

Biblical Marriage Study

Written by Dr. George Kuykendall for Officers' Christian Fellowship

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Study #2

What the Bible says about the impact of the fall on marriage.

Last week we discussed Genesis 2:20b-25. Specifically, we discussed the relationship between a husband and wife in terms of submitting to one another (Ephesians 5:21). God apparently meant for us to be a team... a united couple... one flesh.

Let's get started by reading Genesis 3:1-16 which relates Adam and Eve's disobedience to God's one existing commandment at this time, and the consequences that came upon them because of their disobedience.

What are the points of God's judgment on Eve as given in verse 16?

Childbearing pains will be increased.

The woman's desire will be for her husband

The husband will rule over his wife.

Is this fair?

God is sovereign—He has the ultimate and final power and authority over our lives. He created us and has the right as the Creator to do whatever He wishes with us. His will is the ultimate and final truth. He is God regardless of what we think. The sooner we yield to His power and authority, the sooner we begin to have a right relationship with Him. The most significant measure of our humility is how much we are yielded to Christ as Lord. Another measure is how much we are willing to walk in the footsteps of Jesus who “did not come to be served, but to serve” (Matthew 20:28).

Let's look more closely at each of the points in verse 16. What are the possible reasons for increasing pain in child birth?

1. Pain may be punishment.

2. That which is gained in pain—in this case the child—is more greatly appreciated, in other words may actually intensify the mother's intimate devotion to the child.

3. Because of Christ's pain and suffering on the cross it is possible for us to be “born again” in a spiritual sense. There is a sense of relational meaning in identity with Christ's pain and shed blood on the cross which makes possible our spiritual birth. Pain is associated with both physical and spiritual birth.

Does the statement of God that there will be significant pain in childbearing still have consequences today?

Yes, there is still considerable pain in child birth.

What do you think giving birth would have been like before the judgment when there would have been no pain in childbearing?

Do you suppose the pain has anything to do with the mother's feelings toward the child and her relationship with the child?

What do you think are the possible meanings as we bring together the statement of Genesis 2:24b "a man will...be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh" with Genesis 3:16 "your desire will be for your husband?"

There is a growing, profoundly deepening relationship which affects a woman as a consequence of the process of being united sexually (physically) that correspondingly affects her spiritual and emotional commitment to the man.

Let's have someone read Ephesians 5:25-27. How do you suppose this relates to the Genesis passages?

It could be that as a result of a woman's natural response, man has a powerful possibility of influencing his wife to great spiritual growth.

Is it possible that this could have something to do with God's creational intention for differing male and female roles in life?

What is the nature of our different qualities as male and female (physical, rational, emotional) that may give this discussion meaning?

Physically we differ from the basic cell structure, to the muscle structure, and entire body structure. We are opposites in the weighing of cognitive (rational) versus emotional functioning. The focusing of the male rational mind may be compared to the key box behind an old hotel desk. Males tend to focus on one area (cubicle) without regard to other areas. Females' minds are much like the painter's palette with colors often blending into one another. A woman's emotions overshadow and color the whole and affect many things at once.

As we study Scripture, we will see that God's obvious intent for the marriage relationship was for it to be the most powerful possible team relationship between two people. What are the potential positive consequences of a marriage relationship in the spiritual, physical, and psychological dimensions? How do these dimensions relate to one another?

The third point of Genesis 3:16 is that the husband "will rule over his wife." What might have been the reason for God specifying this order of things?

- 1. It could be a consequence of Eve leading Adam in the sin of breaking God's only existing commandment.*
- 2. Woman is by nature a feeling, intuitive, emotional being...more easily loving, empathetic, and responding with feeling. The negative consequence of these positive traits is that she is a bit more vulnerable to emotional influence. Man tends to be more rational, objective, cognitive (i.e., his rational/thought processes normally dominate). God could have set up this order to protect the woman.*
- 3. It's possible that God just specified an order of things for the purposes of good team work (i.e., the man was appointed the primary responsibility as team leader in the marriage relationship).*

How might the contemporary Christian woman apply the lessons from verse 16?

Someone read Genesis 3:17-19. What are the facts here in order of presentation?

- 1. Adam is receiving judgment because he permitted himself to be influenced by his wife against God's commandment.*

2. *The ground of this farmer would be cursed with thorns and thistles (noxious weeds).*
3. *Man would now primarily eat vegetables which were the result of his own toil rather than the fruit of the Garden of Eden which grew without the problems of weeds and disparities of nature as we know it.*
4. *He would gain his food by hard/sweaty work.*
5. *He would eventually die and his body would decay and return to dust as opposed to living an eternal, healthy life in God's more perfect creation.*

Does verse 17 support the premise that some of these consequences related to the order in which the sin happened?

Eve was influenced by the serpent (Satan), then Adam was influenced by Eve.

For those who have farmed or cultivated a garden...are weeds still a problem?

Unquestionably...thorns and thistles grow abundantly.

How do you suppose this judgment applies to the world of contemporary work as compared with harvesting in the Garden of Eden before the judgment?

The world of contemporary work is filled with all kinds of distresses and problems (weeds), yet harvesting is pleasurable.

What are some of the weeds of your daily toil which would not exist in the Eden economy?

How does the phrase "by the sweat of your brow" relate to contemporary living?

How do you suppose death and dying changed as a result of Adam and Eve's sin?

Before the judgment man would not die...essentially it was a kind of heaven on earth. After the judgment, life on earth became a much more complicated and difficult process. The route to restoration of the right relationship with God is fraught with physical, spiritual, and emotional land mines. The beginning of the relationship starts with accepting Christ as Lord and continues on a day-by-day experience of obedience to Christ.

Someone read John 14:15, 21, and 23. How might we apply this Scripture to our lives today? What can we expect if we are obedient to Christ?