



Week 11 - The Fall: Sin and Separation from God

Genesis describes how God created people in His image. They initially enjoyed a relationship with God, and the only restrictive commandment God gave them was to not eat from the fruit of one tree. That tree represented the knowledge of good and evil and moral independence. Adam and Eve rebelled against God, ate from the tree, and betrayed all of us who inherit and perpetuate this fallen state. See the table below.

Genesis 3: The Fall of Man and its Consequences

Verse	Biblical Account	Description
1	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?’”	God’s word is questioned. The serpent is used by satan to oppose God and His Word. From this point onward throughout history the authority of the Word has been attacked.
2-3	The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”	God’s word is slightly distorted: God only told them not to eat the fruit. Deception begins.

4-5	<p>“You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows when you eat from it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good from evil.”</p>	<p>God’s character is questioned, and the temptation to become God is presented. The consequences of disobeying God are ignored.</p>
6	<p>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.</p>	<p>The temptation for immediate pleasure, fulfillment, and wisdom outside of God enticed her to disobey God (1 John 2:15). Although she herself was deceived, it was Adam who blatantly rebelled (1 Timothy 2:14).</p>
7-8	<p>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. Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as He was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden.</p>	<p>Their desire for independence resulted in fear, shame and a separation between themselves, God and eventually nature. From that point on, people became hopelessly separated from God, lost their immortality, and became more and more corrupt.</p>

The Bible is brutally honest, insisting that all are born with a sinful nature and in dire need for a deliverer (Galatians 3:13). We are not “really” born good, or as blank slates, and then “go bad” through our parents, environment or society at large. Measure this viewpoint against reality. Children born in even the best of families sin, and parents are often amazed how young it can begin. All children must be trained to live right (Proverbs 22:6), but they didn’t need to be “taught” how to sin. Left alone and untrained they will always take the selfish road. The consequences of the fall have been felt throughout the ages. In Genesis 3:7-8, the Bible describes four separations that resulted from the Fall – separations we continue to suffer from today:

Separation #1: from God – God’s presence departs; spiritual separation begins

Separation #2: from Within – Psychological disorders, guilt and shame

Separation #3: from Each Other – Dissentions, accusations, rivalries, and murder

Separation #4: from Nature – Imbalance and natural disasters become common

Thus, our sinful nature and actions result in a hopeless separation from God. “But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He does not hear” (Isaiah 59:2). Although the Bible is very clear about this separation, other religions gain popularity by minimizing or ignoring it.

When we recognize the infinite sin-gap between God and man, we understand our inability to change our own corrupt heart, and we see our need for a Savior.

Actual Sin

Actual sin, unlike original sin, is something we do rather than inherit. (See the table below). We express our sin nature in repeated acts of willful rebellion against God. Scripture calls these sins the “deeds of the flesh” (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21).

Sin Nature vs. Actual Sins

Sin Nature	Actual Sins
Innate bent and guilt	Acts proceeding from innate bent
Inherited	Committed
Root	Fruit
By nature	From our nature

Heard sin (Mark 7:21)	Evil deeds (James 1:14-16)
Described in Romans 1-5	Matthew 5-7 (Sermon on the Mount)
Makes us guilty	Makes us corrupt

In describing his own battle with sin, the apostle Paul described the conflict we all face: “For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is in my flesh [i.e. sinful nature],...for the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish” (Romans 7:18-23).

The biblical description of humanity is not very flattering:

“There is no one righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good; there is not even one.” (Romans 3:10-12)“

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23)

“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned...” (Romans 5:12)

Review:

1. What is original sin?
2. Name the 4 consequences of the Fall of man.
3. What is the difference between our sin nature and actual sin?