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[00:00:00] Genesis, chapter three, verse one, the Bible says now serpent was more cutting than any beast of the field, which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, has God indeed said, you shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said to the serpent, We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the fruit of the tree, which is in the midst of the garden God has said, you shall not eat it. She got that right. Then she adds this, nor shall you touch it. Then she goes back to what he did say, lest you die. Verse four. Then the serpent said to the woman, this is just crazy. You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God knowing good and evil. What a punk. Verse six. So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of it, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her and he ate (loser). Verse 7. The women say amen to that. That's just so classic. Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they knew they were naked and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day and Adam and his wife hid themselves. This is just so sad. Hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, where are you, of course, God knows exactly where he is.

[00:01:43] So he so he said, I heard your voice in the garden. And I was afraid. First time the word fear or afraid appears in the scripture. It's in contrast to love. And I was afraid because I was naked and I hid myself. And He said, who told you? He knows this too. Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat? Total opportunity. He's like dude just own it. Confess it. Come on. So what does the dude do. Well the first dude. The man, then the man said, the woman, the woman whom you gave to be with me. Like, look, it's not me, it's her and really it's you, because everything was cool when it was just you and me, Lord. The woman whom you gave to be with me. She gave me of the tree and I ate. And the Lord God said to the woman, What is this you have done? Girls, before you just like give the dudes trouble. The woman said the serpent deceived me. It's not me. The serpent deceived me and I ate. No one laughs at that. That's just fascinating. The husbands are like, man, I'm too smart to laugh at that pastor. Father, we love you so much. God, we're thankful for the truth of your word, how God your word gets to the core of the issue. It gets to the core. God, don't let us off the hook today. Don't let us off the hook. God, we are going to wriggle. We are going to squirm today. And all of that is just simply a sign that we need to repent. God, we want to to be confronted by you because we know God, you weren't condemning Adam and Eve and you weren't looking to destroy them.

[00:03:38] You're not cruel. You don't look to crush God. You lovingly call us. You give us opportunity, Father. And so please, today, God, make these words more than words. God cause them to have the full weight of impact so that everything that you omnisciently desire to do and every single heart across this room and online, God, it would happen. And that the enemy would have no place, no place in this place, no place in our hearts, no place in our relationships. God consecrate this time in Jesus name. Amen. You can have a seat today.

[00:04:21] There was a woman in England, this is a true story, by the way, there is a woman in England who religiously played the lottery every single week. She played euro millions. And she had this she had this procedure that she went through that she followed meticulously. She would go to the same store. She would buy her weekly lottery ticket and she would bring her lottery ticket home. She would go to her little notebook that she she had and she would write down the numbers. She would record the numbers on that ticket, and then she would take the ticket itself and she would entrust it to the care of her husband. Right. I mean, it's is in his hands. He's keeping them every week. No safer place than, you know, then then giving it to him. Well, this went on week after week. And, you know, she while she never won, she still never gave up. To her surprise, one week when the numbers were released, she looked at the numbers on the screen, she went to her little notebook and she compared the numbers number by number. And number by number it all matched up till she got to the last number and she realized to her great delight that she had one euro millions. She had one euro millions.

[00:05:35] And so so she went to her husband and she said, you're never going to believe this. I've been doing this religiously, consistently week after week. And look at my notebook. Look at the screen. We have totally won. Where's the ticket? And to her dismay, her husband, who had gotten so used to losing every week when she would give him the ticket, he would take the ticket and he would throw it in the garbage can. I know, right? So that euro millions was worth a hundred and eighty one million U.S. dollars. He had thrown one hundred and eighty one million US dollars in the garbage can. Now, can you imagine counseling that couple? Can you imagine that? I mean, is there a doghouse big enough? Is there a dog house? How does like you know, sometimes in marriage relationships we bring stuff up like, hey, you never take out the garbage or, hey, you know, you put the roll of toilet paper on backwards. Could you imagine having your spouse bring up, hey, you know what? You lost us one hundred and eighty one million dollars. Like you can hold that over the head of somebody forever. What a huge loss that was. But it was nothing compared to the loss here in the garden. How big was the fall? I mean, the fall was too big to even be measured. You know, there are so many things to talk about when we consider the original sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. And, you know, of course, one is how devastating is one single sin? Because a lot of times we look at sin and we think, well, we have our way of evaluating and measuring sin and what impact sin has.

[00:07:15] And yet, as we look back to this moment in time, it was just one single denial of being obedient to God. And I think this moment in Genesis Chapter three answers some of the biggest questions in life. You know, we can trace selfishness and greed and hate. We can trace fear and violence and exploitation. We can trace lying and gossip and all evil. Back to this moment here in the garden, I'm not saying today that that is absolutely the all comprehensive answer. But when people talk about evil in the world and wickedness and why it even exists, what do we do as believers in Jesus Christ? We go back to this moment in history. This story is not a fable. It's not myth. It's not a fairy tale. It's not to be taken allegorically. It is actual history. And all evil can be pointed back to this one moment in the garden when Adam and Eve chose to disobey instead of obey. Now, you know, we look at the scripture and we can say, hey, the word of God says why things are the way they are. The world has a different idea, right? Why is there a wickedness? Why is there evil? While the world would say we're all just victims, we're all just victims, like we live in a total culture of victimization today. It's amazing to me how no one's responsible for anything, it seems. And it's convenient too, right? Because, you know, you want to hold some people accountable and make them responsible. But when it comes to you and your moment you want to be the victim, well, that's just what the world says. The world says we're not really responsible for our actions. Or the world says, you know, if circumstances would be different, you know, if it was just a different set of circumstances, a different scenario.

[00:09:08] But, you know, you look at the garden and you couldn't have gotten any more perfect than the Garden of Eden. And yet humanity still sinned. Some people would say, well, you know, there's a psychological issue. It's not really evil or wickedness that we're culpable of or responsible to. The truth is, in some people, there's just a sickness that they're not responsible for or some people in the world would say, you know, the vast majority of us are really good and moral individuals. There's just a couple of bad apples. But the Bible doesn't teach that. The Bible doesn't teach that we're just victims or if circumstances could just be different or there's a sickness that we have. The Bible doesn't teach that there's just a few bad people. The Bible teaches that we are all corrupt with sin. The Bible identifies what the problem is. And it's a very simple three letter word. The word is sin. Malcolm Muggeridge, I believe to be one of the brightest minds of the twentieth century, said this concerning sin and how reticent we are to acknowledge it. He said the sinfulness of man is at once the most unpopular of all teachings, but at the same time the most empirically verifiable. It is on the one hand, the most unpopular, but the most obvious. It is the one that we don't want to hear about the most and were deeply offended when someone says that we're the reason why we are the way we are, we're deeply offended by that. But nothing could be more true. I mean, the data is all there. It's not just that we have to look beyond ourselves to see that reality. We have all we have to do is look inside of ourselves. In a recent Barna survey - just to kind of establish this point - in a recent Barna survey, they were surveying temptation and how and why people think temptation happens.

[00:10:53] 50 percent of the people that they surveyed said they weren't sure why they gave in to temptation. They just didn't know. It was an enigma to them. And only one percent of those people said it was actually because of a sinful nature. Say, wow. Yeah, because that's pretty amazing. That's pretty amazing. I mean, what does that say that says the vast majority of those people who are being surveyed were living in denial, they were living in denial. They didn't want to really acknowledge the reason why it was that they were tempted and they absolutely did not want to acknowledge that deep down inside themselves there was a sinful nature. Why is this important in relationships? Because if you want to transform your relationships, and let me just say this today before I say anything else. If you are in this room today, or watching online, and you don't in some sense want to transform your relationships, I would say you're living in denial. You're living in denial. If you really think you're in a spot where there's no more room for you to grow, where somehow you think you're the relationship guru and you do everything right and you're, you know, the relationship answer man or relationship answer woman. Let me tell you something. You're in sin already in your relationships are probably a lot worse off than you think that they are. Thank you for coming to church. I'm just saying to us today, we all have room to grow, couldn't your marriage be a little better? Well. Now, listen, I know some of you, and if you don't want to answer that question today, I will answer it for you. Yes, you do want it to be a little bit better. Don't you want your relationships in the body of Christ? Don't you want your friendships to be a little bit better? Don't you want this dating scenario that you're in to be a little bit better? If you do want it to be better? If you do want to grow, you have to identify what the problem is.

[00:12:54] You have to identify what the problem is. And I'll tell you what the problem is. Sin is what ruins relationships. Sin is what ruins relationships. You know, as we look at Genesis three, what we identify is that the problem really does start right here. Up to this point has been an amazing story. But what we see introduced here is what the real issue is that we deal with every single day. Now, as we read Genesis Chapter three, what we see is that we have three specific enemies that are fighting against us in our relationships. I said this last week and I'll just say it again. Relationships are not easy. You know, they're difficult. They take a lot of work. There's a lot of self-evaluation that goes into relationships. I mentioned last week that for me, marriage has been probably God's greatest tool in refining me as a believer in Jesus Christ, because I'm confronted with how much of a sinner I am. I wish relationships were easy, but they're not. And it's not just because they're not easy is because we have three enemies that are fighting against us every single day. Number one, there is the anti God that is at work every day in our relationships, the enemy of our soul, the adversary, the devil, the serpent here, the serpent here in Genesis, Chapter three, Satan disguised as a serpent. And he is against everything that God is for in your life. He is against everything that God is for in your life. Like when you have a relationship that is giving glory and honor to the Lord. Let me tell you something. The devil is going to be against that relationship because the devil hates it when God gets the glory. He hates it.

[00:14:42] He hates it when God is worshiped. He hates it when God is magnified. He hates it when people do things God's way. He has always wanted to be worshiped himself. And so what does he do when he sees something that glorifies and honors God? He goes after it. And you know what? He is more than happy if you're living in a place where you're not glorifying and honoring God, he is more than happy to try to keep you in that place. Look, you have the anti God at work in your life. Paul said it like this. We don't wrestle against flesh and blood, but principalities and powers, rulers of darkness, hosts of wickedness and the heavenly places. That is the reality every day in your life. And the devil is not your spouse. We'll talk about that later on. Somebody say amen to that this morning, right? You're like, OK, hey, man. You're going to need counseling after that. The second enemy, the second enemy in your life is the corrupt influence all around you. The second enemy in your life is the corrupt influence all around you. You live in a world that is fueled by anti God philosophies. We'll talk about that in a second. And the third enemy that you have, so you have the adversary, the devil, you have the corrupt, ungodly anti God philosophy or influence of the world, the culture that we're in. And the third enemy is the worst enemy, the hardest enemy to deal with. You know what the third enemy is? Yourself, yourself, like you are the biggest impediment to God glorifying relationships. Can somebody by experience, say amen to that, just by experience if you don't have experience in that. All right, so so listen, three enemies.

[00:16:28] Number one as we read the story, I want to remind you today that there is an enemy who hates you. There is a devil who is against you. And the tricks, let me say this about the adversary, he has no new tricks in his bag, all right? He has no new tricks in his bag. What you're going to see today is a template. It's a pattern that he still uses every single day against the people of God. So what does he do with Eve here? The first thing right, there's this beautiful Garden of Eden. There are multitudes of trees that they can enjoy as they've been given the responsibility to oversee the garden and to represent God in that capacity. There's only one condition that in the midst of the garden next to the tree of Life is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And God had given the command, he'd given the command to Adam. Difference of opinion on this. With respect to commentators, some people say it was just to Adam and Adam passed it on to Eve. Some people say that Eve was present, or at least that God probably reiterated the command when Eve was present. Either way, she knew exactly what it was that God had said. What does the devil do? Well, I want you to notice here in verse one, he comes to Eve there in the Garden of Eden. He is disguised as a serpent and he seeks to confuse her concerning God's word. He seeks to confuse her concerning God's word. And he says this, by the way, when he asked this question, he's not asking in the sense of hoping that she'll fill in the right information. He's asking with hubris. He's asking with arrogance.

[00:18:02] He's asking, seeking to get her to doubt what it is that God had said. Has God indeed said you shall not eat of every tree of the garden? The first thing he wants to do is he wants to throw her off balance. He wants to get her to be confused concerning the word of God. He wants to lead her to a place where she is waffling and waffling, she does. Waffling, she does. I mean, she responds with part of God's truth and then she adds to it, you know? Yeah, he said don't eat of it. But then she also adds that he said, do not touch it. So she adds to the scripture. But she's not speaking in a way that is, you know, as if it's a once and for all statement. This conversation is over. I'm standing on the word of God and there's no moving me off this spot. No, she becomes confused about what it is that God has said. Listen, it is so important for us to know what the Bible says about relationships. I mean, it's great for you, maybe, maybe, maybe not to have a whole bunch of self-help books on your shelf. But if you're not going to the book, none of those other books are going to help you at all. Because the adversary, first and foremost is going to try to confuse you concerning what it is that the Lord has said. So let me just ask you today, do you know your Bible? Are you spending time in the scripture like Bible reading and scripture meditation is a lost discipline in the church today. And I don't think that we say it like this, but the way that we live demonstrates that, hey, why do I need to do that? Because pastor will give me the message on Sunday.

[00:19:50] Well, pastor's message on Sunday is only supposed to complement your own personal time of devotion throughout the week. When you were born again, you understood that you're called the trust in the Lord with all of your heart, lean not on your own understanding. Acknowledge him in all of your ways. And he is the one who leads and directs your path. Somebody said this we assist the devil in his designs to destroy us when we don't know what it is that God has said. Don't expect your relationships to be glorifying to God if you don't know what God expects in the first place. The second thing is, you know, he wants her to doubt the warning that God gave. He wants her to doubt the warning that God gave. Now if the impact, the import, the freight of this doesn't hit you hard, man, you need to reread it. Because it's just astounding to me that the devil has so much pride and hubris that he is willing to go in the midst of God's garden. He's willing to go into the midst of God's garden and deny what it is that God himself has said. Right. She wraps up her statement by rightfully saying, Lest you die right. God said, don't eat, because in the day you eat of it, you will die. And then he has the hubris in God's house, in God's house to say, you will not surely die. I want to remind you guys I didn't say this at the first service so it's a special treat for you, today. The devil goes to church. The devil goes to church, you know, if you don't think that in the midst of a service, when God is speaking truth to your life, if you don't think that the adversary is not going to be right there denying every word that it is that God's God is saying, like you're living in a different realm.

[00:21:31] You're living, you say, well, pastor, this place is consecrated. It is. But there still is an adversary. And you know what he wants to do? The son of man, scatters the word. When the word is preached and that seed falls on soil. Some of it falls by the wayside where the devil, because it's not received with faith and obedience, the devil snatches it up and takes it away. Right away, he says, listen, you're not going to die. I know God said this, but the truth of the matter is this is what's going to happen. God said, you're going to die. I'm telling you, you're not. When you are in the midst of temptation. Let me just boil this down to all of us today. You are either going to believe Satan's word or you're going to believe God's word. You're either going to believe Satan's word or you're going to believe God's word. Because the devil will be there all day long saying to you, hey, listen, it's OK. You'll get a pass. It doesn't matter. It's not that big of a deal. You can go ahead and do this or that, and there will be no consequences. Absolutely not true. The third thing we see here is that he desired to deceive her concerning God's character. He wanted to deceive her concerning God's character. And he says in verse five, listen, the real deal is this. God knows in the day that you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. So in other words, the devil's like, hey, listen, God's been holding you, holding out on you the whole time. God's been holding out your life could be better. God knows that day,

[00:23:09] if you do choose to eat it, you're going to be just like him. And that's what he's concerned about. He's concerned that if you do that thing, you will be like him. There's this experience that you can have that will, in fact make you better. And so the temptation here was to be deceived concerning God's character, to think somehow that God was holding out, to think somehow that God had not given to them everything that they needed. Look, this is why the Bible is so clear about the danger of covetousness. You know, because at the root of covetousness is this idea that God somehow has been holding out and not giving something to us that we think would actually make our life better. If you look at these three temptations, these tricks are the devil has in his bag. I believe they can all be boiled down to one lie. And the lie is this. The lie is that you can operate autonomously with impunity. That's the lie. That you can operate autonomously with impunity. Let me say it a different way that you can play God and avoid the consequences. That's the real deal here. The real deal is the deification of self and the deification of self is just simply pride. And I would say to you that pride is the chief and root of all sin. It's making the choice to play God, to think that we know better than God knows himself, to place ourselves on that throne that only God deserves to sit on, and then to think somehow that the consequences will be something that we escape. I want you to think about this in terms of a particular sin. Just think about the anatomy of a sin. I'm just going to pick sexual sin here today just because.

[00:25:00] So remember, God made sex. OK, can I say that on Sunday morning? Thank you for coming to church. Sex is good. God made it. It's not like, you know, Adam and Eve all of a sudden started doing this thing and God was shocked and you know, sex was part of the fall. No, that's not that's not the case. We all know that. Right? Big, big boys. Big girls. We can acknowledge that and say amen. Thank you. God, he made it. It is good. It is good if it's experienced within the parameters that he set, right. Marriage between one man and one woman. That's what we're talking about. We're talking about a commitment, a consecrated commitment before God between one man and one woman. And in that relationship, God has accommodated the two to become one flesh. Any type of sexual gratification outside of those parameters is sin. Any type of sexual, and there are all sorts of words in the English version of the scripture that identifies sexual sin. I mean, we're talking about fornication and we're talking about adultery. And the Greek word for fornication is porneia. So, like, you can fill in all the blanks on that. But sex, I'm saying to you today, sex is good if it's experience within the parameters of God's established prescription. If it goes outside of that, there's sin that's the fruit and sin.That's the root. Sin that's the fruit is the lust, the greed, the selfishness. All of those are motivating factors. Lust, greed, selfishness, indifference. Indifference is the opposite of love, indifference towards a person. Where the truth is this, you're doing something that is disobedience to God and you don't really care about what God thinks and you really don't care about that other person because all that matters is that your needs are met.

[00:26:56] That's not love by the way. If somebody says that they love you and they're leading you into sexual sin, they don't really love you. There's sin that's the fruit. But the root of all that is the sin of pride. It is a total disregard of God and putting ourselves in his place. Let me say it like this. Every time we sin, we remove God from being God in our lives. Every time we sin, we remove God from being God in our lives. If you're a Christian today, I'm not saying that you stop being a Christian, but I am saying that you are choosing to worship something other than God. You're choosing to worship yourself. You're taking God off of the throne of your heart and you're putting yourself and your own desires there. That is the deification of self. So enemy number one obviously is the adversary. Enemy number two, this is true, sin spreads like a virus in our culture. So the world around you, the world around you has an anti God philosophy. By the time we get to Genesis Chapter six, by the time we get to the life of Noah, the world is so totally corrupt, influenced by violence and all things that are anti God that God's like we're starting over. Like it is so bad. It is a petri dish of sin. It is a virus that has gone wild and it is so bad. Everyone is so infected, the culture is so off track that we just need to start over. By the way, we are living in the days of Noah. The Bible says, the Bible says before the coming of the son of man, just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be. Where we see the extent of it, evil is being called good and good is being called evil.

[00:28:51] Which brings me to this point, right? As we acknowledge that, acknowledge the culture is aligned against all those things, against all those things that please God. It brings me to the simple point. Culture won't guide you to glorify God in your relationships. The culture around you is never going to counsel you, is never going to advocate the way of God in your personal relationships. Why is that the case? Because the culture that we live in is anti God in the first place. Now, listen, we have to be careful with this because sometimes what happens is there's a reductionism. We just start to reduce the world we live in to for God against God, God culture, not God culture. It's not just that we're against that culture, we're against the people in that culture. And I'm saying to you today, we've got to be surgical, right? We're against the philosophy. We're against the anti-God sentiment and way of operating, but we're not against the people. The people need to be born again. Lost people need to be saved. It's not a culture where culture war, where we think, oh, God, just wipe them off the face of the earth. No, the Bible says for God so loved the world. We can acknowledge that the way of thinking, the philosophy, the system that's operated by is ungodly. But those people need Jesus Christ, don't go to the culture. Don't go to the culture to get guidance and direction on your relationships. I'm not saying that you won't find truth there from time to time, but all truth is God's truth and all of God's truth that you need is in the scripture. I'm not militating for isolationism here either. But listen, before you're in a bunch of other books, make sure you're in the book.

[00:30:39] Make sure you're in the book. And yeah, I mean, that's true. And don't expect like I hear this all the time, I hear people say, well, you know, Pastor, the truth is it's a really hard relationship. And so I'm just going to I'm just going to get a divorce. I'm going to get a divorce. I have all these friends, all these friends who are saying to me, hey, listen, you're in a really bad situation. And I know sometimes people are the victims and I'm not denying that. But for the sake of this illustration, I have all these friends that are saying, hey, it's a horrible situation and you deserve out of that. I'm like, well, where do your friends go to church? Well, they don't go to church like, well, how long have they been on the Lord? Well, they don't really know the Lord, they're not Christian. And you expect, you expect to get good godly wisdom and counsel? The truth is this, oftentimes when we are doing the wrong thing, we will find the people that will advocate our position. We will find the people that advocate. You can find somebody all day long that's going to reinforce how right you are in your sin. But you need to remember that that voice is never going to lead you into God glorifying relationships. John said it like this in his first epistle. If anyone loves the world, we're talking about the system of the world, the philosophy of the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the father is not in him. For all that's in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life is not of the father, but is of the world.

[00:32:09] The third thing, that third enemy is this. We are all infected. We're all we are all sin positive. All right. I know. I know. That's on all of our minds today. Are we? Are we how do we test? Well, let me give you the test today from the scripture. We are all sin positive. It's not just that the world is toxic. We are toxic. The Bible says the heart is deceitful and wicked above all things. Who could knew it? Who can knew it? Who can knew it? Who can knew it. Only God knews it. All right. The Bible says that God knows the heart. He tests the mind. Somebody said this some time ago, I think it was DL Moody. He said, we sin because we're sinners. We aren't sinners because we sin. The problem is on the inside. Right? The problem is on the inside. Now, having said all of that and you guys, I am ten minutes ahead of where I was in the last service. I know you should be thankful today and and and so let me say let me say this before we hit this next section, I almost cut this teaching into two sections because I went so long in the previous service, but I really felt like I needed to continue. But the this is what I said to them. I said, I'm not going to continue unless I have absolutely everyone's attention. Right. OK, so because this next section is really important, all right, it's really important. I'm not going to say it's going to be easy. All right. But it's really important. So I need your attention. That means you're not getting up and walking out. And the agreement that I have with the team is that if you do get up, we're going to take your picture.

[00:33:53] And the next next Sunday, we're going to show it on the screen and just identify you as somebody who wasn't paying attention. So. I mean, this might make you squirm, squirm a little bit. So what went wrong, what went wrong in the garden? And how can we live truth in such a way that we don't make the same mistakes that Adam and Eve made? And, of course, listen, we're all going to struggle, but we want to make sure that we're walking in the truth. Number one is this I think that she was too close to the wrong tree. I think she was too close to the wrong tree. There are a lot of trees in the garden that were permissible. And yet of all of the trees that she is, she could be next to in the garden enjoying we find her next to a tree that she probably shouldn't have been next to. And not only was she present in a place that she shouldn't have been, she was contemplating. She was thinking she was meditating. She was considering. You know, I want to remind all of us today, God has given us so many good things to enjoy. Make sure you are drawn to those things, not to those things that he has forbidden. She was physically and mentally in a place that she shouldn't have been. She was thinking, the Bible says, and she saw. And I want you to think about all the different things that she was considering. She saw that it was good for food. She saw that it was pleasant to the eyes, that it was desirable to make one wise. Look this isn't a moment of thinking. This is deep, considerate meditation. She was pondering this thing.

[00:35:37] And let me tell you something. The truth is this temptation is always going to be tempting. Even as a Christian, sometimes, you know, you give your life to Christ and your life is just all jacked up in a mess and you get saved. You're like, man, thank God I'm never going to be tempted anymore. It's not like that. It's not like that. God allows temptation its full appeal. God does not take it away. Now our hearts change towards it. There's no doubt about it. But temptation is still tempting. Otherwise it wouldn't be temptation. And so I want to encourage us today. Don't get close to sin. Don't get close to sin. Don't entertain sin. All of that starts in the mind. It starts with what we accommodate in our thought life. Your brain, your thinking is like a garden and the seeds that you plant one day will bear fruit. And so the truth is this and I know you know this, but let me just beseech with you for a moment. If we plant unforgiveness, if we plant sexual sin, if we plant pride, if we plant gossip, if we plant anger, right. Thoughts of anger that we entertain and consider if we plant revenge and vengeance. The truth is this what we accommodate in our mind, first of all, that's displeasing to God. We're not just responsible for our behavior. We're responsible for our attitude. And a lot of us our behavior might be right in our relationships, but our attitude stinks. Our attitude stinks. And how's that for a deep theological thing to say? And those those thoughts, those thoughts that we plan one day are going to bear fruit. So the Bible says, how can a man or a woman take fire into his or her bosom and not be burned? It's the small compromises.

[00:37:33] It's the small compromises we make. It's not how close you can get to the line is how far you can get away from it. As a Christian, don't be thinking. Well, I mean, I can cozy up, I can get this close. And this is where the line of demarcation is. And if I just step over that, then I'm in real trouble. No, you're already in trouble. You're already in trouble. Like, if you're thinking about how close you can get without it being an infraction, you're already in trouble. You're leaning the wrong way. Do you understand what I'm saying? You're leaning into the wrong thing. Your whole being should be moving in the other direction. I think that Eve shouldn't have had really the conversation in the first place. And I want to for sure give grace on this, because even if the truth is she was deceived, right? Satan came disguised in the form of a serpent, and so he disguised himself. She wasn't immediately aware. But I would say that once the conversation started going in the wrong direction, she should have bailed. She should have cut it off. She should have she should have left. She should have known in the moment right then, even though she may not have recognized and realized it was the adversary because he was disguised as a serpent when he started saying things that were in conflict with God's word, she should have high tailed it out of there. I want to remind you today that behind every temptation is the devil. Behind every temptation, like if you and I could in the moment that we're tempted, pull the veil back and we could see that that odious, wicked anti God figure it would make our decision making process so much easier.

[00:39:20] But, you know, we don't have the opportunity to do that. All we have is the word of God that says it. Who is behind temptation? The adversary. The devil is behind temptation. God is never behind temptation in your life. You know, I've run into circumstances and situations Rachel and I have when we're counseling people and maybe a woman says, you know what? God is doing this amazing thing in my life. You know, he's brought this man into my life and he really loves me. My husband doesn't really love me. My husband's not really after God. He's not really pursuing God. But this guy that God has brought into my life, he checks all the boxes. He's what I've always been longing for. And then we put the brakes on and say, that guy's not from God, that guy's not from God. It's impossible for that guy to be from God because you're already married and God is never going to tempt you to sin. It's impossible for God to do that. You and I need to remember that behind the temptation is the adversary. Maybe maybe there's a temptation to jump into a social media dogpile and it's just gossip and slander and and, you know, maybe some of it you think is true. And all of this stuff just needs to be unloaded about the person. Is God really behind that? Is God really behind that? Is that thing going to bring edification and grace to the hearers? Is that thing putting the righteousness of God and the love of God and the compassion and mercy of God on display. Has the appropriate process of Matthew 18-ing somebody? I'm just saying, all kinds of crazy stuff today. I don't know.

[00:40:57] I'm all messed up. Has the appropriate process been walked through because my Bible doesn't say, hey, just post it on social media, my Bible says go to the person. You're like well pastor there wasn't social media. Shut up. All right. You know what I'm talking about? My Bible says, go to the person. Look, the coward's way. It's not just the coward's way. It's the ungodly way is to jump on some social media dogpile and go after somebody when the Bible has already given us clear prescription. God is never behind that. Matthew 5:29 says this, if you're righ eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it away from you. What a picture that is. We got video here this morning. No, I'm just kidding. We don't. Moving right along for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish than for your whole body to be cast into hell. So the devil is the enemy, right? Your kids aren't the enemy. Your friends aren't the enemy, your spouse is not the enemy. Say to your spouse right now, if you're married here and your spouse is with you, say to your spouse, right now, babe, you are not the enemy. Awesome. So, listen, the third thing is there was no mutual support, there was no mutual support. Where in the world was Adam? Where was Adam? I'll tell you where he was. He was AWOL. He was MIA. He was he was a failed leader. He was a failed leader. And and there's different views on this. You know, my view is that Adam was actually with Eve when all of this was rolling out. Verse 6 says at the very end, she also gave to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. They're different views on that.

[00:42:43] You can have your view and I have my view and whatever. You're wrong, I'm right. No I was I was not going to say it. I'm so sorry, I just couldn't help myself. That was temptation, right, and I should have known who was behind it. Back to Adam, churches and families are missing strong male spiritual leadership today, churches and families are missing strong male leadership today, Adam, at whether he was or wasn't there in the moment he ultimately was there, he could have put a stop to this at any time. He could have put a stop to this at any time. He could have said, hey, babe, listen, let's just slow down. There's a better way here. We need to go to the father. We need to go to God. That's what we need to do in this moment. But he failed. He failed in this moment. And you know what? Men are failing today in churches across our country, 60 percent of the people who go to church are women. Thank God for the women in the church of God. That's all I have to say. But while we're thankful for the women, we have to recognize as well that there is supposed to be good godly male leadership, good godly male leadership, men who are not just abdicating that role of the priest of their home. Not just abdicating that role in the church or in the marketplace. Not just looking to their wife. This happens all the time. Hey, Pastor, I take care of the I take care of the the the provision. I bring home the bacon. I'm the breadwinner. That's my part. She handles the spiritual stuff. I say you are all messed up. Listen the provision's important, the spiritual leadership is more important.

[00:44:39] You've abdicated the spiritual role that God has given to you, just like Adam did in the garden. What should he have been doing? He should have been guiding his wife to the Lord. He should have been guiding her to the Lord. Healthy relationships lead people to God, not away from God to obey God, not to sin. That's what healthy relationships do when there's a good, healthy relationship. People are drawn deeper into the relationship with Jesus Christ. If you're dating, let me give you an example. If you're dating right now, a key indication that you are with the right person is that in this relationship you're growing in your relationship with the Lord, you're growing closer to Jesus Christ. Now, you may say, well, pastor, he's he's handsome, he's got personality, and he's got these ambitions and desires and all of these things that he likes, they all match up. And this is the guy for me. And I say to you, if you're not growing closer to Jesus in this relationship, he's not the guy for you. Well pastor that will happen when we get married. Really? Are you sure? Like what, what proverbial switch is going to get flipped when you make that commitment between God and others, you think all of a sudden he's going to become a lover of God? No, the fact is this. If he's not loving God now, he probably won't be loving God then. And because there's more pressure in marriage, he'll think he has more of a reason not to love God in that situation than he does right now. Good godly relationships lead people deeper into their relationship with Jesus Christ. I think about parenting in this regard. You know, I think it's important for us as parents to remember that the purpose of parenting is to disciple our children.

[00:46:19] That's the purpose of parenting. It's not so that we could have some housekeeping done for free or, you know, somebody to scrub the pool or, you know, something like that. They're not indentured servants. They're a little disciples of Jesus Christ. And our purpose our purpose is to disciple them. And our kids get more from the way we live than from what we say. Our kids get more from the way we live than from what we say. We can talk about God all day long, but if we're giving them an example of sin, we are not leading our children the way they need to be led. Parents, let's make sure together that the example that we're leaving our children makes them want to walk with God, not to reject God. And of course, having a Christian school, we deal with this all the time. Like, why are you struggling in your relationship with God? You know, your whole family goes to church. Yeah, my family goes to church and it's a show on Sunday. But let me tell you, the rest of the week, it is utter chaos and madness. I mean, there have been times in this church where I've had parents say to me, hey, you know what? We we're throwing a party for our kids and we're providing the alcohol. And we just want to if our kids are going to sin. If our kids are going to sin we want to provide a place for them to sin safely and I'm like, are you going to the dispensary? Or like, what is wrong with you? Like, what are you smoking? That is the most insane thing I have ever heard in my life. It is the worst possible thing that you could ever do.

[00:47:55] And you would be so surprised at how many parents think, well, my kids are going to do it anyway. So I'm just going to provide a place, a safe place for them to do it. No what you're doing is you're advocating ungodly behavior and that is going to hurt your kids and may make you feel better, friend. But you're not being a parent. There you have it. All right. The next thing is this running from God instead of running to God. Right. This this was a major failure on their part. They ran from God instead of running to God. They were overcome with fear and with shame and with broken relationship. All of that was a result of sin. All of it was a result of sin. But what they should have done is they should have turned to God first. Like, say, for instance, Adam did blow it, right. He ate. Well, it didn't have to even end there. He could have they could have together gone to God to not be foolish enough to think that if they would just hide behind a tree, I mean, they're hiding in a garden from God. Think about how crazy that is, how deceived you have to be. And if they together collectively would have just run to God with their problem, with their failure, with their struggle. You know, what God would have done because God is so mercifully to do. He's so mercifully able to do. I want to remind you today, God is the only solution. Choose to run to God with your problems. God can fix your relationship failures. He can do it. He can do it. There may be consequences that persist, but God can do it. Listen, don't don't try to cover yourself and fig leaves, OK? This is a fig leaf, by the way.

[00:49:48] Now, like, do I need to explain to you why that's never going to be able to work and does not that's not going to cover the problem. I mean, they could have picked better leaves, I think. Right? They picked a very complicated small leaf, like it's called the hand leaf. And the hand leaf is never going to cover up your sin. Not only that, but fig leaves are known to be very itchy and scratchy. They're not comfortable. And so, look, not only is it incomplete in covering up the sin, it is it is unbearable. It is unbearable. It will never be able to do what God is able to do. Your greatest failures can become God's greatest miracles in your greatest lessons. If you will choose to give the problem to God. They blame shifted, two more things real quick. They blame shifted instead of choosing to repent, they blame shifted instead of choosing to repent. So the fifth truth to live here is simply this own your sin. Right? Own your sin. What does he do? He's like God. You know what it was Eve, the woman that you gave me, like it would have been so much better if you just kept things the way they were, because she's the reason we're in this situation today. He kicks it down to her. What does she do? She kicks it down to the serpent. Like, obviously, we know we live in a world where we think it's just easier to blame other people. But blaming others will never solve the problem. Blaming others will never solve the problem. From time to time, someone comes to me and says, hey, pastor, you know what? I finally I think I've met the match of my life.

[00:51:20] I'm on marriage number three. And, you know, wife number one didn't work because of this and that. And wife number two didn't work because of this and that. And now I'm on number three and she's this and she's that. And it's amazing. And I'm like, Dude. Listen, let's talk about what the common factor is in all the failure. Ok, the common factor is you. Right? And you know what's going to happen. You're going to bring that same failure into this relationship and you're going to destroy another life, because all along you've been unwilling to accept your own blame in this, to accept your own blame in this. Sin is primarily a vertical term, sin for sure, has horizontal elements to it we can sin against other people. Our sin has consequences in the lives of others. But when we talk about sin, we are saying it is primarily a vertical term. So we can say, hey, it's my friends or hey, it's those Christians or it's my husband, or it's the world all day long. But when we sin at the end of the day, we have sinned against God. David, you know, murdered Uriah the Hittite. He had committed adultery with Bathsheba. Nathan the prophet - a year had gone by and David had concealed and hidden and stuffed down this sin. He tried to cover it up. He had fig leaves all over the place. And finally Nathan came to him and he gave them the story. And David's like righteously indignant because, you know, when you're walking in sin, you can be righteously indignant about the failure of others and totally be ignoring your own stuff. You know that, right? You know, oftentimes the people who are most righteously indignant are the ones who have the most sin happening in their life? Because they're happy to project the problem being out there when the truth is this, it's all in here.

[00:53:13] And there's this absence of compassion and mercy because they've never even really been walking in it with God themselves. And so David hears this word. He's righteously indignant. And Nathan says, you're the man, you are the man. And David penned Psalm 51. But it was after it was after a year of agonizing. And he says in the Psalms that his soul was literally his bones were rotting within him until he took ownership. And he says in Psalm 51, God against you and you alone have I sinned. I'm telling you guys today, it's hard to hear that. But that's the that's the point of transformation. That's the point of change as a point of forgiveness. That's a point of God's grace, as a point of compassion. And you know what? Your own nature, the world around you and the devil himself will push you as far away from that point as he possibly can. To to put it off another week, to put it off another day, to bury it down deep, to blame it on somebody else. The prodigal son. When he came back, he said to his father, he said, against heaven and against you, I've sinned. He got the order right against heaven and against you I have sinned. Listen, if you want to really experience if we want to experience the true power of God in our life, we need to own what belongs to us to own. We live in an age of consent, inevitable. Inevitably, there are people who say, well, listen, you know, it's not really a sin because this person consents to it. They're agreeing. Well, just because you have somebody consenting with you does not mean that you have the consent of God. Just because you have another human being consenting to your behavior does not mean that God consents with it.

[00:55:01] You guys with me today. The final thing is this. I love how the story just wraps up in Genesis Chapter 3. That God's love them, that God loved them. Like, I don't know how you read these verses. I think some people read the voice of God with condemnation and criticism and cruelty and, you know, just a desire to destroy. But that is not the heart of the father. What is he doing? He is pursuing, he's promising and he's providing. He's pursuing he's going after Adam and Eve when he doesn't have to. He goes after them. He promises in Genesis 3:15 that he's going to provide a solution. And then he does provide. He has them remove their fig leaves and he himself sacrifices an animal and clothes them in a tunic. The final thing I want to encourage you with in your relationships, and we'll talk about this more. Thanks for being patient today. Cultivate an atmosphere of forgiveness and reconciliation, cultivate an atmosphere of forgiveness and reconciliation. Reconciliation is always the heart of God. Like you can bear the grudge your whole life. And it's not just other people that get poisoned. It's you yourself. You need to walk like the Lord and you need to be an instrument of forgiveness and reconciliation. Let's pray together.