

FAMILY WORSHIP HELPS

WEEK 12

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

QUESTION 12: *What special act of providence did God exercise toward man in the estate wherein he was created?*

ANSWER: When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience; forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death.



MONDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 25C

Scripture: Read Genesis 2:7-17

Key Thought: *The covenant of life originated with God alone.*

Questions:

- ☞ What is a covenant?
- ☞ Was God obligated to make a covenant with Adam?
- ☞ Did Adam have the option of not accepting the covenant?
- ☞ Did God owe Adam anything for his obedience?
- ☞ What does this teach us about God's sovereignty?
- ☞ What does this teach us about our duty as creatures?

Prayer

Notes: This week we will examine the covenant of life that God made with Adam before the Fall. Today's focus is on the fact that this covenant, like all of God's covenants, was initiated by God Himself. The word "covenant" has been defined as "an agreement between two or more parties." This definition is accurate in describing covenants between men, but it falls short with regard to God's covenants. A covenant is an agreement, to be sure, but God's covenants are not agreements between equal parties. Rather, they are imposed by God according to His purposes alone. Adam did not seek out this covenant, nor did he have the option of refusing it. Explain to your children that God, as Creator, has the right to require what He will of His creatures. Neither did God "owe" Adam any reward for obeying the covenant. The fact that God promised a blessing to Adam for obedience shows God's grace, since He could rightly have required obedience regardless of the covenant. Explain to your children that as God's creatures, they are required to obey His commandments. Show them that God's promise of blessing to those who obey Him is a wonderful act of grace. Praise Him for His sovereign authority; ask Him for grace to walk in obedience to His Word daily, and thank Him for His covenant mercy.



Praise: Sing Psalm 25C

Scripture: Read Genesis 2:7-17

Key Thought: *The covenant of life showed God's authority.*

Questions:

- ☪ When two men make a covenant, what happens if one of them breaks the agreement?
- ☪ What authorities are there among men to oversee their covenants with one another?
- ☪ By whose authority was the covenant of life made with Adam?
- ☪ Who would hold Adam accountable for keeping the covenant?
- ☪ Who holds you accountable for your actions?
- ☪ When you sin, whose authority are you challenging? How?
- ☪ In what ways have you rebelled against God's authority?

Prayer

Notes: We have seen that God's covenants are initiated by Himself and imposed upon His creatures for His own purposes. The transcendent God—not man—is the source of His covenants. Today we will consider the fact that God's authority is also the force behind His covenants. Every true covenant is backed by some authority. When men make covenants with one another, their agreements are overseen and enforced by some visible authority, whether in the church or in the civil arena. The covenant of life was enforced by God's own personal authority. Adam would have to answer to God for his obedience or disobedience to the covenant. This aspect of the covenant of life demonstrates God's authority over His creatures and their responsibility to Him. To break the covenant of life would mean to rebel against God's authority, challenging Him to enforce His Word. Explain to your children that all sin is a challenge to God's authority as Creator. Show them that just as Adam had to answer to God for his obedience or disobedience to the covenant of life, so we will all answer to God for our actions. Discuss the fact that God has ordained earthly authorities in the family, church, and state to represent His authority over His creatures. Pray together, confessing rebellion against God's authority and asking Him for hearts that delight to obey His commandments.



Praise: Sing Psalm 25C

Scripture: Read Genesis 2:7-17; Romans 7:7

Key Thought: *The covenant of life had a condition.*

Questions:

- ☞ Have you ever made a formal agreement or covenant? Were there conditions? What were they?
- ☞ On what condition did God promise life to Adam?
- ☞ Does this mean that Adam could earn God's favor by what he did?
- ☞ What was Adam's duty toward God before the covenant of life?
- ☞ What was Adam's duty toward God after the covenant of life?
- ☞ Why then, did God make a conditional covenant with Adam?

Prayer

Notes: So far we have seen that biblical covenants, including the covenant of life, originate with God and are enforced by His authority. Another feature of biblical covenants is the presence of conditions that must be obeyed. All human covenants or contracts require some specific action or actions from the parties involved. So it is with God's covenants. The condition of the covenant of life was perfect obedience to God's command not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Explain to your children that this condition did not mean that Adam could earn God's favor by his obedience. Before the covenant of life was given, Adam's duty was to obey His Creator. The specific terms of the covenant of life did not change this basic duty, but they did provide a visible test of Adam's obedience. The commandment not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge was the first negative command given by God. It was the first time God told Adam *not* to do something. The purpose was not to give Adam a way of earning God's favor, but rather to show his need to trust in God's will and to submit to His commands in order to be truly happy and blessed. By giving Adam a negative commandment, God showed him that there was a way of life (obedience) and a way of death (disobedience). Adam could not have known this apart from the covenant of life. Paul says that he did not know what sin was apart from the commandment. Explain to your children that the purpose of God's commandments is to show us the way of life and the way of death.



THURSDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 25C

Scripture: Read Genesis 2:7-17; Romans 6:23

Key Thought: *The covenant of life had a penalty for disobedience.*

Questions:

- ☞ What was the penalty for breaking the covenant of life?
- ☞ To whom did Adam owe his life and happiness?
- ☞ Can there be life and happiness apart from God?
- ☞ What would Adam's disobedience say about God?
- ☞ Why is death the just consequence of sin?

Prayer

Notes: The Covenant of Life was originated by God and enforced by His authority. It carried a condition of perfect obedience to God's command. It also included a specific penalty for disobedience. Explain to your children that there are always consequences for disobedience. The penalty for breaking the command to abstain from eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge was death. At first, death may seem like a harsh penalty for eating a piece of fruit, but there was a much larger issue at stake. Adam's disobedience to God's command would amount to a rejection of God, to whom he owed his life and happiness. Explore the implications of Adam's disobedience with your children. Show them that all sin is treason against God, who is our source of life. Because of this, the just penalty for sin is death. Pray that God will open your eyes to understand the seriousness of sin and its consequences.



FRIDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 25C

Scripture: Read Genesis 2:7-17; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22

Key Thought: *The covenant of life affected Adam's descendants.*

Questions:

- ☪ Are a man's children affected by his decisions? Cite examples.
- ☪ Would Adam's descendants be affected by his obedience or disobedience to the covenant of life?
- ☪ How did Adam's disobedience affect his children? How does it affect you?
- ☪ What provision has God made for you?

Prayer

Notes: In receiving the covenant of life, Adam stood as a representative of all of his descendants. Discuss with your children how the actions and decisions of men affect their children. Apply this to Adam's role as the representative of the whole human race, showing your children how his disobedience has affected them, and pointing them to the provision that God has made for us in Christ, who is called the "second Adam." Praise God together for His grace through Jesus Christ and pray for faith to take hold of His gift of eternal life which He accomplished through His perfect obedience to God's commands and His sacrificial death to fulfil the penalty for us.



Note: Only five lessons per week are included. You are encouraged to lead your family in worship seven days a week. On weekends, you may want to review or build upon the lessons from the previous week, discuss the sermon from Sunday morning, or work on questions from the Catechism or memory verses. These lesson suggestions are intended to provide a simple framework for parents to build upon. You are not limited to this content. The habit of morning and evening family worship is the biblical ideal. We hope you can use these lessons as a starting point for the development of a blessed practice of family worship in your home.