

7-SESSION BIBLE STUDY

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A large, stylized flower graphic composed of various colored stained glass panels. The petals are in shades of pink, purple, blue, yellow, red, and orange, all outlined in black. The flower is partially visible on the left side of the cover.

VIDEO
ACCESS
INCLUDED

Very GOOD

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS
ABOUT BEING A WOMAN

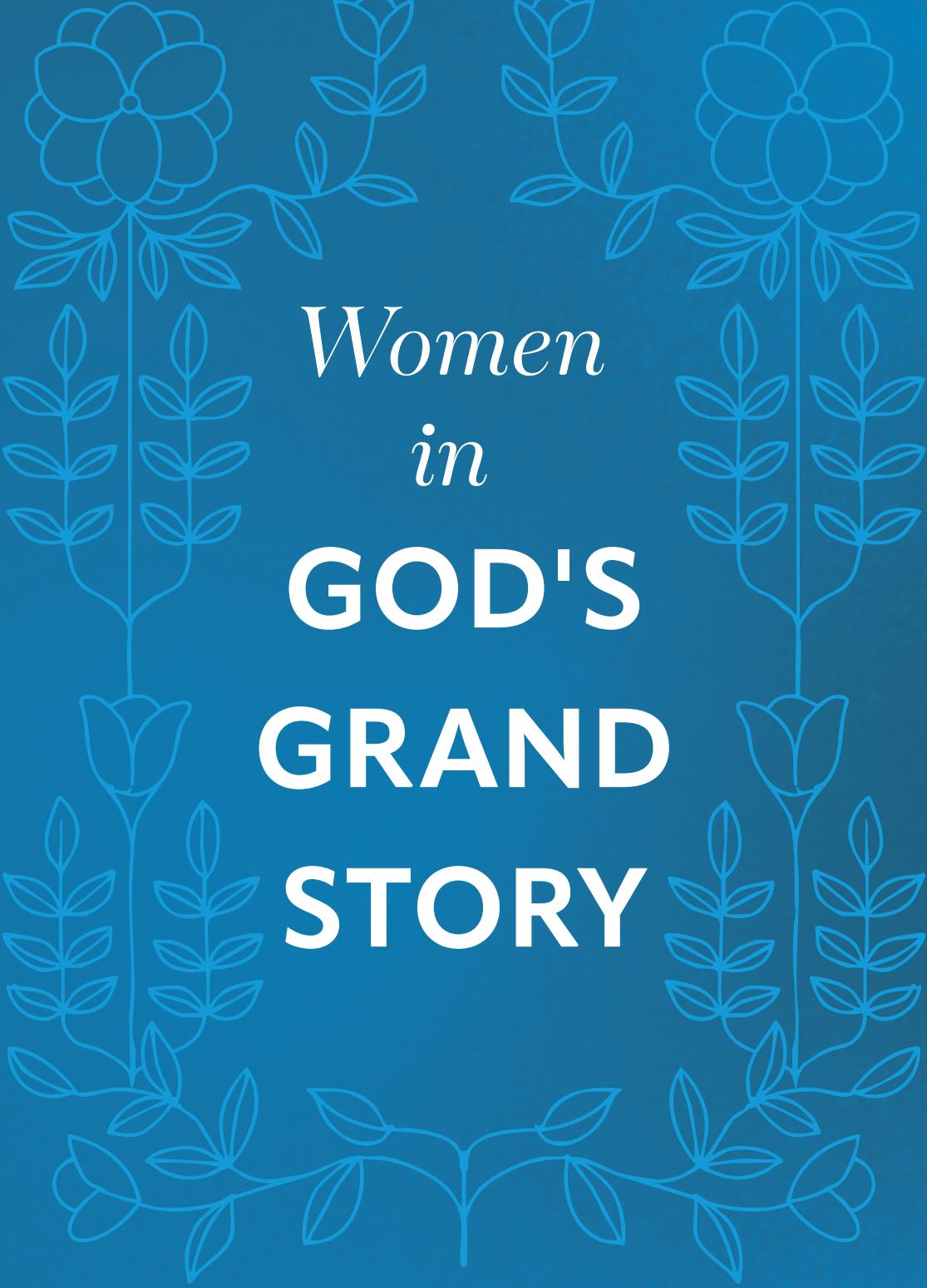
The Creation of Eve

It was not good for Adam to be alone. God made a helper (a strong Hebrew word) for him so that the two might carry out God's commission to them in His creation. The creation of Eve is beautiful and rich with meaning. Not only was Eve essential for the commission and calling God gave to humanity, but she's essential to the story of Christ. Her union with Adam points to the mystery of our union with Christ!

Watch the Session Two video and take notes here.



To access the video teaching sessions, use the instructions in the back of your Bible study book.



Women
in
GOD'S
GRAND
STORY

Day 1

MALE AND FEMALE, HE CREATED THEM

Couched in the creation story—which you have read and studied from multiple angles at this point—is a phrase that, on the surface, feels matter of fact, even ho-hum. But in today’s world the phrase may very well feel like fighting words, “he created them male and female” (Gen. 1:27).

The very act of distinguishing male from female may feel offensive to those who think that *equality* between the sexes depends on their very *sameness*. Indeed, we’ve seen that Adam and Eve—and by extension men and women today—have far more in common than not. Highlighting our differences, then, can feel like the first step to sidelining one sex or the other. Women know all too well that our differences from men have at times been used against us, to even remove us from contexts where we rightfully belong.

Further, “he created them male and female” is increasingly offensive in a world that insists we humans are self-made. Especially in the western world in the twenty-first century, we prize individual autonomy, self-determination, and self-expression more than just about anything else. Today some argue we assign our genders to ourselves. Our culture says any limit placed on our sexuality is an affront to our personhood.

The idea of a Creator and two distinct sexes may feel out of step with our current age. My hope in today’s personal study is to convince us that we have a good Creator with good intentions and good plans for every man and woman. Our sexed bodies are good, distinct, and not interchangeable. And all of this is for our flourishing.

LOOK UP GENESIS 2:7. What two things did God use to form Adam into the first human being?

LOOK UP DEUTERONOMY 6:5-7 AND MARK 12:28-30.

Jesus's words in Mark are a repetition of God's greatest command to Israel, known as the *Shema*. With what are we to love the Lord our God, according to Jesus?

While we speak of our unique parts—hearts, souls, minds, and bodies—it is not possible to actually separate them from one another. Humans are unified beings. We are “embodied souls” or “souled bodies.” We can speak about our different parts and their functions, but we cannot extricate our physical selves from our spiritual selves.

How have you noticed an attempt to separate our physical selves from our spiritual selves in culture today?

Gnosticism is an ancient heresy that elevates the spiritual above the physical. This unbiblical way of thinking continues to pervade our culture today, oftentimes even Christian culture. But God is maker of both body and soul. We know our God deeply values our bodies because He came to earth as a baby in a manger. Immanuel, God with us, reveals God's value for physical bodies. Not only that, but when Jesus rose from the grave on that first Easter morning, He did so in His very own body. Jesus's life, death, and resurrection all say that both body and soul are immeasurably valuable and eternal.

What happens to the body, happens to the soul, and what happens to the soul, happens to the body. We know this is true because when we are physically ill, we feel discouraged, and when we are upset, our physical bodies also experience the toll.

We are the dust of the earth and the breath of God (Gen. 2:7). So then, the bodies we live in—the very ones God gave us when we were born—are inextricable from our souls, minds, and hearts.

How does knowing our bodies are inextricable from our souls impact how we view our femaleness?

It's not only our physical selves that are male or female, but also our spiritual selves too. Male and female are not interchangeable. Adam alone did not fulfill God's design for creation. Females were necessary too. One cannot be traded for the other.

In our current culture many separate sex from gender, but this is out of step with the creation narrative and Jesus's own teaching, as we'll see below. While gender might be expressed in different ways in different cultures, our gender necessarily flows from our sexed bodies. We will investigate more deeply in the coming weeks what the Bible does and does not say about gender expression, roles, and stereotypes. Today, though, our focus is understanding that male and female are both good and not interchangeable.

READ MATTHEW 19:3-6. In this scene some Pharisees seek to debate marriage and divorce with Jesus. To get to the root of the matter, He points them back to creation.

What verses in Genesis 1 and 2 does Jesus quote in verses 4 and 5?

What from the creation account does Jesus reaffirm in Matthew 19:4?

What from the first wedding does Jesus reaffirm in Matthew 19:5?

In Matthew 19:4 who does the creating? And in verse 6 who does the joining?

Jesus points the Pharisees back to creation because it's not possible to fully discuss marriage, sex, or gender without discussing the God who made them. God is the Maker of gender, sexuality, marriage, sex, and families. These are His good gifts to us, His image bearers. He made them and called them all very good! We are meant to embrace these gifts, enjoy them, and thank God for them.

Our bodies were created by God with intention. Our genders are not arbitrary. As ethicist Andrew Walker puts it, "Men and women are different. Our differences extend to the deepest levels of our being: chromosomes, brains, voices, body shapes, body strengths, and reproductive systems. What our bodies are designed for and destined for are different. How our bodies are designed bear witness to the difference that reflects God's creative will for humanity."¹

A biblical sexual ethic adheres to the design of our God and is not meant to be repressive, restrictive, or harmful. To live according to a biblical sexual ethic is to live according to our good design, which is for our flourishing. This means we acknowledge, celebrate, and live out the reality that God made us male and female and that sex is a good gift to be enjoyed between one man and one woman who are united in a lifelong marriage. To live contrary to our design is to our demise. To be well, to be free, to fully thrive, humans must live in harmony with their design and their Designer. God is our Maker, and we are not meant to bear the weight of His role. This truth is not meant to stifle but to set free.

I don't know how this discussion of our design and Designer impacts you personally. I know many in our current age struggle with this, so I want to pause here and say, if that's you, *I know you're here too. And I'm so glad.* Please keep reading. Please keep studying. Please don't take my word for it, but please keep pursuing God's Word for what's good, beautiful, and true about sex and gender.

CLOSE TODAY BY READING 1 CORINTHIANS 6:12-20.

**How does it make you feel to consider that you are not your own?
Does it feel stifling or freeing?**

We are not our own, we were bought at a price. God's Word and His commands are trustworthy, because Jesus, who gave up everything to make us His own, is trustworthy. We have a good Creator and a good Savior, who made us very good.

What makes you willing or unwilling to surrender to God's good design? Write a prayer here telling God how you feel about not being your own and offering yourself up for His glory.

Day 2

THE GRAVITY OF THE FALL

Good stories *show us* rather than *tell us* the truth. As the reader, we take in the narrative and get a sense of what the storyteller wants us to know. In Genesis 2–3 Moses tells a story and unveils a point through the setting, conflict, climax, and resolution. In Genesis 2–3, the conflict, or main question, of the story is conveyed through repetition.²

READ GENESIS 2:15–3:19. Underline in red the phrase you see repeated five times (depending on your translation, it may be worded differently each time) in 2:17; 3:1; 3:3; 3:11; and 3:17 and write a paraphrase of it here.

For each time the phrase is repeated, write down who's speaking, who's being spoken to, and the circumstances.

VERSE	SPEAKER	HEARER	CIRCUMSTANCES
2:17			
3:1			
3:3			
3:11			
3:17			

Who does the most speaking when it comes to the command not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?

Who is the most frequent hearer when a version of the command is stated?

Given that the phrase prohibiting eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is the most repeated phrase in the narrative, what do you think the main question or conflict of this story is?

And what is the climax (Gen. 3:6)?

Moses tells us the serpent is the most cunning of all the wild animals. The serpent is Satan's tool of deception. A fall has already happened in the angelic world and Satan is a fallen angel, acting in rebellion toward God, his Maker. He now pursues the fall of humanity. Adam and Eve were meant to rule over the animals, but in the serpent's cunning presentation of the fruit, he seemingly rules over them.

The serpent calls into question God's goodness, generosity, and provision in the garden. He leads Eve to ponder if she'd be happier obeying God or eating a piece of fruit. Eve becomes convinced that obedience to God means she's missing out. She chooses a piece of fruit over her kind, intentional, and generous Creator. In the narrative it's clear that Eve exalts herself above her God. In contrast to many cultural retellings of this story, we don't actually see Eve attempt to domineer or persuade Adam. He takes and eats the fruit under his own free will.

This is the same choice you and I make every time we choose to disobey God. We decide in our hearts that we'll be happier if we reject God's design, His rule, His good order. Adam and Eve commit treason against their Creator and the results are heartbreaking. They are immediately ashamed and hurry to cover themselves.

We have highlighted Adam and Eve's pronounced unity up until this point. They are both made in the image of God, and they are both given the creation and cultural mandate. In Genesis 3, they both sin.

But when we zoom out and take stock of the whole narrative, we must admit that Adam's role in the story feels more pronounced than Eve's. Adam is created *first*. The command to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is repeated *to Adam*. Eve is created *for Adam*. Eve is created *from Adam*. Adam names Eve (3:20). Moses says Adam, the man, must leave his father and mother and pursue unity with Eve.

And, as we'll see next in Romans 5, the consequences of Adam eating the fruit are far greater than the consequences of Eve eating it. Adam is *the one held responsible*. Adam takes priority in this story. But why?

READ ROMANS 5:12-21.

Circle every mention of Adam's name with a blue colored pencil and Jesus's name with a purple colored pencil.

Circle every time you see the word "one" with a red colored pencil.

How did sin and death enter the world (Rom. 5:12)?

Finish the end of verse 14: Adam is a _____.

What two things are being contrasted in this portion of Scripture (Rom. 5:15)?

Write Romans 5:21 in your own words here:

Theologian Thomas Schreiner says, “Adam and Christ are the two most influential individuals in human history. But believers can take confidence because they belong to one who has overturned all that Adam introduced in the world.”³

The reason Adam takes priority in this story in Genesis is not because women are less important or secondary to men; we already know that’s not true from our study of Genesis 1 and 2. It’s because God had a plan for headship—directly related to our redemption—from the beginning. The head of all humans is Adam. And the head of all those who receive God’s gift of redemption is Jesus Christ. Genesis 1–3 is not only our origin story, but also the beginning of God’s grand story of drawing us back to Himself after our great act of treason that led to death. Thank God Adam’s work is undone by the work of Christ! What a relief. What a gift.

In the video teaching, we discussed the word *helper*, as when the Lord God noticed, “It is not good for man to be alone,” He said “I will make a helper corresponding to him” (Gen. 2:18). The Hebrew word for helper is *ezer* and is often used to describe God Himself. Knowing the same word is used for Eve and sometimes God reveals that women are in no way after thoughts or less-than. Instead, *ezer* points to a strong and necessary ally or partner. For example, “I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my *help* come? My *help* comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth” (Ps. 121:1-2, ESV, emphasis mine). Though helper can feel initially off-putting in our cultural context, with some additional knowledge we see it’s actually a powerful and dignified word.

Just like *helper*, *head* is a hard word for us in the twenty-first century West. And to be sure, Adam’s headship has been wrongly interpreted and wielded far too many times. What is clear from the narrative in Genesis 1–3 and Romans 5:12-21, though, is that Adam bears a special *responsibility*. He is uniquely charged by God to obey God’s good command. He is a *representative* for Eve and all humanity. We will study headship more in the later weeks of our study, but for now it’s helpful to point out that we don’t see in either Genesis 1–3 or Romans 5 a headship that is hierarchical or domineering. Rather, Adam’s role as head is meant to point us to our perfect head, Jesus.

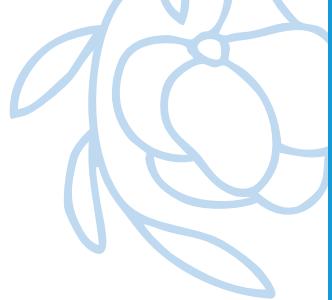
Reclaiming the meaning of *helper* and *head* is one of many ways we’re disentangling culture from Scripture in this study.

List any questions or misgivings you still have about the creation narrative, the word *helper*, the idea of headship, the fall, or anything else. Don't be afraid to be honest! These are your questions, and God stands ready to help.

Meditate on the truth that the work of Adam is undone in the work of Christ. When you think about yourself—who you are, your identity, your worth and value—do you think more often about your sins in Adam or your salvation in Jesus? Do you believe that the gift of Jesus is greater than the sin of Adam and Eve? Do you define yourself by your sins or by your Savior?

Close today in prayer, thanking God for giving us the gift of Jesus so that we no longer have to define ourselves by our sins.

Day 3



BECAUSE YOU HAVE DONE THIS: GOD'S WORDS TO THE SERPENT, EVE, AND ADAM

Yesterday we reluctantly turned from the good news of our creation to the bad news of our fall. Both Adam and Eve rebelled against their Creator. Both chose to eat the fruit that God forbade. Their disastrous choice had ramifications further reaching than we can fathom. It's a choice we regrettably see in ourselves too, as we consider how easy it is for us to disbelieve God's goodness and generosity toward us. We too give into the lie that there's something better for us than God's perfect will.

READ GENESIS 3:7-13. Underline the three immediate results of Adam and Eve's disobedience mentioned in Genesis 3:7 in red.

What was their response to God after they sinned in Genesis 3:8?

God called out to Adam, not because He didn't know where Adam was (God is all knowing!), but because He was gently calling Adam to Himself. In Adam's response in Genesis 3:10, circle every pronoun Adam repeats in blue. What is the pronoun he repeats the most?

How does this scene contrast with Genesis 2:24-25?

God continues to gently draw Adam in. He restates a version of His command about the tree in 3:11. How does Adam reply in 3:12?

God also draws Eve into conversation next, gently requiring her to recognize what she's done. How does Eve reply in 3:13?

Notably, God does not begin a conversation with the serpent. The serpent has no hope of pardon or redemption.

The result of eating the fruit was not what Adam and Eve had presumably expected. The fruit did not make them more like God. It did not make them happier or wiser or their lives better in any way. The results were immediate shame, fear, isolation, and blame. Sin over promises and under delivers. Like the fruit, sin looks good, delightful, and desirable, but it's rotten to the core.

When have you experienced the immediate, rotten fruit of sin in your own life? Describe a time when you were certain that a sinful choice would make you happy, but instead you quickly experienced shame, fear, isolation, or blaming others.

READ GENESIS 3:14-19. Restate God's words to the serpent (Gen. 3:14-15) in your own words.

God relegated the serpent to a shameful existence on the ground, underfoot of humanity and all animals for the rest of his days. The snake, and Satan who used him, were subjected to an existence of humility, and they were promised ultimate defeat in a war that began here between the serpent's offspring and Eve's. (We'll study this hostility more in tomorrow's personal study and a few more times in the weeks ahead.)

Restate God's words to Eve (Gen. 3:16) in your own words.

Restate God's words to Adam (Gen. 3:17-19) in your own words.

In Adam's and Eve's penalties for sin, much of the goodness of creation and the creation mandate are impacted and even reversed. For Eve, her role in bearing children and helping Adam will be frustrated. God will intensify (not initiate) her pain in bearing children. And this pain is likely not only physical but also points to the sorrow that often accompanies childbearing in a fallen world. Eve may experience the additional sorrow of giving birth to her sons who are not the One promised in Genesis 3:15, the One who will strike the head of the serpent. Further, she will have some kind of desire that will be met with a ruling over her in some way.

Commentators acknowledge significant difficulty in pinning down exactly what Eve's desire for her husband will be after the fall. The Hebrew word *teshuqah* only appears three times in the Old Testament (here, Gen. 4:7, and Song of Sg. 7:10).⁴ Scholars offer a range of meanings:

- a general desire,
- a sexual desire (even though childbearing is painful, she will still desire her husband sexually),
- an idolatrous desire (a desire for her husband to be or do more than he is able or called to),
- or a desire to dominate her husband.⁵
- One scholar argues that “your husband” in 3:16 should be translated as “the man,” pointing to the anticipated son or seed whom Eve will bear. Under this interpretation, Eve desires the One who will restore what has been lost, the One who will rule over all.⁶

Whatever her desire is, it will be met with a ruling over her.

Our intensified pain in childbearing and our frustration in marriage are the consequences of the fall. Don't forget: God's good design was that Adam and Eve would be partners, on mission together. The fall doesn't ruin that, but it does frustrate it. We see this reality in the world around us and maybe even in our own marriages and relationships. The relationships between men and women are marked by subjugation, suspicion, and sometimes even violence. These verses are descriptive, not prescriptive; they *describe* how life is after the fall, not how it was *meant* to be. As we turn to Adam's punishment for sin, verse 17 may cause you to wonder if his sin was listening to Eve. We know that's not the case for three reasons.

- First, "Don't listen to Eve" wasn't God's command, rather "Don't eat from the tree" was His command (Gen. 2:17).
- Second, given that Adam and Eve were called to partner together and Eve was meant to be his helper, we can assume that Eve speaking and Adam listening at times was part of God's good design for them.
- Third, further on in Genesis Abram is commanded by God to listen to his wife Sarah (Gen. 21:12). Listening to one's wife is not the issue here but obedience to God is.

God told Adam the land He generously provided would be cursed. The lavish vegetation was now riddled with thorns and thistles and caused Adam and his descendants great pain. Work was now toil, not a delight. While Eve's penalties were focused on childbearing and marriage and Adam's were focused on work, we know both genders experience all the effects of the fall. Adam would also experience the effects of the fall in his body, just as Eve would also experience the effects of the fall in her work.

Finally, God pronounced the entrance of death into the world. We are formed by dust, and we will return to dust. In this scene Adam and Eve experienced their spiritual death (Eph. 2:1) and knew that their physical death awaited (Rom. 5:12).

What did we cover today that surprised you?

Are there any elements of the biblical account of creation and fall that oppose a cultural account you have been holding on to or have been taught in the past?

Take a moment to grieve what was lost in the fall. How do the penalties incurred by Adam and Eve personally affect you now? Write your honest thoughts about that in a prayer of lament and confession to God.



Day 4

GRACE IN THE FALL

True to His character, the Lord was gracious when Adam and Eve disobeyed. He preserved their physical lives when they deserved immediate death. And even more than that, He immediately promised redemption for fallen humanity.

READ GENESIS 3:14-15. Underline who the hostility will be between in verse 15 (four parties) with a red colored pencil.

In your own words, what will happen between Eve's offspring and the serpent's offspring?

Theologians call Genesis 3:15 the *protoevangelium*—the first mention of the gospel or the prototype of the gospel. This is God's first announcement that there will be a war between those whom Satan uses and those whom the Father ordains to bring about the rescue of humanity through Jesus Christ His Son. Even as the disastrous fall occurred, our gracious God announced He will never leave us, nor forsake us. From the very beginning of our story, our rescue is already in the works.

READ GENESIS 3:20-21. Underline what Adam did in blue. Underline what God did in purple.

What do you think might be the implications of Adam giving his wife the specific name Eve and the Lord clothing Adam and Eve? What is the narrative trying to show us, rather than directly tell us in these two actions?

READ GENESIS 3:22-24. In your own words, what does God say in the entirety of verse 22?

Why do you think God sent Adam and Eve out of the garden?

As Genesis 3 comes to a close, we see more of God's lavish grace. He promised that Eve would have offspring, and we see that Adam trusted the Lord to do just that when he named Eve "the mother of all the living" (v. 20). They were counting on the Lord to preserve humanity and produce the offspring that would one day defeat the serpent. Further, God covered their shame with animal skins. The first clothes reveal that innocent blood is required to cover our sin. Though they and we deserve to walk in open shame, our gracious God clothes us.

Adam and Eve's removal from the garden was another act of grace. Notice in verses 22-24 only Adam is referenced, but these truths apply to Eve too. Again, Adam is held responsible, as he is Eve's representative and ours. Because Adam now knew good from evil—and this knowledge came to him through wrongful and rebellious means—he now lived in a state of sin. If he ate from the tree of life at this point, Adam and Eve would live eternally in a sinful state, apart from their Creator.⁷ Adam and Eve had to be removed from the garden for their own protection. By keeping them from the tree of life, God initiated His plan of redemption through Jesus. It's through Christ alone that we may now obtain eternal life by grace through faith.

The enmity between Eve's offspring and the serpent's offspring is a theme throughout Scripture. Read the following three verses from the New Testament and write in your own words what has already happened and what will happen in the future. (Note: Not every box will be filled.)

VERSE	WHAT HAS ALREADY HAPPENED	WHAT WILL HAPPEN
Romans 16:20		
Galatians 4:4		
Revelation 20:10		

From the very beginning God has been on the move. We've seen throughout this week and last that God does not need anything from you or me. Rather, He created us out of His kindness and generosity, that we might be happy in Him. Our God is for us, always has been, and always will be.

So far in the storyline of the Bible, we've seen Creation, Fall, and the Promise of Redemption. The rest of Scripture reveals God's unfolding and grand story of bringing His image bearers back to Him—restoration to an intimate, worshipful, and overwhelmingly satisfying relationship with our Maker.

Close your time in the Word today by rewriting the verse that has made the strongest impact on you so far. Write a prayer to God about the verse, restating God's goodness and mercy *to you personally* in that verse and in His grand story.



Day 5

CREATION > FALL > PROMISE > REDEMPTION + MISSION

One thing you may be hoping for in this Bible study is a set of rules and regulations for living that are distinct for women and distinct for men. As with all areas of the Christian life, we think a to-do list would be helpful so that we can ensure we are behaving like the women God made us to be. I have possibly disappointing news for you: there are very few gendered instructions in the Bible. While we will see some gendered instructions when it comes to marriage and the gathered worship of the church in Paul's letters in the New Testament, we'll also see that even those instructions often point beyond their specific context to a greater principle for the Christian life. God just doesn't often say, "Women be like this and men be like that."

What we do see on repeat throughout Scripture, though, is a call on God's people to love Him and love others in the place where He has put us. God alone gives us life and breath, and God alone ordains when and where we live. He puts us right where we are, that people might seek God and find Him (Acts 17:24-27). As we turn from Creation, Fall, and God's Promise, and move through our story of Redemption, I want to point out that the Redemption story is not passive; we have a role too. All God's people do.

Jesus alone saves. Within God's design, however, He also has a role for us in His redemption story. Because of this truth, I like to employ the following timeline for God's grand story:

Creation > Fall > Promise > Redemption + Mission > Restoration⁸

Our restoration to the new heaven and new earth is coming. After the Fall and prior to Jesus's arrival is the age of Promise. As we've seen, God promises redemption through Eve's offspring. Between Eve and Jesus, then, we have a lineage of women whom God used to bring His promises to pass. Before Jesus came to earth as a baby in a manger, there was a biological line and people to preserve. After Jesus's life on earth, there is a spiritual line and people to produce. Today, let's look back on five women who lived before Christ and were used by God to preserve His people and bring about the promised Messiah.

Shiphrah and Puah: 15th Century BC

The Israelites had settled in Egypt, thanks to God's provision to them through Joseph, who had been appointed second in command in Egypt by Pharaoh. Joseph's role enabled Israel to survive the famine in the land (Gen. 41). The narrative in Exodus tells us that the Israelites were fruitful and multiplied, so generations after Joseph the new Pharaoh was afraid of their vast numbers and strength. He therefore inflicted harsh slave labor on Israel. He was so intimidated, in fact, he ordered the Israelite baby boys to be killed.

**READ THE STORY OF SHIPHRAH AND PUAH IN
EXODUS 1:15-20.**

**How did Shiphrah and Puah play a role in God's promise
of redemption?**

Deborah and Jael: ~13th Century BC

Eventually Israel escaped Egypt, wandered in the desert with Moses, and ultimately entered Canaan, the promised land, under the leadership of Joshua. Israel defeated many of the pagan people groups in Canaan, but not all, which proved to be the cause of ongoing pain for Israel. After Joshua died, Israel was led by various judges. When Deborah came on the scene as a judge, Israel was suffering under the oppression of the Canaanite king Jabin.

**READ ABOUT DEBORAH IN JUDGES 4:1-16 AND JAELE IN
JUDGES 4:17-24.**

**How did Deborah and Jael play a role in God's promise
of redemption?**

Esther: Mid-5th Century BC

Esther's story takes place after Babylon conquered Israel and took them into exile. Persia conquered Babylon and while many Jews returned to Israel, many remained in Persia where they had already built their lives during the Babylonian exile. Through a series of events, ordained by God's sovereign hand, Esther married King Ahasuerus (aka King Xerxes I) and became queen. Haman, who was second in command to King Ahasuerus, was on a mission to violently obliterate all the Jews in the Persian Empire. Esther herself and her cousin Mordecai were both Jewish and under threat.

READ THE FOLLOWING VERSES TO GET AN OVERVIEW OF ESTHER'S STORY:

- 4:13-16**
- 5:1-3**
- 7:3-6**
- 8:1-6**
- 9:1-2**
- 9:20-22**

How did Esther play a role in God's promise of redemption?

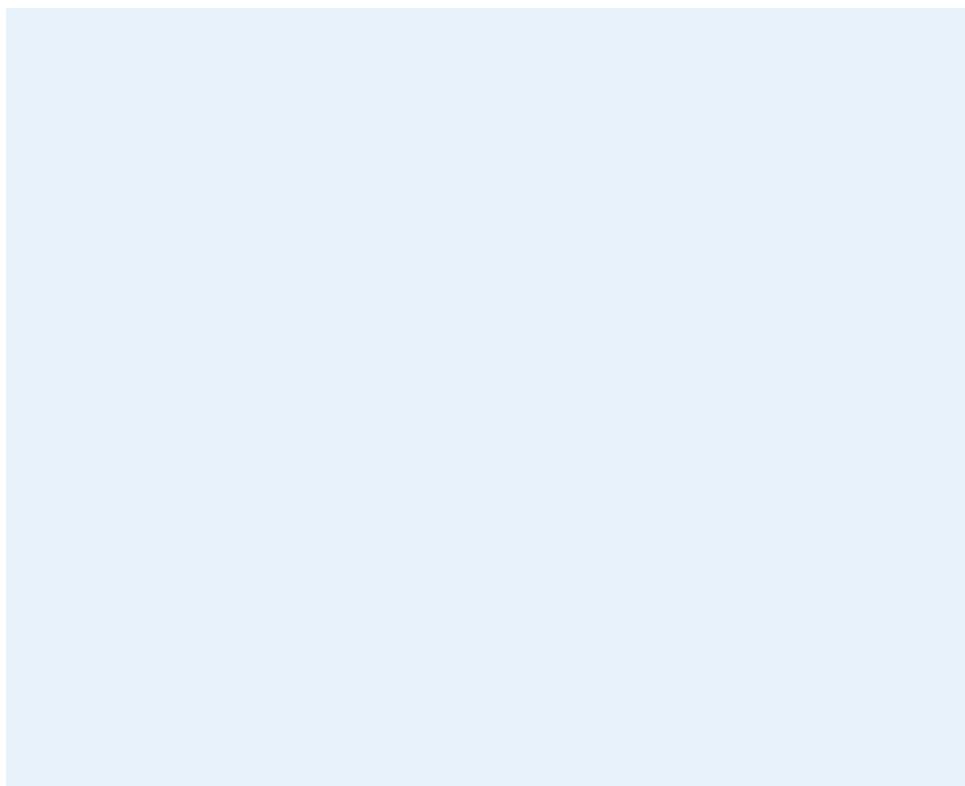
Each of these women was created by God and for God to carry out His purposes for His people in their specific time and place, with the unique gifts and roles He gave to each one. We've got midwives, a judge, a strong woman at home with a tent peg, and a woman of ethnic minority who became queen. They each displayed different strengths, challenges, and behaviors. God's creativity is on display in their diversity alone!

The point is, these women—and all women throughout the Bible—don't necessarily give us a list of dos and don'ts for women. What they do show us, though, is that God delights to write women into His story. We play an essential role in the storyline of the Bible. These women were on mission, serving God and serving His people. Their roles in God's story were not in spite of them being women, but *because* they were women. Their gender gave them access to certain spaces, which enabled them to preserve God's people. Further, these women foreshadowed the Savior to come. They were deliverers, defenders, and advocates for the people of God.

What roles do you have in your own life, or what spaces do you have access to, precisely because you're a woman? (e.g., the midwives in Exodus were in their role specifically because they were women. They leveraged their gender.)

How might you steward that role or space for God's glory and the good of His people?

Close by writing a prayer to the Lord to give you courage, perseverance, joy, or whatever you need to steward your roles and gender well.



REASONS WE CAN SEE THAT GOD'S DESIGN OF WOMEN IS VERY GOOD

- God made our bodies good. The female body is very good! Our gender is good and necessary; it is distinct, it is God-made, and it is not interchangeable.
- Our headship in Adam points us to our headship in Christ, who is our only hope for redemption, mercy, salvation, and joy.
- Even in the midst of our sin, God ordained a way to rescue us and reconcile us back to Him.
- The gospel, the promise of God's redemption, was first proclaimed in God's words to Eve, a woman.
- After God's promise of salvation, which would come through the offspring of a woman, we see many Old Testament examples of brave women who played essential roles in the redemptive storyline of the Bible.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1

In what ways in your own life do you see a good need for both men and women, each distinct from the other?

2

To be represented by another can be a hard pill to swallow for us who live in a highly individualistic culture. How does the idea that Adam is Eve's representative and ours sit with you? What is an example of representation in culture that we like? What's an example that we chafe at?

3

Of the five women we looked at on Day 5, whose story is most intriguing to you and why?

4

VIDEO: In the teaching session, Jen talked about the cultural context of the Old Testament laws about women. Did any of the cultural values or standards surprise you? How do they point to God's character and view of women?

5

What did you learn this week that helped you to see that being a woman is very good?