

**The Diagnosis**  
Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-24  
**Small Group Guide**

**Opening Icebreaker Question:**

- Who do you know is good at diagnosing, discerning, or reading people? What do you think makes them this way?

**OPTIONAL BACKGROUND READING/INTRO:** In case you missed last Sunday, we just started a new sermon **series** that's going to last throughout the academic year, called "The Big Story." We're walking through the Bible from beginning to end, to try to understand the big story that's running underneath all the little stories. We're doing this because it's going to make more sense of our story. And what we saw last week in the story of creation was that the story of our origin shows us the outcome of our story. Today's study may be one of the most important studies you've ever participated in. If you don't understand what we're going to see in Genesis Ch. 3, life and the world will not make sense. Genesis 3 tells us what went wrong with the world.

Just for fun, let's **READ GENESIS 2:15-17 and 3:1-24** like we're reading a great book or watching a great movie. Every good story has the following elements. See if you can identify them as you take turns reading aloud:

- Characters:
  - Protagonist (the good guy):
  - Antagonist (the bad guy):
  - Mentor or Sage (if there is one):
- Setting (location):
- Every good story must have Conflict and a Resolution:
  - How is a potential conflict set up?
  - What is the climax (point at which the conflict is at its worst)?
  - What is the resolution?

1. Pastor Josh first discussed the **Source of Sin**.

- a. We've seen in Gen 2:15-17 that the potential conflict was set up when God forbade Adam and Eve to eat from tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
  - i. Notice that God doesn't explain why he set up this choice. How do you deal with it when God doesn't explain all you want him to in your life?<sup>1</sup>
  - ii. So, assuming God had a good reason for it, why do you think He established a choice?
- b. In Gen 3:1-5, what do we see as the source of sin? What lie does Satan try to persuade Eve to believe?
  - i. Josh said, "Every sin is a manifestation of this choice to put ourselves in the place of God rather than trust his goodness." Do you see aspects in your life where you trust yourself over God?
  - ii. Satan still uses this lie today. How can we combat this lie in our lives?<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Note that the Bible is rife with examples that God does not owe us an explanation, e.g., the Book of Job.

- c. The Bible teaches the Doctrine of Original Sin, whereby one of the consequences of Adam and Eve's sin is that every human since then (except Jesus) has been born with a bent toward sin and self-centeredness.
  - i. If you don't accept this truth, where might you go wrong in how you understand yourself and the world (of people)?
  - ii. Josh borrowed a phrase from Tim Keller: "The radical democracy of sinners," which this doctrine of sin gives us. What does this phrase mean? How does it affect the way we view and treat others?
2. Second, Pastor Josh also discussed the **Effects of Sin**, which we see clearly in Gen 3.
  - a. Shame and fear (vv7-10). Define each. What does shame and fear look like in relationships today?
  - b. Blame shifting (vv11-13): How do we do this in our family and in the church today?
  - c. Broken marital relationships: "You're desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you" (v16b). Many scholars think that this "desire" means that a woman will be want to dominate her husband, and the man will be tempted to exercise insensitive and dictatorial authority over his wife. Have you seen this tendency in yourselves?
  - d. In vv. 14-19, what do you see about the effect of sin on our relationship with the earth and our work?
3. Third, Josh preached on the **End of Sin**. Verse 15 can be taken as a promise of sin's end: "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring (seed) and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."
  - a. If, as most respected commentators say, the Hebrew for Eve's "offspring" is used in such a way that it refers to Jesus, how does this provide us hope for the sin problem?<sup>3</sup> What does this this promise imply for the effects of the curse that we experience? How does it affect you to know that God communicated a solution for sin as early as Genesis 3, right after sin came into the world?
  - b. Aside from hope for the future, how does the knowledge of this promise (and its fulfillment in the cross of Christ) begin to unravel the lie and its poison in your life today?
4. Prayer: Among our usual prayer requests, pray that we would reject the lie from Satan that God does not have our best interests at heart and thus reject our attempts to control our current happiness and future security.

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<sup>2</sup> One way is to immerse ourselves in Scripture that talks of God's goodness, Psalm 34:18-22; Ps 62; 69:19; 84:11-12; 116:5-7; 117; 145:17-20; 147:3-5; Rom 5:8; Rom 8:28-39; and Eph 1:3, as well as reading the Lament Psalms of David in order to identify with someone who temporarily distrusts God, Psalm 6, 13, 38, 42-43, 69, and 88. See Attachment.

<sup>3</sup> See Paul making this very argument in Gal 3:16, "now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "and to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "and to your seed," that is, Christ." (Same Hebrew word for "seed" or "descendant" is used when God addresses Abraham in Gen 13:15-16, 15:5; 17:7-10 as is used in Gen 3:15.

## ATTACHMENT – A REASON TO TRUST: GOD’S DAILY LOVE FOR US

John 3:16-17 – <sup>16</sup>For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup>For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

1 John 4:10 – This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

2 Cor 1:3-4 – <sup>3</sup>Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, <sup>4</sup>who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

1 John 1:3a – See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

Romans 5:5 – And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Ps 145:17-20 – <sup>17</sup>The LORD is righteous in all his ways  
and faithful in all he does.

<sup>18</sup>The LORD is near to all who call on him,  
to all who call on him in truth.

<sup>19</sup>He fulfills the desires of those who fear him;  
he hears their cry and saves them.

<sup>20</sup>The LORD watches over all who love him,  
but all the wicked he will destroy.

Ps 68:19 – Praise be to the Lord, to God our Savior,  
who daily bears our burdens.

Ps 116:5-7 – <sup>5</sup>The LORD is gracious and righteous;  
our God is full of compassion.

<sup>6</sup>The LORD protects the unwary;  
when I was brought low, he saved me.

<sup>7</sup>Return to your rest, my soul,  
for the LORD has been good to you.

Ps 34:18-22 – <sup>18</sup>The LORD is close to the brokenhearted  
and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

<sup>19</sup>The righteous person may have many troubles,  
but the LORD delivers him from them all;

<sup>20</sup>he protects all his bones,  
not one of them will be broken.

<sup>21</sup>Evil will slay the wicked;  
the foes of the righteous will be condemned.

<sup>22</sup>The LORD will rescue his servants;  
no one who takes refuge in him will be condemned.

Ps 84:11-12 – <sup>11</sup>For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor;  
no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless. <sup>12</sup>LORD Almighty, blessed is the one who trusts in you.

Rom 5:8 – But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Eph 1:3 – Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Jam 1:16-17 – <sup>16</sup>Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. <sup>17</sup>Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

Rom 8:28, 31-33, 38-39 – <sup>28</sup>And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who<sup>[a]</sup> have been called according to his purpose.... <sup>31</sup>What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup>He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? <sup>33</sup>Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.... <sup>37</sup>No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup>For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,<sup>[c]</sup> neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,<sup>39</sup> neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Matt 7:7-11 – <sup>7</sup>“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. <sup>8</sup>For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. <sup>9</sup>“Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? <sup>10</sup>Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? <sup>11</sup>If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

Psalms 103 – Praise the LORD, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

<sup>2</sup>Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits—

<sup>3</sup>who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,

<sup>4</sup>who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion,

<sup>5</sup>who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's....

<sup>8</sup>The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.

<sup>9</sup>He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever;

<sup>10</sup>he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.

<sup>11</sup>For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him;

<sup>12</sup>as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

<sup>13</sup>As a father has compassion on his children,

so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him;

<sup>14</sup>for he knows how we are formed,

he remembers that we are dust....

Psalms 34:8-10 – <sup>8</sup>Taste and see that the LORD is good;

blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.

<sup>9</sup>Fear the LORD, you his holy people,

for those who fear him lack nothing.

<sup>10</sup>The lions may grow weak and hungry,

but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.

Psalms 147:3-5 – <sup>3</sup>He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

<sup>4</sup>He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name.

<sup>5</sup>Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit.

Phil 3:17b-21 -- And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, <sup>18</sup>may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, <sup>19</sup>and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. <sup>20</sup>Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, <sup>21</sup>to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.