

Demolishing Strongholds Video Series

God's Way to Spiritual Freedom

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Chapter 3, How Adam's Fall Into Sin
Has Harmed Us

"So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed"



Freedom In Jesus Series

(Part 2)

Chapter 3 How Adam's Fall into Sin Has Harmed Us (Genesis 3:1-4:7)

As we've already shared in previous segments, Adam and Eve's decision to disobey their loving Creator has wreaked havoc on all mankind.

The knowledge of evil they gained by willfully eating the forbidden fruit has devastated humanity. We ALL inherit our sin nature from their one act.

The apostle Paul makes clear the all-encompassing consequence of the first couple's sin: "For as in Adam, ALL DIE..." (1Corinthians 15:22) In this segment and the next, we're going to take a closer look at *how* Adam and Eve's disobedience impacts us today.

Chapters 3 and 4 of Genesis offer vivid insight into the repercussions of their sin. Let's examine the bitter fruit of Adam and Eve's sin, and the effects it's had on us today.

Harms Our Hearing From God (Page 30)

First, our ability *and* accuracy in hearing from God have been harmed. Remember, before their sin Adam and Eve conversed with God in the garden.

"Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God really say, "You must not eat from ANY tree in the garden?'" (Genesis 3:1)

Right here the stop light should have flashed before Eve. God only said, "you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."

But rather than fleeing the temptation or rebuking the lying serpent, Eve decided to hang around. By choosing to listen to Satan rather than stay within the boundaries God had established, she made herself vulnerable to further seduction.

There is an important lesson for us here — one that Paul warned the Corinthian believers about: "Do not *go beyond* what is written."

The entire Bible ends with a sober warning against altering God's Word:

"I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book" (Revelation 22:18,19).

The Bible is one of God's ways of telling us about Himself. His Word establishes for us the freedom and boundaries of our relationship with Him, and with other people. It's critical that we not alter His purpose and intent as Eve did.

Not only did Eve hang around too long entertaining deception, she also misquotes God.

"The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, "You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you MUST NOT TOUCH IT, or you will die"' (Genesis 3:2.3).

We all know from our own reading of the Bible that God never told her that. Eve had already noticed the fruit looked good, so she was going to have it.

Isn't that what many do today when they face temptation? They want something even if it's against God's will. Rather than resist the devil as Eve should have done, they're willing to alter His Word to fulfill their evil intent. (See James 1:14,15)

In over 27 years of following Jesus, we've encountered so many Christians who are desperately seeking God's guidance but not finding it.

A major reason we've found when people aren't receiving specific guidance is related to another warning our Lord gives us in His Word: "'When I called, they did not listen; so when they called, I would not listen,' says the LORD Almighty" (Zechariah 7:13).

We encourage you to be very careful in how you interpret, and apply God's Word in your life. If you're true to the written Word, then the Holy Spirit can entrust you with any specific guidance you may be seeking from Him.

And things only get worse if you don't repent and change. If you're not experiencing God's guidance, you'll tend to tolerate increasing sin in your life. Deceiving voices will prompt you to make decisions that don't align with God's Word. This atmosphere provides the necessary ingredients for strongholds.

Without God's revelation, your confusion and frustration just get worse. You rely more on your own sinful inclina-

tions, and you're attracted to the WORLD'S ways that oppose GOD'S ways. Your condition is a double whammy. First, as we saw in chapter 2, the stronghold blocks out the truth you're seeking. And, since you're NOT experiencing victory through hearing God's truth, you tolerate more sin in your life.

Engrave this truth indelibly on your mind: If you allow your sinful thoughts to lead to habitual sinful actions, you'll not only fail to experience God's guidance, you'll also lay the foundation for other demonic influences in your soul.

Harms our Belief In God (Page 31)

Because of Adam's Fall, our *belief* in God has been harmed. We get a peek at the evil motive of Satan to disrupt our trust in our God when we look at the enemy's insinuations to Eve.

"'You will not surely die,' the serpent said to the woman. 'For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil'" (Genesis 3:4,5).

The framework of our faith calls us to "trust IN THE LORD with all our heart and lean not on our OWN understanding." (Proverbs 3:5) When we doubt our God's trustworthiness, we scramble to fill the void. In effect, we make *ourselves* to be higher than God.

Don't overlook this serious point. GOD knows Who He is, and He knows without doubt that He truly is trustworthy. The whole *universe* depends on Him holding it together.

ALL sin is wrongdoing. (See 1 John 5:17.) But, there are sins we can commit that

reflect our lack of belief in our Lord's trustworthiness. These types of sin attack His very character. An example of this kind of sin is *presuming on the future*. Many do this by getting into needless debt. Others do it by making future plans without the Holy Spirit's guidance. The future is God's domain, and when you presume through debt or ungodly planning, you display unbelief.

James clearly understood the connection of unbelief and presumption when he warns:

"Now listen, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money'. Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes" (James 4:13,14).

Much of God's character is found in His many Names. (Some Names of God: Provider; Protector; All-powerful; All-merciful; Abba Father; All-wise; Prince of Peace) Often by knowing His Names you can help yourself avoid sins that affront Him.

Perhaps an analogy will illustrate the difference between sins that DON'T affront God's character and those that do:

A wife prepares a wonderful supper for her husband but he gets stuck in traffic on the way home. Her feelings may be hurt, but her character isn't affronted.

The same couple are walking through a shopping mall. He keeps turning around to ogle every good looking girl who walks by. Do you think her character is affronted now?

You bet! Her uniqueness as his supposed only beloved is being assaulted by his lusting after others. HE may not see it that way, but God certainly does! (See Matthew 5:28)

Unbelief in God is distrust in Him. And, the demons spend a lot of effort trying to trap the followers of Jesus here. They often delude people into misperceiving the true character of God. They portray Him as aloof and unconcerned in the midst of their struggles.

Demonic influences also incite people to impart character flaws they see in their EARTHLY fathers onto our heavenly Father.

Perhaps your relationship with *your* earthly father was marred by anger or emotional distance. Then you're more likely to succumb to the demonic ploy of picturing Father God the same way.

Bill Gothard, in his Institute in Basic Life Principles Seminar, describes 10 unchangeable characteristics that are your legacy at birth. Your discontent over any of these unchangeable features indicates you harbor doubt and unbelief in the One Who gave them to you:

These characteristics are:

1. Your physical features.
2. Your mental capabilities.
3. Your parents.
4. Your gender.
5. Your birth order.
6. Your brothers and sisters.
7. Your nationality.
8. Your race.
9. Your time in history.
10. Your aging and life span.

Demonic influences of deception or doubt and unbelief SUPPRESS the truth of God as your all-wise and loving Father Who has specifically and uniquely created you.

The demonic rationale that you have a RIGHT to be dissatisfied with yourself and your circumstances SEEMS logical. But, believing that lie will destroy your confidence in God.

Harms Our Desires (Page 31)

Third, the Fall of Adam harms our desires. Remember, Adam and Eve regularly conversed with the God Who created them. It was He Who graciously provided all they needed for well-being and joy. He was also the One Who restricted them from eating from the forbidden tree.

As we'll discuss more fully in a later segment, Eve's LACK of holy fear of God caused her to give way to temptation. She preferred instead to fulfill her own willful desires.

(Explore: *Jesus In Your Home* Video Series: "Fear of God")

Try to picture Eve's mental state as you consider HOW she was enticed.

"[T]he woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom" (Genesis 3:6).

Your personal level of contentment and your level of trust in our Lord are interwoven. Shopping malls overflow with people who haven't learned contentment, so they pursue their desires without restraint. The massive credit card debt owed by the majority of Americans

proves this.

Listen: When you're dissatisfied with what you have, you compare and compete with others. This way of thinking and responding is what we call "horizontally focused". (HORIZONTAL FOCUS desires what *others* value or own.)

In other words, what your eyes see that others have, your mind then wants. This is the world's way of thinking, and you're vulnerable to it if you haven't learned to trust our Lord and desire only what HE wants for you. (Vertical focus desires only that which pleases God.)

What we call the "vertical focus" of our lives means that you *fully trust* our Lord to fill your needs according to His design. That He chooses also to shower you with *desires* according to His plans and purposes is the outpouring of His Father's heart for you.

"Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart." Psalm 37:4)

You please God through TRUSTING Him. When demonic influences of jealousy, insecurity, and idolatry impact you, you DISTRUST God's plans for your life. You become increasingly vulnerable to pursuing other ungodly desires.

When you're agitated by demonic spirits, you take matters into your own hands. You yearn for something YOU think is in your best interest but isn't in God's plan for your life. If you do this, you're spiritually wounding yourself!

BEFORE you take major steps to obtain something you really desire, Stop!

There's much to be said for the counsel of your spouse or of a mentor whose life bespeaks faithfulness to God.

Frequently those close to you can see through your rationale and probe your true motivations. These can then be held up to the Light of Christ for scrutiny.

Remember this biblical maxim: When your desires line up with our Lord's will, then He delights to fulfill them.

Harms Our Actions (Page 32)

The fourth effect of Adam's Fall is that our *actions* are harmed. Eve's disobedience is reported simply:

"She took some and ate it" (Genesis 3:6).

Look, choosing to appease your sin nature by giving way to temptation isn't complicated. If you decide to entertain sinful thoughts, then sinful actions will result. If you refuse to submit to God and resist the devil, then you'll be enticed by Satan's spirits into more and more sin.

We discussed the development and progression of spiritual strongholds in a previous segment, but let's review it:

- 1)Satanic-inspired THOUGHTS are introduced into your mind.
- 2)Entertaining these thoughts brings on EMOTIONS.
- 3) Giving in to emotions eventually leads to you taking some sort of ACTION.
- 4) Continual participation in this disobedient action causes you to develop a HABIT.
- 5) Once a habit is developed, a demonic STRONGHOLD is built in your soul.

Demonic influences such as pride, idolatry, or sexual impurity will influence you to blindly pursue your own goals wholeheartedly. You won't *want* to stop and consider the destructive consequences of your pursuit.

A spirit of deceit will make sure you don't reconsider through enticing you to rationalize your choices. But there will *always* be painful consequences to your sin.

The pleasure of the moment is fleeting, and the subsequent guilt and regret further displace the intimate companionship you *could* have with God.

Keep in mind that your own sinful desire is propelling your sinful pursuits. The demonic spirit is only fanning a determination that's already bent on sinning.

Picture this evil progression in the words of the apostle James:

"Each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death" (James 1:14,15).

Ask YOURSELF: Have *my* desires so consumed my mind, will and emotions that they've led to actions that displease my heavenly Father?

Harms Our Relationships with Others (Page 33)

Fifth, Adam's Fall has harmed our relationships with other people.

When someone is bent on sin, he'll often seek out others to participate with him. This was the case with Eve:

“She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it” (Genesis 3:6).

It’s easy to rationalize our path into sin by asking, “What’s WRONG with it?” The question we should be asking ourselves is, “What’s RIGHT with it?”

The first question, “What’s *wrong* with it?”, opens the door for us to be horizontally focused. If we see *others* sinning, it makes it that much easier for us to sin as well.

This is also when we recruit other people to join us in our sin. There’s good reason for the warning in Proverbs: “My son, if sinners entice you, do not give in to them” (Proverbs 1:10).

It’s pretty simple: If you’re considering a sinful action, you’re more likely to succumb to it if someone else joins in.

When people decide to sin, they’re not turning to God for guidance. People who are bent on giving in to enticement are NOT going to ask, “What would Jesus do?”

And that’s tragic, because spirits of deceit often influence you to believe that when you take part in sinful actions with others, you’re strengthening your relationship with folks who really understand you.

All you’re doing is gratifying the familiar spirits within one another by obeying their siren call.

When you consider others who are close to you in the faith, is tolerated sin part of your relationship with each other?

Figure III

