

WHERE ARE YOU?

MAIN POINT.

God shows us **mercy** in our **shame**.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Even in Adam and Eve's transgression, God's grace was evident. God promised to provide a descendant, Jesus, who would crush the head of the serpent, defeating sin and death and restoring people with God and one another (**Rom. 16:20**).



SHAME AND **MERCY**

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. We encourage you to dig in and read all of the content on this timeline.

Genesis 3:7

Genesis 3:24

SIN LEADS TO SHAME AND SEPARATION

GENESIS 3:7-11

7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. 8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 So the Lord God called out to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" 10 And he said, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid." 11 Then he asked, "Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

GENESIS 3:16-19

16 He said to the woman: "I will intensify your labor pains; you will bear children with painful effort. Your desire will be for your husband, yet he will rule over you." 17 And he said to the man, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'Do not eat from it': The ground is cursed because of you. You will eat from it by means of painful labor all the days of your life. 18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. 19 You will eat bread by the sweat of your brow until you return to the ground, since you were taken from it. For you are dust, and you will return to dust."

GOD SHOWS US MERCY WHEN WE SIN

GENESIS 3:20-24

20 The man named his wife Eve because she was the mother of all the living. 21 The Lord God made clothing from skins for the man and his wife, and he clothed them. 22 The Lord God said, "Since the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil, he must not reach out, take from the tree of life, eat, and live forever." 23 So the Lord God sent him away from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. 24 He drove the man out and stationed the cherubim and the flaming, whirling sword east of the garden of Eden to guard the way to the tree of life.

MAIN POINT.

God shows us **mercy** in our **shame**.



THEOLOGY CONNECTION

SIN AS MISSING THE MARK

One aspect of sin is missing the mark of God's standards set for humanity. This missing of the mark is not a simple mistake but a falling short of God's glory through **consciously choosing sin**. We may refer to sin as a failure on the part of humans to live according to God's standards, but we must recognize this failure is intentional. We miss the mark when we deliberately choose to cast aside God's intention for us.

DISCUSSION

SIN LEADS TO SHAME AND SEPARATION SCRIPTURE REFERENCE

- How do you react when you're caught doing something wrong?
- In what ways do you try to cover up or make excuses for your sin?
- What does God's response to Adam and Eve's sin reveal about His nature (v. 9)?

GOD SHOWS US MERCY WHEN WE SIN SCRIPTURE REFERENCE

- What would've happened if Adam and Eve had eaten from the tree of life? How was exile from Eden actually merciful?
- When have you struggled with viewing the consequences of sin as too harsh?



HOW DOES GOD MAKING ADAM AND EVE'S CLOTHING WITH HIS OWN HANDS AFFECT YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF HIM?

CULTURAL CONNECTION

Your view of God will likely determine how you handle your sin. Culture often depicts God as a harsh and cranky old guy who enjoys catching us in our sin and punishing us. Here's the truth: God does hate sin. He doesn't hate you when you sin. God is holy, and He must oppose sin. But stop and consider that sin is what separates you from Him. God opposes the thing which comes between you and Him. In fact, God sent Christ to die so that sin would no longer separate you from Him if you place your faith in His Son. So why hide from the Lord? Why hide from the One who loved you enough to save you from eternity without Him? He isn't harsh or cranky. He's a good Father. He loves you, and He wants to restore you, not punish you. Sin has consequences, not because God is mean, but because He is completely just and good.



DAY ONE

GENESIS 3:11-13

Is it difficult for you to own up to your mistakes? Yeah, it's difficult for a lot of us. It's just easier to shift the blame to someone or something else. Maybe we blame a sibling for a fight we had. Or we blame our work schedule for not having time to study for a test. Or we blame our horrible attitudes on difficult circumstances. But really, it all comes down to our decisions. And when it comes to sin, we have the choice in every situation to do the right thing (1 Cor. 10:13).

Adam and Eve both shifted the blame when they disobeyed God for the first time. Notice who Adam blamed when God questioned him: Eve. Then Eve responded with basically our equivalent of "the devil made me do it." Neither of them admitted their personal disobedience to—and distrust of—God's command.

We sometimes do this with our sin too. Instead of confessing it to God, we run and hide. We make excuses and point our fingers at other people—our parents, our friends who are bad influences, our culture. We even sometimes blame Satan. But the truth is that Satan has no power over us. He can't make us do a single thing. We choose to go against what God has spoken in our own free will. But God mercifully seeks us out when we sin, and we can always be honest with Him about our sin. He already knows, and He loves us anyway.

○ WHO OR WHAT DO YOU BLAME FOR YOUR SINS?

○ WHY DO YOU SOMETIMES FIND IT HARD TO ADMIT YOUR SIN TO GOD?

PRAY

GOD, HELP ME CONFESS MY SIN INSTEAD OF HIDING FROM YOU. HELP ME ADMIT WHERE I FALL SHORT INSTEAD OF SHIFTING THE BLAME.

DAY TWO

GENESIS 3:16-20

Think about some of the consequences you've faced for your mistakes. Maybe your coach made you run for a missed practice. Or maybe you were grounded for bad grades. Maybe you had to ride the bus to school instead of driving your car because you missed curfew. Let's be honest: consequences aren't fun. We'd rather avoid them. But they usually help us learn from our mistakes.

Adam and Eve both received consequences for disobeying God—ones passed down to all of humanity. Eve would have pain in childbirth, and she would struggle to submit to her husband's authority. Adam would work the earth, laboring to produce food. Both of them would die physical deaths and return to dust. None of this was part of God's original design in Eden. It's easy to only see the negative parts of the couple's consequences (and ours), but take a closer look and you'll see the mercy in them. Eating the forbidden fruit was supposed to lead to death. The spiritual death was immediate, and the physical death loomed ahead. But God mercifully allowed them to live. He also allowed them the gifts of having children and providing food for themselves. We often don't see the mercy in the consequences of our sin, but it's there. Every consequence we face is an opportunity to learn from our mistakes and draw closer to God. He doesn't leave us hanging when we mess up. In fact, God loves us enough to mercifully walk with us and show us a better way.

○ **WHAT IS A CONSEQUENCE YOU'VE FACED FOR SIN?**

○ **HOW HAS GOD SHOWN YOU MERCY EVEN IN YOUR CONSEQUENCES?**

PRAY

GOD, THANK YOU FOR LOVING ME ENOUGH
TO TEACH ME A BETTER WAY WHEN I
MESS UP. HELP ME SEE THE MERCY IN THE
CONSEQUENCES OF MY SIN.

DAY THREE

ISAIAH 53:5-6

Has someone ever taken the blame for something you did voluntarily? It can feel like a relief when someone willingly takes your place, receiving the punishment you should have received. Maybe it was an older sibling who took the blame, but it probably resulted in you owing them big time! It may have been worth it, though, to escape the punishment.

The verses in today's passage couldn't be clearer: Jesus took our place. In the greatest act of mercy ever displayed, Jesus stood on our behalf and took our sin upon His shoulders. The punishment we should have received was on Him, and we're healed because of His death and resurrection. We didn't even have to shift the blame; Jesus willingly took it on Himself.

So how does this affect the way we live? God showed us mercy in sending His Son. How do we live in response to this? It should impact everything we say and do, not out of an attempt to pay God back or earn His love, but out of gratitude for what He has already done. When someone takes our place, we usually feel a huge sense of relief. We feel grateful. Jesus, God in flesh, took our place, and the best way we can honor His sacrifice is to live our lives in a way that brings Him glory. All of our words, actions, motives, and desires can bring glory to God and serve as acts of gratitude. Our God gave us peace in place of our sin. It's more than we could ever deserve.

○ **WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR RESPONSE TO JESUS'S SACRIFICE?**

○ **HOW CAN YOU INWARDLY AND OUTWARDLY DISPLAY GRATITUDE FOR GOD'S MERCY?**

PRAY

JESUS, HELP ME TO NEVER GET NUMB TO
THE GREAT LENGTHS YOU WENT TO SAVE ME.
HELP MY LIFE OVERFLOW WITH GRATITUDE
FOR YOUR MERCY.

DAY FOUR

1 CORINTHIANS 15:47-49

Some of us come from amazing families, and it's a compliment when people tell us we act like our family members. But some of us don't come from amazing families. Instead, we come from families who have made poor choices that bring us shame, and ones we want to disassociate ourselves from. There is one thing we all have in common though: Adam's legacy of sin was passed down to us. We inherited sin traits we likely wouldn't ask for. But there's good news! We may have been born into a fallen creation, but we don't have to let it define us.

As believers, we get to join the family of Christ! We are coheirs to Jesus's inheritance (Rom. 8:17), and this passage in 1 Corinthians 15 says we will "bear the image of the man of heaven" (v. 49)! If that doesn't excite us, then we may need a pulse check. Here's the truth: because we live as a part of fallen humanity, we've inherited the very worst of it. We're sinners. We dishonor God. We lie, cheat, and steal. We gossip, commit adultery, and struggle with pride and addiction. It's doesn't sound very promising, does it? But we aren't stuck in these things! Jesus's death and resurrection made it possible for us to step out of our shame. We can choose to be like Jesus in the way we live, talk, and love others. We have the freedom to walk away from the sin that entangles us and live for God. We have power through the Holy Spirit to model Christ instead of this world. What a gift!

○ **IN WHAT WAYS ARE YOU BEARING THE IMAGE OF ADAM MORE THAN CHRIST?**

○ **WHAT CAN YOU SHARE WITH OTHERS ABOUT HOW TO WALK AWAY FROM SHAME?**

PRAY

GOD, I KNOW I AM MADE OF DUST. BUT I PRAISE YOU FOR MAKING ME NEW AND FOR THE POWER TO LIVE LIKE CHRIST.

DAY FIVE

TITUS 3:3-7

Do you tend to look forward to what's coming, or do you spend more time looking back at what has already happened? It can be really easy to focus more on what's in the past because it's what we know. It can honestly be tempting to dwell in the past—whether we look back at times that seemed easier or better or we look back on past mistakes.

Imagine how Adam and Eve must've felt once they were banished from Eden. They must've remembered Paradise. Did they spend time fixating on what they lost when they willingly disobeyed God? It had to hurt. But if they had chosen to dwell on the past, they may have never moved forward. And neither will we. We've all sinned and fallen short of God's best for us (Rom. 3:23). It's in our sin nature because of the fall. Maybe you have certain sins you can't move on from no matter how hard you try. You keep looking back, and feelings of shame overwhelm you. Scripture urges us to reach toward what's ahead (Phil. 3:13). Why? If we continue to look back, we will likely veer off course again. We'll suffer from discouragement. We'll miss the good things God has for us in the present and in the future. And we'll neglect the freedom Jesus offers us. Once we confess our sin and repent, we can move forward and never look back. God doesn't just offer us forgiveness—He makes us new. While we may still face consequences for our actions, the past is done. We can leave it behind us.

○ **WHAT PAST MISTAKES DO YOU STRUGGLE TO RELEASE?**

○ **READ PHILIPPIANS 3:13. HOW CAN YOU TAKE STEPS TO WALK TOWARD WHAT'S AHEAD?**

PRAY

LORD, THANK YOU FOR FORGIVENESS. HELP ME EMBRACE IT AS I WALK AWAY FROM PAST SINS. THANK YOU FOR FREEDOM.