

Protection Is Not Punishment Part 1

Genesis 2:24-25; 3:1-19

*As we start this new series, my goal is to expose the original and most effective tool of Satan. That is, to make “**Protection seem like Punishment**”. We see in Genesis chapter two below, Adam and Eve, the original humans, were living under the absolute protection of and reliance on God. They were content and had **NO** feelings of shame, embarrassment, or low self-esteem.*

Genesis 2: 24 That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

25 Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

The Nature of God Under Attack

Satan is aware that if he can attack the character of God in the eyes of human beings, he can get us to give up our security in God in exchange for the uncertainty and short-term pleasure of the world. If he can make us question whether God is protecting us and is actually punishing us, he can derail us from our true purpose. We see this echoed to this day. If you are a parent, you can relate to being misunderstood when restricting your kids from doing something everybody else seem to be doing because you know it is not good for them. As a nation, we were almost torn apart over whether wearing a mask during a pandemic was protection or punishment. It was not really about the mask. The science was there that masks may not be the perfect solution, but they saved lives. Just like seat belts, you can still die but they do help. It was about the character or nature of the opposing views. If the enemy can plant doubt and cause you to believe that God is just withholding from you and not protecting you, he can cause you to fail.

Genesis 3:1 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’?”

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.’”

Genesis 2:15 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. **18** The Lord God said, **“It is**

not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”

THE DECEPTION OF THE ENEMY

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.”

Satan uses deception to trick us. Deception always has some partial truth to work. It uses part of the truth to bait us. Satan told them “You will know the difference between good and evil like God”. He did not tell them the hurt, shame and insecurity that would come with it. For example, we grew up with a parent or guardian taking care of us. When we were younger, we could not wait to grow up and call our own shots. We had no idea about the bills and demands and sacrifices that our parents/ guardians were making for us. Most of us, now that we are out and grown, would love to go back to a time when we had no idea what a “Bill” was.

OUR NATURAL DESIRES WORK AGAINST US

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.

Notice how Satan used Eves’ own desires to get here to disobey God. When she “Saw” it and that it was “Pleasing to the eye”, she ate (consumed) it. Adams’ desire was his wife and not the law of God.

James 1:14-15 New International Version

14 but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. 15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

SIN CAUSES US TO SEPARATE FROM GOD

8 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. 9 But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?”

10 He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

11 And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”

Up until Adam and Eve disobeyed, the Bible said they walked with God in the cool of the day. After the fall, their response to the voice of God is to hide or avoid him. Because Satan was successful at making them believe that Protection was Punishment, they have gone from being safe and secure to paranoid and afraid.

FINGER POINTING/ BLAME IS A RESULT OF SIN

12 The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

13 Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

In a sin sick world, few people take responsibility for their actions. Nobody owns their part. Adam blames his wife; Eve blamed the serpent. Both were partially right. Eve did convince Adam to consume the forbidden thing. The serpent (Satan) did deceive Eve by convincing her that God was not protecting her but punishing her. Notice however, we see that God holds them all accountable in proportion to their part in their failure to obey what they knew God said. In our fallen nature, we tend to overlook the fact that nobody can “Make us” do or be anything. We always have a choice. We focus on the “Wrong Crowd” instead of our personal freedom of choice. We say things like “Well, if you hadn't made me mad, I wouldn't have done it”. We overlook our freedom of choice. If we don't have free will, how could God hold us accountable for anything that we ever do.

1 Corinthians 10:13 New International Version

13 No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

THE PROPORTIONAL PUNISHMENT

➤ Satan's Punishment

**14 So the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this,
"Cursed are you above all livestock
and all wild animals!**

**You will crawl on your belly
and you will eat dust
all the days of your life.**

**15 And I will put enmity
between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will crush your head,
and you will strike his heel."**

➤ Eves' Punishment

**16 To the woman he said,
"I will make your pains in childbearing very severe;
with painful labor you will give birth to children.**

**Your desire will be for your husband,
and he will rule over you."**

➤ Adams' Punishment

**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,'
"Cursed is the ground because of you;**

**through painful toil you will eat food from 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."**