

IN THE BEGINNING: GOD

Community Group Lesson 2: "Shared Brokenness"

Have someone read aloud Genesis all of Genesis 3, then watch the video and work through the questions below.

1. No matter how you cut it, Genesis 3 is a difficult text. The story of the Fall of Man causes us to have to wrestle with some of the most basic and fundamental problems in human existence- problems we still wrestle with to this day.

Are there specific circumstances in your life right now that you can confidently point to and say, "Yes, I too am fallen?" What are they? Perhaps we could frame the question the way God frames it to the humans in the story: *Where are you* right now?

2. In the video, we highlighted 3 distinct responses to sin that tend to be problematic for all humans, everywhere:

- They *sew fig leaves* (v.7).
- They *hide*. (v 8, 10).
- They *shift the blame* (v.12-13).

What do you think causes humans to engage in these kinds of behaviors?
Is there one of the above that you can relate with more than others? Why?

What were getting at, here, is that it is a natural human tendency to want to cover our shame. What is the best way, then, to help others (or ourselves) come face to face with their brokenness, so that we can receive forgiveness? Is it to point out their sin? Is it to convince them they are fallen? Is there some other way?

3. We didn't get there in the video, but the narrative goes on gives some startling consequences of the choices that the man and woman made- which are typically called "the curses."

(Have one member of the group read the verses and explanations below, then pose the questions to the whole group):

- It begins with the woman in 3:16: **16** *To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."*

There are two things happening here. The first is that the woman's **greatest joy** (here the birth of her children) **will also include great pain and ache**. The second is that she will "desire her husband." The Hebrew word for *desire* literally means "a stretching out."

The image is of reaching out for something that you can never quite get. In other words, **there is a longing for fulfillment in her relationship with the man that will never quite satisfy her.**

The pain of childbirth notwithstanding, Are there times in your life where a moment of joy was also tainted with pain? When?

Have you (whether you are a woman or a man doesn't matter) ever tried to find something in a relationship that the relationship simply couldn't deliver?

- The second curse is for the man (v. 17-19): 17 *To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it 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 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."*

So, in the same way that the woman is bent toward the man and he cannot deliver, the man is bent toward the ground. His worth is going to come from what he does, the land he owns and cultivates, and the work he accomplishes. *But the land will produce thorns and thistles. Just as the woman cannot be satisfied in the relationship, so the man's work will never quite satisfy; never quite fulfill.*

Are there ways in which you have tried to satisfy yourself or your longings through your work? Have you searched for significance by building a reputation or an identity in your work?

Did it 'work?'

4. Is there a sense in which both relationship and work can become "fig leaves" for what we truly need? How so?
5. Read Genesis 3:21.

Let's turn the corner here (finally!) The beautiful reality of the Christian hope is that the story does not end in Genesis 3. Even though we all in some way "bear the scars" of the fall, God never abandons His people, and He doesn't abandon us. It begins with the making of proper clothes for the man and woman, and ends with the magnificent rescue of His people through Jesus Christ.

The hope we hold onto as Christians is nowhere better distilled than in Paul's words in Romans 8. Have someone read Romans 8:18-25, and someone else read 8: 37-39. Close by spending some time together in prayer.

If someone has shared something deep or personal, now would be a great time to surround them and pray for them. Remember, the things shared in this space are confidential. It is yours to pray for and walk alongside those who shared, not to share it with others.