

Lesson 2

EVE

Introduction

I couldn't sleep the other night. Thoughts were rolling around and around in my head. Unfinished to-do lists screamed at me. Concerns about my children and worries that I was falling short in my role as a mother weighed heavily on my heart. Relationships that needed tending, household chores that needed attention, and work deadlines all reminded me that I needed to be *more*. The words "Not good enough . . . not good enough . . . you've wasted time . . . your life is a mess . . . she's so much better than you" whispered in my head. Shame gnawed at my soul.

My first instinct was to get up and start working on my list. True, it was two thirty a.m., but all I could think of was how much I could get done before my household woke up. But I knew my movement as I got out of bed would wake my husband, Leo, and he'd think I was out of my mind. Seeing no good solution to my stress just made me want to give up.

Is there a better way to cope? I believe there is. When I can't sleep at night, or when my stomach is upset during the day because of worries or concerns I am struggling with, God offers me refuge, a place to hide. I get tempted to hide behind my performance (getting up in the middle of the night to work), or under my covers (just giving up), but He calls me out and invites me to hide *in Him*. When faced with the many ways that I fall short, I can choose to rely on myself or to rely on Him.

Eve was faced with the same choice. Her circumstances were different from mine, but she still faced the choice of where to go with her feelings of shame and inadequacy. I don't want to emulate her, but I can definitely learn from her.

As we study Eve's life and choices, let's remember that the book of Genesis was written to reveal spiritual truths to us. It teaches about the mysteries of God's nature, where we come from, the sacredness of marriage, and many other truths. The intention of the author was not to teach science. We are to read Genesis (and all of

Scripture) with open hearts that ask, “God, what do you want me to learn from these passages?”

It is critical that we treat Adam and Eve as people who actually lived. According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 390, “The account of the fall in Genesis 3 uses figurative language, but affirms a primeval event, a deed that took place *at the beginning of the history of man*. Revelation gives us the certainty of faith that the whole of human history is marked by the original fault freely committed by our first parents.”¹ This means that the fall was a historical event that took place at the beginning of human history. This event was written about in a language that the people of that time could understand.

It’s my prayer that as we study Eve’s story, we will not only understand it, but we will grow in wisdom as we apply the truths we learn. May these truths penetrate deeply into our souls, quieting our questions, doubts, worries, and inadequacies that seek to rob us of the peace and dignity that Christ offers to each of us.

Day One

DIGNITY

Read Genesis 1 and 2.

1. In what way was the creation of man different from the creation of animals? See Genesis 1:27.
2. What does it mean to be created in God’s own image and likeness? See CCC 225 and CCC 343.

¹ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, revised in accordance with the official Latin text promulgated by Pope John Paul II, 2nd ed. (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997).

3. We can choose to base our dignity on who God says we are or on what the world says has value. What are some of the things our culture says give us dignity?

4. How is the woman described in Genesis 2:18? What is your personal reaction to this description?

5. How does CCC 1605 describe a woman's relationship to a man?

Understanding the meaning of the word *helper* in the original Hebrew sheds important light on this subject. The Hebrew word for helper is *ezer kenegdo*, which means “a helper who is equal in power and ability to him.” This term is used twenty-one times in the Old Testament, and only once does it refer to women. It is used seventeen times to refer to God Himself.² That's eye-opening, isn't it?

Quiet your heart and enjoy His presence. . . . His love for you is unconditional.

Eve was created as a person with dignity, and so is every woman who has been created since. Yet so many of us, if we were honest, would admit to being plagued at times by feelings of worthlessness. We try to grow in dignity through our accomplishments, our possessions, and our reputations. But none of these things can be counted on; all can be taken away in an instant. When Jesus walked on earth, He offered us a different example to follow. Instead of allowing His sense of worth and dignity to be dictated by what people thought of Him, He kept His focus on what His heavenly Father thought. 1 Peter 2:4 describes Jesus as “rejected by human beings but chosen and precious in the sight of God.” Jesus laid down His life for mankind, and what He received in return was rejection. Yet He didn't let that determine His value. He knew He was chosen and precious in the sight of God. Do you know that that is how your heavenly Father sees you? You are chosen and precious in God's eyes. Take a few moments to meditate on this fact. Let Jesus whisper to your heart, “It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you” (John 15:16).

² Examples of this can be found in Psalm 10:14, 30:10, 54:4, 70:5, and 121:2.

Day Two

TEMPTATION

Read Genesis 3:1–6.

1. According to 2 Corinthians 11:3, how did the serpent (Satan) deceive Eve? Do you see ways he employs the same tactic with women today?

Satan began the temptation with a question: “Did God really tell you . . . ?” He whispers questions to us, too. They might seem harmless. What is the danger in playing around with a question in our minds? That depends on the question. One of his favorites is “What if . . . ?” “What if you had married someone else?” “What if you had more money?” “What if God hadn’t allowed that loss?” Would life be better? The question plants a seed of doubt in our minds regarding God’s goodness. Underlying the subtler question is the real one: “Is God holding out on you? Does He *really* want what’s best for you?”

2. Compare Eve’s words in Genesis 3:3 with God’s words in Genesis 2:16–17. What is the difference between the two? Why is this significant?

3. According to Genesis 3:6, what drove Eve’s decision to eat the forbidden fruit?

4. Satan was subtle. Instead of inviting Eve to rebel against God, he asked questions, planted seeds of doubt, and mixed truth with lies. He caught her off guard. He does the same today. He knows better than to tempt God’s daughters to curse God and rebel outright. Most of us would recognize such a direct attack and run

the other way. He knows that it's so much more effective if he can plant seeds of doubt and expose us to half-truths. What are some of the doubts that he whispers into the ears of God's precious daughters today?

The enemy of our soul wants us to doubt God's unconditional love for us. He wants us to doubt our dignity based on who we are in Christ. He wants us to doubt that sin has consequences. He wants us to doubt that God will forgive anything if we ask with a contrite heart. He wants us to doubt that inner beauty matters more than physical beauty. He wants us to doubt that *God is enough*, that *He is all we need*.

When we are faced with temptation, we can learn from Eve's mistakes. Each mistake led her further down the path into sin. No doubt Eve struggled with her conscience over the choice before her. The right thing to do would have been to flee, not stay and try to fight the temptation.

Eve's mistakes:

1. **She conversed with temptation.** Remember, Eve had perfect communion with God. If she had kept her eyes on Him and all He'd given her, she would have avoided the conversation with the serpent, which is what led her down the wrong path.
2. **She was careless with God's Word.** Her words, "You must not touch it," were her addition—not God's words.
3. **She looked at the temptation.** Once she started dwelling on the forbidden fruit, her eyes came off of God and His goodness. This weakened her resolve to obey.
4. **She allowed her desires to drive her decision making.** She saw that the tree was good, pleasing to the eye, and desirable. Her desires—rather than God's commands—became her focus.

Quiet your heart and enjoy His presence. . . . He longs to shower you with love.

Take a few moments to ask God to reveal to you an area in your life where you are experiencing temptation. Prayerfully go through Eve's four mistakes, and ask the Holy Spirit to prick your

conscience, alerting you to any areas in which you are following her pattern. Remember, “He that is in you is greater than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4). Although the temptation may seem overpowering, the Holy Spirit who dwells within you is stronger than whoever or whatever is tempting you. But you need to ask for His help. He is waiting to strengthen you from within.

Day Three

CONTENTMENT

Read Genesis 2:16–17 and 3:1–6.

1. Describe God’s actions toward Adam and Eve in Genesis 2:16–17.
2. Satan managed to get Eve to shift her focus. Describe how her attention shifted.
3. Use a dictionary and write out the definitions of *discontentment* and *contentment*.

Discontentment:

Contentment:

Satan’s message to Eve was, “Are you longing for something more? More knowledge? More wisdom? Then you should be able to have it! Why should you have to experience unfulfilled longings? Take matters into your own hands!” His message is the same to us today. He convinces us that we shouldn’t have unfulfilled longings. And our world chimes in, suggesting all sorts of remedies. Do you want something you can’t afford? Put it on a credit card. Are you longing for affirmation and attention? Dress seductively to get it. Are you discontent in your marriage? Satisfy your emotional needs with another man.

It's important to note that the longing itself is not sinful. In fact, God put this longing into our hearts to draw us to Him.³ But we get into trouble when we insist on fulfilling that longing with things of earth, and when we're willing to do whatever it takes to fulfill it, regardless of right or wrong.

4. A. What did Satan promise Eve would receive if she ate the fruit?

B. What had God already taught Eve according to Genesis 2:16–17?

C. How had God already made Eve, according to Genesis 1:26?

Do you see what Satan did? He tempted Eve to sin in order to gain something that she *already had*. She was already made in God's image. God had already graciously and lovingly provided this for her. Yet Satan managed to get Eve to take her eyes off the freedom she had and focus instead on the one thing she couldn't have. When her focus shifted, she forgot who she was. She was God's beloved child, made in His image. Oh, the power of deception. She was deceived into believing that sinning against God would give her greater dignity, wisdom, and strength.

Before we are too hard on her, can we see times in our own lives when this has happened? How often do we forget that we are beloved daughters of God, and instead seek to earn dignity in ways other than resting in His grace and mercy? Sometimes we follow Eve's example and do this through poor choices (think of the times a girl will give her body sexually in hopes that she'll be unconditionally loved in return), and sometimes we do this by trying to earn the favor of God through our good deeds. We forget that nothing we can do or give can make God love us more. He already is crazy about us. He already has given us dignity.

We get into trouble when we take our eyes off of what we already have and focus on things we lack. The best antidote to this tendency is gratitude. It sounds simplistic,

³ "You have made us for yourself, oh Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you." Aurelius Augustinus, *The Confessions of St. Augustine* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

but the truth is that a heart full of gratitude leaves less room for doubt, discontentment, and unhappiness.

Quiet your heart and enjoy His presence. . . . Bask in His smile as He delights in you.

Dear Lord,

Help me to remember that the only place all my longings and desires will be fulfilled is in heaven, when they've been purified by Your love. Help my unfulfilled desires to draw me toward a longing for heaven with You. Thank You for meeting the deepest longing of my heart.

I know I don't have to wait until heaven to experience something of Your presence and Your filling of my empty places. Help me to cultivate a heart of gratitude. There is much for which I am thankful. These are some of the blessings I acknowledge as coming from Your generous hands. . . .

Day Four

HIDING

Read Genesis 3:7–11.

1. How did Adam and Eve respond when they realized that God was walking in the garden?
2. In Genesis 3:10, why did Adam say he hid? Why was he experiencing that particular emotion?
3. In what ways do we hide from God and others today?

Often it is guilt that causes us to hide. *Guilt* is the act or state of having done a wrong or committed an offense.⁴ When faced with our guilt, we have two choices. We can confess it and accept the consequences, or we can hide and try to sweep it all under the carpet. The first option leads to healing. The second can lead us to shame. Shame is defined as “a painful emotion caused by a strong sense of guilt, embarrassment, unworthiness, or disgrace.”⁵ Guilt can develop into shame, and shame seeps into and erodes our dignity and self-worth.

Shame can develop from guilt over a specific act, but we can also carry shame when we feel we don’t measure up. It isn’t always that we can point to a specific thing we’ve done wrong. We may just have a sense that we are walking under a cloud of discouragement, and we don’t like ourselves very much. We are vulnerable to this anytime we base our dignity on the wrong things. It’s then that we will be tempted to hide behind masks of performance, fake pleasantries, or tough exteriors that communicate, “I don’t care.”

Our dignity comes from being created in God’s image and being adopted as His precious daughters. Does being His daughter mean we’ll be perfect? No. We’ll make mistakes. We’ll fall short. But when we’re aware that we are less than we’d hoped, we have a choice. We can hide behind masks, or we can hide somewhere else.

4. Read the following verses, noting where we can go to hide when we need a refuge from our current circumstances. These verses are taken from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible. Other versions may use different translations of the key word *hide*. If yours doesn’t use *hide* or *hidden*, don’t worry. Just search for the meaning of the passage.

Psalm 17:8

Psalm 27:5

Psalm 32:7

⁴ *Webster’s New World Dictionary* (New York: Prentice Hall Press, 1986), 622.

⁵ Jessica L. Tracy, Richard W. Robins, June Price Tangney, *The Self-Conscious Emotions: Theory and Research* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2007), 202.

Psalm 119:114

Colossians 3:3

Because our lives are hidden in Christ, we no longer have to create our own safe places. Those masks that we think protect us only hold us back from healing and wholeness. We think they are safe, but they always fail us. The only thing we can count on is Christ's unfailing love, which will never wane or end. His love is not dependent on what we do or don't do. He's always there for us, waiting to hide us away in His mercy and grace.

Quiet your heart and enjoy His presence. . . . You are precious in His sight.

Meditate on the lyrics of the song "The Shelter." It can be found on iTunes (from the album Come Weary Saints, produced by Sovereign Grace Music).

The Shelter

*I have a shelter in the storm when troubles pour upon me.
Though fears are rising like a flood, my soul can rest securely.
Oh Jesus, I will hide in you, my place of peace and solace.
No trial is deeper than your love that comforts all my sorrow.*

*I have a shelter in the storm when all my sins accuse me.
Though justice charges me with guilt your grace will not refuse me.
Oh Jesus I will hide in you, who bore my condemnation.
I find my refuge in your wounds for there I find salvation.*

Oh Jesus you have covered me!

*I have a shelter in the storm when constant winds would break me.
For in my weakness I have learned, your strength will not forsake me.
Oh Jesus, I will hide in you—the One who bears my burdens.
With faithful hands that cannot fail, you'll bring me home to heaven.*

*Oh Jesus, I will hide in you—the One who bears my burdens.
With faithful hands that cannot fail, you bring me home to heaven.*

Day Five

THE CONSEQUENCES

Read Genesis 3:11–24.

1. When faced with their guilt before God, how did Adam and Eve respond? What would have been a better response?
2. The judgment given to the serpent included a promise for mankind (Genesis 3:14–15). This passage contains our first glimpse of the Redeemer. Write it below and explain its significance.
3. What was the effect of Eve’s fall on womankind? See Genesis 3:16 and CCC 400.
4. What judgment was given to the man in Genesis 3:17–19?
5. How did God respond to Adam and Eve’s nakedness? See Genesis 3:21.

If it was necessary that the animal die in order for the skins to clothe Adam and Eve, this would be the first example of a substitute in death. An animal died so that Adam and Eve could be covered. Later, animals would be sacrificed to atone for the

Israelites' sins, and ultimately, Christ died as our substitute so that we could stand before God.

6. What was the final consequence of Adam and Eve's sin? See Genesis 3:23–24 and CCC 400.

7. The legacy that Eve left behind was a fallen nature that we all would inherit. What legacy would you like to leave? What is the most important thing you want to pass on to the next generation?

Our own life and how we live it has consequences. We hand on to the next generation our good and our bad. Never underestimate the strength of a woman and her power to influence. We can see the consequences of Adam and Eve's sin: separation from the Father. But they didn't just lose this intimacy for themselves. Their children and all of mankind would bear the consequences of their disobedience. The same is true for us today. Those who suffer the consequences of our actions are most often those we love.

Quiet your heart and enjoy His presence. . . . He is all you need.

Dear Lord,

I wonder if it seemed like such a tiny thing to Eve. It was just a little deviation from the rules—nothing too major. Yet as is so often the case, the consequences snowballed and she was left with enormous regret. Holy Spirit, help me to look at my own life. Are there areas of my life where I am tempted to blame others for my own choices? Are there choices I am making that are going to reap negative consequences for those whom I love? What am I passing on to the next generation? Is it an example of obedience to You or the consequences of going my own way? What legacy will I leave behind?

Conclusion

“Man, tempted by the devil, let his trust in his Creator die in his heart and, abusing his freedom, disobeyed God’s command. This is what man’s first sin consisted of. All subsequent sin would be disobedience toward God and lack of trust in his goodness” (CCC 397).

What virtue could have protected Eve from all the trouble she got into? It’s the same virtue that can keep us from despair, or from taking matters into our own hands. It’s the virtue of trust. Underneath Eve’s discontentment and susceptibility to temptation was a lack of trust in God. Did He really want the best for her or was He holding back? Was His way truly the one that would lead to freedom and fulfillment? Was He worthy of trust?

Have you ever been in a situation of real need, only to discover that the friend you thought you could count on was nowhere to be found? While you may have continued with the friendship, no doubt your trust in that person was eroded. We trust those who we know are with us and for us, and who will stay by our side in the hard times.

Trust in Christ is never misplaced. He proved to us that He is in it for the long haul, *for our sake*, when He suffered and hung on the cross. He could have taken the easy way out, but He didn’t. He stayed on the cross for you. He stayed for me.

In the times when people might desert us, that is when He is nearest. It’s a comfort to know that He hears each spoken need. *He hears each spoken need*. Isn’t that a comfort? Every detail of our life matters to Him. He cares. We don’t always perceive His work, but He always acts on our behalf.

When life seems too much and disappointments weigh heavily on our hearts, and when the future seems scary, God invites us to trust Him enough to hide in Him. He encourages us to shed the masks that conceal our true selves, crawl into His lap, and let Him shelter us in His love.

Don’t make Eve’s mistake. Don’t forget who you are. You are God’s beloved daughter. He gave everything so that you could have that privilege. The intimacy that Eve lost in the garden is available to you. God calls to His tired, weak, and wandering daughters, “Come home and rest in my love! Your strength will return as you rest in me. I call you by name. You are mine. All you long for can be found in me. I am worthy of your trust. Hide yourself in my love.”

My Resolution

In what specific way will I apply what I learned in this lesson?

Examples:

1. I will identify an area of my life where I am battling temptation. I will look at Eve's mistakes and see if I am making any of them myself. I will determine to flee—and ask for God's strength to help me do so—rather than dabble with temptation.
2. In order to battle discontentment, I will practice the art of thankfulness by starting a gratitude journal. I will write down ten things each day for which I am grateful.
3. I don't want to be like Eve, blaming someone else for my mistakes and hiding instead of saying, "I'm sorry." I will take a step toward reconciling a relationship in my life by writing a letter or making a phone call to apologize. If the one I'm hiding from is God, I will make it my priority this week to take part in the sacrament of reconciliation. No more hiding.

My Resolution:

Catechism Clips

CCC 225 (The Implications of Faith in One God) It means knowing the unity and true dignity of all men: everyone is made in the image and likeness of God.

CCC 343 Man is the summit of the Creator's work, as the inspired account expresses by clearly distinguishing the creation of man from that of the other creatures.

CCC 390 The account of the fall in *Genesis 3* uses figurative language but affirms a primeval event, a deed that took place *at the beginning of the history of man*. Revelation gives us the certainty of faith that the whole of human history is marked by the original fault freely committed by our first parents.

CCC 397 Man, tempted by the devil, let his trust in his Creator die in his heart and, abusing his freedom, disobeyed God's command. This is what man's first sin consisted of. All subsequent sin would be disobedience toward God and lack of trust in his goodness.

CCC 400 The harmony in which they had found themselves, thanks to original justice, is now destroyed: the control of the soul's spiritual faculties over the body is shattered; the union of man and woman becomes subject to tensions, their relations henceforth marked by lust and dominion. Harmony with creation is broken: visible creation has become alien and hostile to man. Because of man, creation is now subject "to its bondage to decay." Finally, the consequence explicitly foretold for this disobedience will come true: man will "return to the ground," for out of it he was taken. *Death makes its entrance into human history.*

CCC 1605 Holy Scripture affirms that man and woman were created for one another: "It is not good that the man should be alone." The woman, "flesh of his flesh," his equal, his nearest in all things, is given to him by God as a "helpmate"; she thus represents God from whom comes our help.