's going on, right? Another answer would be, what's wrong with the world? Oh, I got it. It's the breakdown and the loss of the family. Look, all of those things are bad, and all of those things are things that are wrong with the world. But the Bible says there's something at the bottom, at the basement, and beneath all of that, and it's sin.

If you'll turn to Genesis chapter three, we're going to see that sin infects and affects all of us. Guys, we are in week five of the Multiply Initiative, and we're still in the garden. Today, we're going to get kicked out of the garden, but we're still in the garden. What's interesting, and this will explain a lot about your life, is that all of you long for Genesis one and two. You long for paradise regained. Man, woman, naked and unashamed, worshiping God, right relationship with creation.

But I hate to break it to you, and I hate to break it to me, but we don't live in Genesis two. We live in Genesis chapter three. If you ever think about this for a second, today in Genesis chapter three, we go from blessing and multiplication to cursing and division. A fair question you could ask is, why are we spending 16 months on the word "multiply" when it's the first thing we're told to do? I mean, why do we need to be motivated to do what we're made to do?

Come on. Why do we need to be inspired? Why do you need to give us a book? Why are we focusing on this for like a year and a half? It's because what sin does is sin slows multiplication, and sin makes us want to multiply the wrong things. Today in Genesis chapter three, we're going to see how sin enters the world. Because of that, we're actually going to see how temptation follows or actually precedes the sin.

What I want to do today is explain to you the world that we currently live in. I'll do that if you'll turn with me to Genesis chapter three, verse one. The first thing we're told is that you and I have an enemy. Look at verse one. "Now the serpent," that's Satan, "was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made." So Satan shows up as a snake. We take it for granted. We just know this story, but it's kind of strange.

Maybe this is one of the reasons why almost every human hates snakes. Do you agree? Maybe this is the reason. Seriously, this is another interesting thought. Why is every movie about aliens invading, you know, America or whatever, or our universe area, like why is every movie about aliens reptilian? Why is every alien a reptile? They're a human, a reptile, that's very smart, that wants to destroy us.

Maybe this is part of our collective unconscious that we know that we have an enemy, and maybe the scariest enemy would be a smart reptile. Anyway, this shows up. Here's what I want you to know. This is so important. There is a snake in every garden. That's one of the teachings from Genesis chapter three. Think about this: If there is a snake in Eden, there is a snake in your house. If there is a snake in a perfect place where God walks in the cool of the night and Adam and Eve are in a sinless, perfect state, right? And they're worshiping God and they're in harmony with one another, and there's a snake.

Here's another principle: There's a snake in every home. And here's the other principle to this: If you don't know where the snake is, he's talking to your spouse. I promise you. Just because you go, "There's not a snake," no, there's a snake. You don't know where he is, and he's probably talking to your spouse or talking to your kids. You know how that works.

See, what the Bible gives us is we have to have this theology of good and evil, right? You know, there are lots of questions that would take hours to answer, like, why is there even the tree of knowledge of good and evil? And why, what is a snake doing in the garden? The simplest answer, or the deepest answer, is that love needs to be a free choice, and God wanted us to be free agents to choose to love him.

There's a lot to that story, but what I want you to first understand, though, is that we have an enemy. Here's what I want you to understand too: Your enemy is not your wife. Your enemy is not your kids. Your enemy is not your husband. Your enemy is not the opposing political party, right? Your enemy is not your boss. What Satan would love us to do is have the wrong enemy. Because if you have the wrong enemy, you'll be fighting some battle that doesn't really matter.

Here's the other thing I want to talk about in regards to Satan showing up as a snake. There are two things we're told about him. The first I already read, I'll show you, is this: Satan is crafty. Now, this is why this is important. If Satan is introduced and he is our eternal enemy, okay? The enemy under all of our enemies, and God introduces him to us in Genesis 3, and then God tells us just one characteristic about him, it might be the most important thing for us to know, which is this: Satan is smart.

Satan is smarter than you, okay? Thankfully, he's not smarter than God, but Satan is smarter than you. He's lived longer than you. He's watched human nature for longer. He knows, we'll get to this, he knows God's word better so he can twist it. Here's a really humbling thought: Satan has taken down people more godly than you. Satan's taken down people who knew the Bible better than you. Satan has taken down people better than you, which leads to the second thing we learn about Satan.

The second thing that we're told about Satan is that he's patient. Look, I'll read it to you. Let's just read verses one through five. "Now the serpent, that's Satan, was more crafty, that's smart with sinful intent, than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. And 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, 'Well, you know, 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.'"

Satan is patient because he waits for a while to get the woman alone to have a conversation. Now, we don't know. We'll know when we get to heaven, those of us who are Christians. We'll know, but we don't know how long Adam and Eve were in the garden in a sinless, perfect state before they fell. Was it a couple of days? Was it a couple of weeks? Was it a couple of months? We don't know.

Now, we do know that Satan waits to get the woman alone to have a conversation with her. Here's what I want you to know: Satan is patient, okay? Satan is not in a hurry. The temptation in some of our lives is to think that we're going to get away with something where what Satan, listen to this, what Satan is waiting for is the time to bring a maximal negative effect to the kingdom of God by exposing a person when they're at their height.

If you've ever watched people, you know, leaders' lives, but even just your friends, you watch their lives fall apart, and you go, "It doesn't make any sense. They just bought the new home. He just got the promotion. They just built that ministry. They just had their fourth kid. What is going on?" You look at it, and you'll talk to your friends about it. It makes no sense. It happened at the height of their life. It's like, exactly. Satan is very, very patient, and he's waiting for what is the most strategic chess move for him to make to destroy your life and also have it negatively impact the kingdom of God.

He also, by the way, he gets, and by the way, you'll see this at the end that Eve eventually, or sorry, Adam eventually gets there by verse six. Most people think that Satan begins the conversation with Eve, and then Adam comes over, and he should have interrupted it. We'll get there, but he doesn't. But I'll say this too, that the fall, and we'll pick on men in a little bit, but the fall into sin and the ruining of humanity starts with a woman having a conversation with somebody she shouldn't be talking about things she shouldn't be talking about.

Do we know any women in here who do that? How many women end up having conversations with people they shouldn't about things that they shouldn't, and it gets everybody in a bunch of trouble? That's how the story starts. But let's look at Eve's conversation, by the way. We gotta go back. We're going to be reading the same things again and again. This is going to be a very nuanced textual sermon. In other words, you're going to have to be looking very closely at your Bible to understand what I'm saying.

Verse one, I want you to see Satan's strategy for temptation. Here's what it is. "Now the serpent was more crafty, smart, than any other beast of the field that the Lord God made. And he said to the woman, 'Did God actually say, you shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" So what I want to do for the rest of the time is I want to explain to you what happens when you get tempted, and when I get tempted.

I'm going to articulate it. This is not what happens to some of you. This is what happens to all of us all the time. Yes, you have different personalities. Yes, you have different proclivities. Yes, you have different sinful patterns and behaviors. Yes, you have different marriages. Temptation comes the same way. Here's what it is. And as soon as I say this, you're going to know this, but here's the first thing temptation does: It makes you question God's word. That's what it does.

It comes to you and it says, "Okay, you're right. It says, 'Did God really say you can't get drunk? Did God really say one man, one woman, one lifetime? Did God really, you know, whatever it is?'" Now, by the way, did God really say you have to be generous? Whatever. And it's going to be in some area of your life, by the way, you're going to want to question God's word wherever you don't want to obey God's word. Or you're going to question God's word wherever the culture is pressing hard enough against it.

Now, here's what I've learned. We're actually so sophisticated as a culture now. We really are. If you grew up in the church, okay, or you're here, and even if you sit under the teaching of this church for 10 or 15 weeks, you're going to know what the Bible teaches. So then, here's the second move Satan does. After Satan goes, "Did God really say that?" This is where he goes next: "Yeah, but did God mean that?" In other words, "Are you sure this is, is there another way to interpret this passage so that you don't have to obey it?"

I'm telling you, I won't tell you my whole story. I have a seminary degree. I've got an MDiv, is what it's called. When I was getting it, I ended up being in four different seminaries just because of some jobs and travel and different things. So I know the seminary world pretty well. One of the things that's very interesting is there are entire seminaries and there are entire denominations, okay? Their whole job, like all the professors there and all the pastors in there, their whole job is they try to read texts that are so obvious and straightforward in what they mean.

They spend an enormous amount of energy trying to make the verse say something other than what it says. You know, it's like, "All right, do not get drunk." Well, what does drunk mean? And then you try to, "Well, hold on, was it, was that just for them? Was that a unique circumstance for those people?" That's what we all try to do. So Satan, first he gets you to question God's word. Now look how Eve responds.

And the woman said, "Okay, this is, follow this closely." 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's in the midst of the garden. Neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" Okay, you're not

going to believe this, but in Eve's conversation there, she makes three mistakes. You need to really closely read Genesis 2 to see it. So with your community group, go back to Genesis 2 and check if what I'm telling you is true, but I am.

I'm going to tell you three things she does. The first thing she does is she drops a word from the command. So she says, "God said we may eat of any tree in the garden." That's not what God said. If you go back to Genesis 2, God said, "You may freely eat." So you go, "Well, what's the big difference?" She's beginning already to see God not as generous as he is. So whenever sin comes in, Satan's going to lie to you. You're going to try to reinterpret scripture to cleanse your conscience, to do something you know you shouldn't.

Then you're going to see God as restrictive, right? You're going to see God as, you know, here's what people tend to think: If my life were biblical, I'd be miserable. If I do what God wants me to do, I'm not going to be happy. So immediately, Satan wants Eve to see God as restrictive. Guys, if you're a Christian, this is how free you are. This is what the Bible says: As a Christian, you are free to do whatever you want, except sin. That feels like an enormous amount of freedom.

What Satan wants you to do is he wants you to focus on the one tree you can't have instead of every other tree you can freely eat of. The second thing she does is she adds to God's word. She's getting religious. So if you go back to chapter two, the command said, "Do not eat of the tree." She says, "And God says we can't touch the tree." God didn't say that. This is what religious people do. They add a lot more rules.

Now, if personally she decided, "I don't want to touch the tree because it'll be too tempting," great. But that's not what God said. The third thing she says, and this is harder to see in the English, but you can still see it, is she says, "If I eat of this, we should not eat of this tree, lest we die." That's not what God said. God said, "You will surely die." "Lest you die" is a softer way to say, "The most literal translation, most likely if we do this, we'll die," which is exactly what happens.

Okay, listen, you want to do something you shouldn't. You start to question God's word. You start to see God as not generous. Then you start to believe there are no consequences if you give into this. And Satan is going to be really excited. Look at this. He's like, "Look at, look at verse four. But the serpent said to the woman, as soon as she says, 'lest you die,' yeah, yeah, yeah. Don't even worry about that."

Because the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die." Now, what's interesting is, I think in our culture today, it's very hard for people to think that there are no consequences for sin. Because you can look around. I mean, we have Facebook now. You can watch your friends' lives from high school unfold. A lot of times you'll see, "Oh man, yeah, they're experiencing now in their 50s the consequences for their sin in their 30s." It's very easy to see this. You just need a long enough time horizon.

But, so I think it's harder for Satan to get us to believe the lie that sin doesn't have consequences in this life. But I think Satan wants us to believe the lie that sin does not have consequences in the next life. That somehow we can live a life however we want to live. We don't need to repent. We don't need to trust Jesus. We don't need the cross of Christ. We don't need to put our faith in Jesus, and we're going to be okay.

This is why very rarely will anyone ever talk about hell, let alone hear a sermon on hell. This is Satan's strategy to get us to not even think about the consequence for us. And by the way, this is interesting. Why were they told by God not to eat of the tree? They were only given one answer. The answer they were given is, "If you do this, you'll die." They weren't told all of the other reasons that would happen. They weren't told all of the positive things that would happen if they did obey.

Here's why: Because God wants us to trust him in our obedience. There is, in some sense, sometimes a mystery to exactly why God asks us to do what he asks us to do. Sometimes you don't fully understand why until you've obeyed over a course of a long period of time. That's the truth.

So anyway, watch this. So, verse five, "For God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God." I want you to see this. This is profound. Satan promises them something if they give in to the sin. So, "Hey, there won't be consequences." And he says another thing will happen: "You'll be like God."

Now, here's the big idea. Satan promises them things they already have. They already are like God. There's nothing more like God on earth. That was what chapter one was all about. They're made in the image of God, and they're told to be fruitful and multiply and subdue and have dominion. I mean, there is nothing more God-like than Adam and Eve. But here, listen.

Satan wants you to try to get by sinning what God gave you already by grace. So, we think we need to sin. We need to break God's law to get God's blessing. No, we don't. It doesn't work that way. We can't get by sin what God gave us by grace. Sometimes we're sinning to get an identity in something. It's like, "No, God's already given us an identity."

But then the second thing, he says, is that you'll know good and evil. They already knew good and evil. "Hey, it's good to not eat of the tree, and it's evil to eat of the tree." So they already had an understanding of good and evil. Here's what God doesn't want us to know: God did not want us to know evil by experience. And we've all tasted that.

So what Satan does is, well, let's just look at the actual temptation itself. It's unfolding, but the temptation comes to a climax in verse six. So when the woman, and I'm going to show you this, these are, in this one verse, the three temptations in every person's life. Here's where they are. So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that is the temptation to have, and that it was a delight to the eyes, that is the temptation to feel, and that the tree was desired to make

one wise, that is the temptation to be, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave to her husband who was with her, and he also ate.

Every temptation in your life is going to be all three of those or a mixture of one of those. It'll be the temptation to have, the temptation to feel, the temptation to be. By the way, that's why people want lots of money for different reasons. Some want it because they want the temptation to have. That's possessions. Sometimes it's because they want the temptation to be or feel. That's pleasure. Sometimes it's because they want the temptation to be. That's power, prestige, status.

What happens in the temptation, and it's helpful just to have the right language as you think about what's happening to you. So in a temptation, sometimes what you're tempted to is it's the temptation to have. Which really, it's not wrong to have stuff, right? You've heard this. It's not wrong to have stuff. It's wrong for stuff to have you. It's not wrong to have desires. It's wrong when desires become demands. You've heard things like this before.

But what happens is it's a spirit of entitlement that God's holding out on me something I deserve otherwise to have. Then, of course, materialism and consumerism come alongside us. The temptation to have is massive in our culture. If you get really honest, there's something about our sinful nature that the temptation to have is usually this: It's usually to have that which is forbidden.

There's just something about what's forbidden. I mean, I remember being in middle school, early high school, and I still have great parents, had great parents, and they told me, "You can have any CD." CDs were before Spotify and iTunes and all these things. They would say, "You can buy any CD you want as long as it's not parental advisory." And I wanted those parental advisory CDs so badly. I would just go look at them at the store. I wonder what it'd be like to have one of those. I wonder what words they say.

I'm serious. My parents, you can watch any PG-13 movie you want, but you can't watch a rated R movie. Oh, I want to go to my friend's house. They're allowed to watch rated R movies there. There's something deep in us. By the way, that's why lust is never satisfied because once you have it, it's not forbidden. You need novelty and something new.

The second temptation, by the way, is the temptation to feel. This is something really good to know. The worse your life is going, the greater this temptation will be for you. People who are just like hanging on to life, oh man, whoo, they're going to be giving over to this temptation all the time. Your marriage falls apart. You lose your job. You go bankrupt. Something horrible happens in your life, and it's like, I don't fully understand how this works, but like all the cheap, instant pleasures of life feel so much better to you than they do to everybody else.

Because you're just like hanging on, and you need something so bad, and you just want to feel because you just feel dead inside. The way that you fight the temptation to feel is you have to have a purpose in your life greater than the cheap pleasures all around you. You'll see this even

among non-Christians. They're like, "Well, I can't get drunk every night. Why? Because I got to get up at five in the morning for my job." And that's purpose. That's actually, and I like my job, and I want to provide for my kids.

I had a dad or two recently say, "Yeah, I stopped drinking." Why? "Because I don't want to be drunk in front of my kids." Okay, well, there you go. There's a purpose greater than your pleasure, and that's exactly what you need. There are a lot of great pleasures, so you better find some really great purposes for your life.

The third is the temptation to be, right? And that's status and power and prestige, and that's to reach beyond what God has created you for. Part of what they're unable to accept is their humanity and their finiteness here. But here's what I think is really interesting, and this was, for me personally, the greatest insight this week is that the temptation takes six verses, and the sin takes half a verse.

I think this is a, because for a lot of us, like, you know, this is a, this is for all of us, I do think, a message for now, but like, this is a message, this is like a warning message to all of us, including myself, I'm saying, that here's the principle: Temptation often is there for a long time before the sin manifests itself. You know, I was talking to a guy one time, I don't know if I've told this story, I didn't tell this story in the first service, it just came to me.

I was talking to a guy one time, and he had had an affair. I was like, this was like the first guy I knew well that did this. Enough time had passed, I said, "What happened?" He said, "Well, dude, I had to go back, and I realized that I noticed this girl, and then I purposely introduced her to my wife so they could become friends. I kept hoping that their friendship would blossom and that she would come over to our house more."

I know that's an extreme example, but he could go back a year or two. I'm just telling you, sometimes you, here's the thing, we need to share our sins, but many of us are not ready to do that. So what you do before you're ready to share your sins is you talk about your temptations. Because part of the, you know, you share your sin, and everyone's like, "What? I didn't even know you struggled, what?"

But if you can talk about your temptations, maybe eventually you could share your sins. You know, if you talk about your temptation, "Hey, I'm at work, and I'm married, and, you know, I'm noticing this good-looking guy and this good-looking girl, and I'm spending too much time with him or her, and it's a temptation, and I need to talk about it, I need to run from it."

You know, "Hey, you know, at night I come home, and, you know, I drink, and I find myself, I'm tempted to keep doing it, to just drink more and more and more." "Hey, I'm finding myself struggling with same-sex attraction." "Hey, whenever I travel, here's what I'm tempted to do when I travel alone." It's like, dude, if you want your community group or your DNA group or your marriage to go to another level, you need to appropriately talk about your temptations because there's nothing, there's no shame in being tempted, guys.

Jesus Christ, the Bible says, was tempted in every way yet without sin. We have to create a culture here where we can talk about our temptations. The sin happens in one verse. It says they eat, right? And she ate, and she gave it to her husband, and then look, pick up verse six. I want to show you this. In verse six, it says, "So she took its fruit." Here's the sin in one verse, half a verse, and ate it and gave it to her husband who was with her.

So, okay, Adam is with her. We don't know when he shows up exactly, but in the Hebrew, the word is elbow to elbow. Basically, here's the principle for men, okay, and for husbands and for fathers, of course for dads. If you do not lead your home, someone else will. So, Adam wasn't leading his home, and then everyone thinks, "Well, I don't lead my home." That's, you know, that's not how it works.

Somebody leads everybody's home. Usually, Satan steps in. Sometimes, social media steps in. Sometimes, your kid's peer group, that's who's leading the home. Sometimes, it's the YouTube channels that they're watching that are leading the home. It's their phone activity that's leading the home. I promise you, somebody's leading the home, and the struggle with men is to be, it's a classic Adam struggle, which is to be passive and silent. That's Adam's sin.

Eve's sin is, you know, she takes the fruit, we already had all that. Adam's sin is, he actually, the Bible says Eve was deceived, and Adam wasn't deceived. It actually says it that clearly. Eve was deceived, and Adam wasn't, which means Adam bears the greater responsibility because he watches his wife walk into sin. Who knows why? Maybe Adam wanted to sin, but he said, "Well, I don't know what's going to happen. I might die, so I'll let her eat first."

I don't know. We don't know how dark people's motives are and where people go. But anyway, the whole point is Adam is passive, and Adam is quiet, and this is, so men struggle with sins of commission. So do women, but I'll talk about men. Sins of commission and sins of omission. Sins of commission is like, I willfully break and cross the line, and I know what I'm doing is wrong, okay? And I do things I shouldn't do.

Men also struggle with sins of omission. It's all the good they fail to do. What I've seen in 20 years of ministry is most men privately struggle with sins of commission when no one else is around. When they're with other people, their family, they struggle with sins of omission. So what'll happen, and I don't do a lot of marriage counseling, but we do a lot of marriage counseling in our church, and we recommend people for marriage counseling.

Whenever you do marriage counseling, you know, you have to get like three to five sessions in to kind of, you're basically just helping people untangle their story, you know? They start talking, and they start talking, and you would think that maybe, you know, and this is not the case, you might think that like, you know, the main problem in marriage is like the guy is a complete, you know, loser, idiot, like he's screaming, you know, he's abusive, he's whatever, like he's just the worst, and that's not what you find.

It takes like three or four counseling sessions, and you're like, "The main issue is this guy doesn't do anything." Sometimes that'll be, you know, "Well, the kids, you know, they're going in all these different directions, well, you know, I didn't say anything." It's like, "Yeah, that's the problem, you didn't say anything." So what happens now is you have the consequences for Adam's sin. It shows up in verse seven.

"Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths." So they become self-conscious in a new way. They realize they're naked. In Genesis 1 and 2, nakedness is a good thing. From now on, as a general rule, when nakedness shows up in the Bible, it has to do with shame, guilt, and vulnerability.

This is interesting. For the first time, Adam and Eve become self-conscious, and they become self-conscious through two means: guilt and shame. So the difference between guilt and shame is guilt is personal; shame is social. So guilt is to the soul what pain is to the body. It tells you something's wrong. If you've been engaging in any type of sin, you'll have guilt. Even if no one else knows about it, you're unconscious.

You'll wake up at 2 in the morning and go, "What am I doing?" But if it gets public and somebody else finds out about that sin, you move, you can feel it in an instant. You move from guilt to shame. Shame is other people see me as a sinner and know what I've done. They have this experience where they are simultaneously guilty over their own sin, and they're feeling shame because the other person, they all know how they've sinned right here.

So they sow fig leaves together, right? They move from what's called the rebellion of the fruit to the religion of the fig tree. They begin to try to cover up their own sin. Now in verse 8, it says this: "So I think this is another clear picture in scripture to male leadership in the home is that even though Eve started the conversation, took the fruit, ate it first, gave it to Adam, when God goes to hold the family unit accountable, he goes and he talks to the man and he says, of course, those famous words, "Where are you?"

It's not that God had lost Adam; it's that Adam had lost Adam. He needed to be reminded of this. So what's amazing is what happens in verse 10 is exactly what happens every time we sin. "And he said, 'I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself.'"

So the first thing we do, once we've given in, now I'm talking about what everybody does once they've given into temptation. Everybody feels guilt, and if it goes public, you feel shame. Everybody only has three temptations: to be, to have, and to feel. But then, here's what happens once you sin. This is going to be the great temptation once you sin: to hide it, to bury it, or to blame it on others.

So you've, the first thing they do is they hide from God, or they hide from each other, they hide from God, then they tell God they were afraid, and that's why they hid. See, maybe you've heard

this before; this is an old adage: You're only as sick as your secrets. You're only as sick as your secrets. We're hiding from, you know, we hide sin; we're so sophisticated nowadays. We hide sin from ourselves with the language we use to talk about it.

It's not pornography; it's adult entertainment. It's not getting drunk; it's having a good time. We have all of these different phrases. We, I mean, think about people when they want to engage in sin. What do they do? Well, sometimes they pay cash. Why? Well, that hides it. Sometimes they have a private browser, or they delete the internet history. Well, that hides it. There's a temptation. The lie, by the way, is the hiding. I mean, that's the constant.

So often, the worst thing about the sin you're engaging in is that it turns you into a liar. Because the lie is the sin that lets every other sin live. But the second thing they do is they blame. Look here. In verse 11, he said, "Who told you you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" Look at what the man says. He actually, watch this, it's subtle. He blames the woman and God.

The man said, "The woman whom you gave me to be with me, she gave me the fruit of the tree, and I ate." So the second thing that we're tempted to do when we've given into a sin is blame everybody else around us. I mean, kids love to blame their parents. Wives love to blame their husbands. Husbands love to blame their wives. Employees, you know, they love to blame their bosses. We love to blame everybody except ourselves, and he even goes and blames God, which is a very common thing.

Today, it sounds something like, "Well, this is just my genetics. This is just the way that God made me. God, why would you give me these desires if you didn't expect me to go? Of course, I'm going to do what I did if you gave me these desires." Right? That's classic blaming God. But then the woman does something that I've seen women do many times. Look here.

Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is it that you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." What does the woman do? She blames, but she does something that uniquely women tend to do when they get in trouble. They get very spiritual very quickly. I've seen this many times. The marriage is falling apart. The kids are acting crazy, and it's like, and we appreciate that mom's a prayer warrior.

But I've just seen women, it's like, "It's the devil, it's demonic, we need to pray about it." It's like, "Okay, we need to do all that, and what have you added to this relationship?" Before we get super spiritual and you get the virtue of being the prayer warrior, let's talk about what you've done. Women tend to get very spiritual and want to blame it on others.

Let me show you this. Let's go to verse 14 because now comes the curses. The Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you've done this," oh, this is important, he will curse the serpent directly, God will. He will curse the domain of the woman, and he will curse the domain of the man. So that's different. He does not curse Adam; he does not curse Eve; he curses their domains, but he directly curses the serpent.

Look here. The Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you've done this, cursed are you above all livestock, above all beasts of the fields. On your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life." Look here. "I will put enmity," that's warfare, that's strife, "between you and the woman, okay, I'm going to come back to that in a second, in between your offspring and her offspring. He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

Now, this is really unique because in the Bible, all the offspring of the Bible, as a general rule, in like 95% of cases, when you're following the offspring, you're tracing it through a male line. You can just go pick up any genealogy or any lineage kind of statement that you have in the Old Testament or the New Testament. There are multiple in Genesis; the book of Matthew starts with one. It's always following, it's like the son of him, the son of him, the son of him, the son of him, you know, and all that.

It's very unique to connect an offspring to a woman, except if you're doing something unique. See, what theologians call this is, they call this, here's a big phrase for your Sunday morning, the proto-evangelion. The proto-evangelion means the first gospel. What this is, is this is the first prophecy of Christ, if you read it again, that there will be enmity between your offspring and her offspring. There will be a battle between the children of God and the children of Satan until an offspring is born, that's Jesus Christ, who will crush the head of the serpent.

So even in the curse on the serpent is a blessing to humanity. But then, the woman's domain is cursed. I want you to understand this. To the woman, he said, "I will surely multiply," okay, this is the first time "multiply" is going to be not something good. "I will multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children."

So the woman's domain, the domain of the home, is cursed. We know this today, but thank God to modern medical science and things like epidurals and different things, you don't feel this quite as much. But the average woman through human history had 12 to 16 kids, half of whom died before they were three. It has always been hard not just to get pregnant, but to stay pregnant, to have children, to raise them.

What it's going to say is what God is saying in this curse is it is going to be very, and every mom knows this, and every dad knows this, it's going to be very, very difficult to have kids, to raise them, to pass on the faith, to have them mature, to send them out. That's going to be difficult in every generation. But then look here. The woman's told a second thing: "Your desire," and it's the desire of control, that's what that word means, "your desire shall be contrary to your husband. You're going to do things the opposite of your husband, and you're going to want to control him. And he shall rule over you."

Now this is the distortion and the dysfunction and the disruption of the marriage relationship, right? Where it's like the man is either passive or domineering, and the woman is, you know, she acts like a doormat, or she's nagging, and she's controlling. So I need to talk about this, that basically part of the curse shows up in the way that a wife tries to control her husband.

How does a wife try to control her husband? Sometimes by marrying a weak man. Because she decides to marry somebody who's weak so that she can control him, and believe me, I've seen this more times than you want to see this, and it never goes well, and everybody's miserable by year three because she resents him for being so weak and pathetic and for having to take care of him. She hates it.

The second thing that women do in trying to control men is they use sex. I mean, this is classic, inside or outside of marriage, but particularly in marriage, the wife uses sex as the reward, punishment, kind of, you know, everything's, if you're good, you get it; if you're not, you don't get it. The husband feels like he's playing offense, and the wife feels like she's playing defense. That's the curse of marriage.

Women do it with their words. They try to control men with their words by nitpicking and demeaning and nagging. They do it by, the fourth way they do it is by manipulating and getting emotional. The reason we're talking about this is because this is some of your marriages. It's like, of course you can't multiply. There's so much dysfunction. Part of what you have to do is you have to figure out how do we live under this curse? How do we try to reverse the curse? How do we relate properly?

The man has his own curse on his domain. Look here. The man, by the way, he gets the first word from God and the final word from God. He gets the first word, "Adam, where are you?" He gets the final word, the curse. It says this, "And Adam, he said, because you've listened to the voice of your wife, because you've eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, you shall not eat of it. Cursed is the ground because of you. In pain, so both domains have pain. You shall eat of it all the days of your life, thorns and thistles it shall bring forth, and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you turn to the ground. For out of it you were taken, for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

So basically, it's saying that the ground is going to work against the man now. Everything a man tries to do is going to take longer, be more frustrating, and cost more money than he ever thought it was going to. This is just what it is. I saw this recently. This is during COVID, but we built this deck on the back of our house, and just the other day it's like, "What is that? There's some damage on the deck." Of course, I call a guy; we have termites. Cursed.

Okay? This is what happens. You build something, it breaks down, and every man thinks there's going to be a time in his life where he has enough money, and everything is okay in his house, and there's no more price. That time is never coming. So here's the temptations of men because of this curse. Number one, to become workaholics. Okay? Men become workaholics because they wake up that the world is cursed.

They're like, "It's not just cursed; it's cursed and there's competition." It's like, "Well then, you probably shouldn't sleep," you know, because there's just something that could always be made

better and always be made faster, and the temptation of a man is to so focus on, you know, the domain of work that he forgets about his family because his domain is so cursed is to avoid it.

Ah, you know, and this is laziness, and this is slothfulness, and this is "I'm not going to get a real job," and this is "Can somebody else work instead of me?" and "Can I live in my parents' basement?" "Can the government send me a check?" I mean, those versions. Here's another really common one, okay? And this is complex, but I'll try just for a second. There are certain men, and I'm talking to married men, who they don't, so remember, the domain of the home is cursed, and the domain of the workplace is cursed, and there's a certain man who wants his wife to bear both curses.

He's like, "I don't, you know, I like going on those nice vacations, and I like not having to worry about money, and I like to, you know, and so, honey, would you mind also working full-time while you watch the kids full-time?" I can see these women. They are exhausted because they are trying, they are trying, but they are bearing the curse of the home fully and the curse of work fully, and it's just too many burdens for one person to carry by themselves.

Every marriage, we're not saying women can't work outside the home, just to be clear, but we're saying in every marriage, you're going to have to have some honest conversations about, because there will be so much dysfunction in marriages because you're not figuring out how to carry these two burdens; both are cursed. Here's another temptation in marriage. One of you thinks the other has the easier burden. Very common. Very common.

Of course, when the kids are young and they're in the house and the diapers need changing, the wife feels like she's cursed with the worst burden. But then when they all leave and she's got all this free time and the husband's still at his work every day, then he can feel like, "What is going on here? What's happening?" It's like, "Okay, we don't want to play that game. We want to come together and say, 'How do we best settle this?'"

The final temptation of men who live in a cursed world is to find a bunch of unhealthy escapes to deal with how much the curse is weighing on them because of how hard their work is. Which is why we'll lead with an encouragement. Why did God, this is a fair question to ask, why did God curse the world? Here's why. Because God, even in the cursing, it is a blessing.

Because here's what God is saying. God is saying, "When a wife or dad, when a husband or mother or father, when their kids rebel against them and they don't do what they want and they feel the pain in childbirth, God says, 'That's exactly how I feel.'" When a man's work doesn't cooperate with them, basically here's what God's saying: "Life itself is going to act toward you the way you act toward me. It's going to rebel against you. It's going to work against your purposes, and in that, you're actually going to cry out to me."

Because when everything's going well, everybody forgets God, and the curse is part of the way God reminds us that we live in a broken world and we need him, which is why as we close, this

part of the Bible ends with the sacrifice. Look here at verse 21. "And the Lord God made for Adam and his wife garments of skin and clothed them."

Now that's amazing because basically what happened is when you sin, you try to cover it yourself. The story ends by saying, "Listen, we can't cover our own sin." As we try to hide it with our own fig leaves, as we try to rationalize it and minimize it and act like it didn't happen and give it a euphemism, he's like, "No, no, the only way that sin can be covered is by God."

The reason I say this is the first sacrifice in the Bible, because where do you get animal skins from? Well, they don't give them up willingly, okay? So you get animal skins from an animal. You only get animal skins from an animal if you kill that animal. That is the first sacrifice. How does God cover sin? This is a type that shows up throughout the rest of the Bible. The way God covers sin is through a sacrifice.

So then we shouldn't be surprised. Thousands of years later, when Jesus Christ shows up, born in the pains of childbirth through a woman. He comes and he lives a sinless life. Remember, he feels three temptations. Do you guys remember he has three temptations in the wilderness? Oh yeah, the temptation to be and the temptation to feel and the temptation to have. Those are his three temptations. He obeyed or he disobeyed.

Remember where he ends up right before he goes to the cross? It's kind of surprising. I got to be there a couple of years ago. He spends his last moments with his disciples before he heads to the cross. Listen to this: In a garden. In the garden of Gethsemane. The very place where they went to the tree and said, "My will, not your will." Jesus goes to the tree and says, "Your will, not my will."

Remember how the curse said that we were going to, by the sweat of our brow, we were going to provide? Well, Jesus Christ sweats drops of blood in the garden as he wrestles with whether or not to go to the cross. Then Jesus goes to the cross. Remember what he's wearing? A crown of thorns. He's literally wearing on himself the curse so that we could be forgiven.

If you'll bow your heads, you'll close your eyes. I just want to give you a chance. I don't know where you are around here. But sin is real, and temptation is near. I'm not going to ask you to raise your hand or do anything embarrassing. I just want you to think right now about where you are. Is the snake talking to you? Are there areas of your life where God is saying, "If your life were biblical, you'd be miserable," where you feel like Satan is saying that?

Are there any areas of your life where you are having that internal conversation, where you're having that fantasy life of what this could look like if you gave into it? I want to give you just a moment right now, just to confess that to the Lord and just to begin to say, "Man, who is somebody that in my life I could begin to talk about my temptations?" Because Christ died to forgive us, but Christ died to set us free.

The church should be the last place that we can be honest about who we are. We can expose our nakedness because we know that Jesus Christ has covered it at the cross. We ask all this in his name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.