

InWord: Lossology 101
Session 1 THE FALL

SETTING THE HEART

Any exploration of the subject of loss and suffering has to start, it seems, with the Fall. The Fall is not only the reason behind why bad things happen. The Fall is also why these bad things hurt. We frequently hear people explain bad things with the phrase “Well, we live in a fallen world,” so it would be good to understand just what that means.

As you prepare to be receptive to what God wants to say through His Word, let your heart be softened by the psalmist ...

Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.

Psalm 119:18

DIGGING IN

The creation scene is a familiar scene, so let’s explore it as if we’re seeing it for the first time. You may, or may not, know that Genesis 1 and 2 give us two accounts of creation. It’s sort of like how the four gospels each gives us a different view of Jesus’ ministry. The account in Genesis 1 is more spreadsheet-like, very orderly and detailed. The account in Genesis 2 is more poetic and flowing. Each offers a different set of details on the same event. Read the two creation passages using the Scripture below. As you read, look for the following:

- 1. References to God and how He’s described.**
- 2. References to male/female/mankind.**
- 3. Any instructions given to Adam and Eve.**

Genesis 1:26-31

²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

²⁹ Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. ³⁰ And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so.

³¹ God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

Genesis 2:4-9

⁴ This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, when the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.

⁵ Now no shrub had yet appeared on the earth and no plant had yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground, ⁶ but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground. ⁷ Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

⁸ Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. ⁹ The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Let's add one more passage to the mix. Genesis 2:15-17 records the first set of instructions given to mankind that pertains to a relationship with God. Read these verses below and do the following:

1. Circle any positive "do" instruction.
2. Underline any negative "do not" instruction.
3. Draw a box around any consequences connected to "do not" instructions.

Genesis 2:15-17

¹⁵ The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. ¹⁶ And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; ¹⁷ but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."

TAKING IT INWARD

Let's take stock on what we've just explored.

What's taken place thus far?

How would you describe man's relationship with God?

How would you describe existence?

DIGGING DEEPER

The verses we have just explored paint the picture of life in "pre Fall" status: pure, direct access to God, no death as we know death today. But as we know, it didn't stay that way. Because the events of Genesis 3 affect EVERYTHING we do every day, we're going to take a super-slow-mo look at how those events rolled out.

First let's look at the detail of the first temptation ever for mankind. This will give us a look at the anatomy of temptation we face every day. In Genesis 3:1-7 each point of interaction represents a stage in the temptation process. As you read the verses in the table below, note how each verse represents an element of the temptation process.

Genesis 3:1-7	Stage of Temptation
Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"	
² The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³ but God did	

say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”	
⁴ “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. ⁵ “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”	
⁶ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.	
⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.	

Verse 7 represents the first in a cascade of consequences. Each consequence represents something that was lost. As you look at the consequences below, write in the middle column what mankind lost as a result of each consequence. We’ve given you a couple examples to get you started.

VSS	Action/Consequence	Loss Of ...	Pain and hurt
3:7	⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.	<i>Innocence</i>	-shame -guilt -lust -diverting sexual energy -all the fears of pre-marital sex
3:7	And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.	<i>Protection</i>	-we now need to provide our own protection: safety and security -Maslow’s hierarchy of needs: when the base needs aren’t met, we don’t achieve other needs
3:8	and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden		
3:10	I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.”		
3:12	“The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.		

3:15	And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers;		
3:15	he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”		
3:16	To the woman he said, “I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children.		
3:16	Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.”		
3:17	¹⁷ To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat from it,’		
3:17	“Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life.		
3:17	It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.		
3:19	By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”		
3:22	And the LORD God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.”		
3:23	So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.		

Now take one more pass with the consequences. Ponder each consequence/loss and write a note for each loss in the far-right column, explaining how it might translate into hurt and pain that we feel today. Granted, this is a fairly involved exercise. But when you finish, you’ll see how much of today’s pain and hurt can be directly attributed to all that was lost in that fateful Garden episode.

PUTTING INTO PRACTICE

Close your time by reflecting on the pain and hurt column. Write down a couple of thoughts in response to these questions.

Which of these have you experienced personally?

Which of these have impacted your life the most?

How does it help your perspective to connect that pain and hurt to the events of the Fall?

Take a minute to write a note that explains how the Fall accounts for the pain and hurt we feel today. Write as if you are explaining to a friend the connection between the Fall and pain.