

Review: *From your experience at the Cornerstone meeting last week, share something that helped build your faith.*

DAY ONE

Read Genesis 3:1-5

NOTE: Here a new creature enters the picture, described only as a snake (NAB). No physical description is given until the creature receives the divine punishment for leading the humans into sin (vv. 14-15). At that point the creature loses its legs and is condemned to crawl on the ground, eat dirt, and reach up only to the heels of humans. The creature is a tempter, but is not the devil in the modern sense of that term. *Collegeville*

1. As we begin chapter 3, another creature, the serpent, is introduced and described in verse 1 as "more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made." Compare what the serpent implied God said in that verse to what God actually said in Genesis 2:16-17. How did the serpent mislead the woman with this statement?

2. In verse 2 the woman replied that they could eat the fruit of the trees in the garden. As she continued to speak, she did not quote God's words exactly either. What did she add in verse 3?

3. In addition to misquoting God's words, the serpent continued to deceive the woman. Select one of the phrases from verses 4-5 listed below and describe how it might be misleading.

You will not die

God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened

You will be like God knowing good and evil

4. What could have been a reason for the command not to eat of the tree? Would you have found it hard to obey without being given an explanation? You can refer to the Commentary, pages 18-19, for help with your answer.

5. In verse 5 the serpent seemed to imply that God had an ulterior motive by restricting access to the tree. What do you think the serpent was suggesting about God's intentions?

6. CONNECTION: The theme of today's passage centers on temptation. God gave the man and woman a limitation, and the serpent enticed the woman to ignore it. Why was the woman willing to listen to the tempter rather than to the Creator who provided her with all the wonderful gifts of the garden? Giving into temptation is a human failing. Name some things that tempt you to focus on this world instead of on God and the many blessings you have received from him. Share with your group some things that help you to refocus on God.

Read 1 Corinthians 10:13. Begin your prayer today thanking God for his blessings and ask for the grace to withstand the temptations and tests of life.

DAY TWO

Read Genesis 3:6-8

7. In today's lesson, the conversation between the woman and the serpent has ended. When the woman looked at the forbidden tree, she saw three reasons to act as a result of the serpent's words. Complete the description from verse 6 below that describes the tree.

the tree was good

the tree was a delight

the tree was to be desired

8. According to the end of verse 6, after she ate some of the fruit of the tree, "she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate." The Commentary, page 19, states that "the key to this passage lies in what was going on in the mind of the Woman." What do you think is meant by this statement?

9. According to verse 7, after the woman and the man ate the fruit of the tree, "the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked." Why do you think they suddenly felt naked when their eyes were opened?

10. As the couple tried to cover their nakedness by sewing fig leaves together to make loin clothes (end of verse 7), what did they hear and do according to verse 8?

11. What does the fact that they hid themselves from God suggest to you about the change in their relationship with him?

12. CONNECTION: Before the Fall, the man and woman knew the presence of the LORD God walking in the garden. Then, acting out of the sin of pride, the first couple disobeyed his command and hid from him. When pride compels us to choose our own selfish desires over the will of God, we too will find our relationship with him and others damaged or broken. Yet, he never abandons us and we can turn to him for help with this human failing. What are some ways to control our prideful thoughts and acts?

James 4:6 reminds us that "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Let these words lead you into prayer.

DAY THREE

Read Genesis 3:9-13

13. As we begin today, the man and the woman have eaten the forbidden fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and their eyes were opened. They were ashamed of their nakedness and hid from God. The LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?" (verse 9) Complete the verses below that describe the man's response from verse 10.

I heard the sound of you in the garden

because I was naked

14. The LORD God continued his conversation with the man in verse 11. What additional questions did he ask?

15. The man answered that the woman, whom God had given to him, gave him the fruit from the tree to eat (verse 12). How did the man's reply to God's questions show that the effects of his sin had already begun to change him?

16. What do you think might have happened if the man had taken credit for what he had done?

17. In verse 13 the LORD turned to the woman and asked her what she had done. She replied that the serpent had tricked her into eating the fruit. Look up and record one of the following New Testament Scripture verses that refer to her actions.

2 Corinthians 11:3

1 Timothy 2:14

18. CONNECTION: In our readings today, the man blamed the woman for giving him the fruit and even blamed God for giving him the woman to be with him. Then the woman blamed the serpent for deceiving her. Their actions display the human traits of making excuses and blaming others instead of acknowledging our own mistakes. With the help of God's grace, how can we take responsibility for the times we choose our will over God's will? What are the benefits of owning up to our mistakes in this way? Record some thoughts to share.

Read and record Proverbs 28:13. Let this thought lead you into prayer.

DAY FOUR

Read Genesis 3:14-15

19. In today's lesson, God turned his attention to the consequences of the sin that had been committed. He began with the serpent in verse 14. Complete the phrases from that verse that reflect the severity of the curse that befell it.

Because you have done this,

and among all wild creatures

and dust you shall eat

20. In the beginning of verse 15, God declared that enmity would exist between the woman and the serpent. With what words did the author indicate that all of humankind was included?

NOTE: Verse 15 is a crucial verse in Genesis, which some think is an etiology that explains the origin of man's instinctive fear of snakes. More likely, the proverbial antagonism between men and snakes was evoked for the purpose of symbolizing man's ongoing struggle against sin and evil, personified by the serpent. Yet, neither interpretation captures the full meaning of the text which foretells the eventual triumph of the woman and her offspring over Satan after a protracted period of hostility.

Christian tradition gives this text a messianic interpretation (Christ is the individual who tramples the devil underfoot), an ecclesiological interpretation (the Church is the offspring that shares in his victory), and a mariological interpretation (Mary is the promised woman who bears the Redeemer). This passage has long been called the "first gospel" (Lat. *protoevangelium*) and stands out as the first revelation of God's mercy in Scripture. (CCC 410-11) *Ignatius Study Bible*

21. If we consider the serpent the symbol of Satan or evil, who might be considered its "offspring" versus the offspring of the woman (verse 15)?

offspring of the serpent

offspring of the woman

22. Look up and record Revelation 12:17 and explain how it relates to this verse.

23. In the second half of verse 15, God said to the serpent, "...he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel." Look up one of the following verses from the New Testament and record the words or phrases that could be used to support an interpretation of Jesus as the Messiah who would destroy Satan.

Luke 10:19

Romans 16:20

1 John 3:8

24. CONNECTION: In today's verses, God foretold the enmity that would exist between the serpent and humankind symbolizing the constant and ongoing battle between human beings and evil. It isn't hard to see wickedness in the world today but it is much more difficult to deal with the subtle temptations of evil in our personal lives. What are some things we can do to seek God's help or the intercession of the Blessed Mother when tempted to be judgmental, selfish or proud? Share some thoughts with your group.

In your prayer time today, seek the intercession of our Blessed Mother and write a prayer asking for guidance and resistance to the temptations in your life.

DAY FIVE

Read Genesis 3:16-19

25. Today, God turned his attention to the woman and addressed the consequences of her disobedience (verse 16). As punishment, she was given increased pain in childbearing. Record the last two phrases of this verse that redefined the relationship between the man and the woman.

26. In what ways do the punishments inflicted by God in verse 16 reflect human life as we know it today?

**NOTE: While the LORD God punishes all three, snake, woman and man, the words to the woman are the fewest and she is not accused of committing the first sin. That idea does not appear in the Bible until Sirach 25:24, "With a woman sin had a beginning, and because of her we all die."
*Collegeville***

27. Finally, God addressed the man. Complete the words of verse 17 below in which God punished the man.

Because you have listened to the voice of you wife

about which I commanded you

cursed is the ground because of you

28. Work was originally given to man by the LORD God in Genesis 2:15. In your own words, how does the curse of the ground in verse 18 and the first part of verse 19 change the nature of labor in the life of man?

29. The final phrase of verse 19 states, "you are dust and to dust you shall return." When do you hear these words repeated today, and why do you think it is appropriate?

30. CONNECTION: Today we learned that work, which was originally given to man in the garden as a blessing, became a burden and hardship because of his sin. In our lives, we too sometimes struggle with work that is often demanding. It is also true, that we can overcome great challenges with the help of God and become stronger as a result. What are some ways we can grow through difficult work to which God calls us? Can you share an example?

Read and record Psalm 90:17. Today in prayer, consider all the tasks the LORD has given you and ask that he enable you to accomplish them in a way that will give him glory.

DAY SIX

Read Genesis 3:20-24

31. Today's lesson concludes the story of the Fall. According to verse 20, for what reason did the man name his wife, Eve?

32. In verse 21 we read that the LORD continued to care for the man and woman by making them garments to clothe them. What does this suggest to you about how their actions affected their relationship with God over time? Record some thoughts to illustrate this below.

Before the Fall

After the Fall

NOTE: God punishes the couple, but does not abandon them. Immediately after announcing the punishment, God arranges for their needs by providing clothes for them. In covering their nakedness, God removes their shame. This act of compassion establishes a precedent for what follows repeatedly throughout the Old Testament: when humans violate the terms of the divine-human relationship God finds a way to restore the balance by providing for the needs of the people. *Collegeville*

33. According to verse 22, the LORD God said, "See, the man has become like one of us." How do you think the man has become like God?

34. It was not enough that the man was destined to perform grueling labor to produce his food. What else happened to him in verse 23?

35. To ensure that the man could not return to the Garden of Eden, God placed the cherubim to guard the entrance to the garden and the way to the tree of life (verse 24). Look up the following verses and record the references that refer to the cherubim similarly guarding the holiness of God's presence.

Psalm 99:1

Ezekiel 10:1

36. CONNECTION: Today we read that, amid the dire circumstances that surrounded the fall of man and his expulsion from the garden, all was not lost. God did not destroy the man and woman though they were justly punished for what they did. He gave them to each other and made garments to help prepare them for their new lives. Leaving home or moving from a place of comfort and security to begin a new life or experience in an unfamiliar place happens to many of us or our loved ones. How have you seen God's protection and providence at work in a situation like this?

Read and record Psalm 5:11. In your prayer today ask God for the grace to trust him to provide for you in every situation.

Read pages 18-20 in *The Book of Genesis Commentary* by Lawrence DiPaolo, Jr., Ph.D. The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study acknowledges that scripture quotations in this study are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, Catholic Edition. Copyright © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

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