

## Week 2 - Sin

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### **Bible Study at a Glance:**

Sin enters the world through Satan's deception of Adam and Eve. He entices them to think that God did not have their good in mind, but rather, was holding out on them. Their sin has devastating consequences on their relationships with God, each other, the world, and even themselves. The entire human race inherits their broken state.

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(Explain to the Group) = You don't have to read this word for word, but this is the general idea of what to explain before moving on.

- **Q: These are questions to ask the whole group**

- *A: Hopefully the group arrives at most of the answers on their own, but if they don't, redirect the discussion towards these answers, and be sure to tell the group the answers if no one quite got it.*

CCC/Verses and quotes to read out loud are in boxes.

**Genesis 2:15-17:** *"The Lord God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it. The Lord God gave the man this order: You are free to eat from any of the trees of the garden except the tree of knowledge of good and evil. From that tree you shall not eat; when you eat from it you shall die."*

- **Q: Why did God give Adam a choice? Wouldn't it have been easier to make it such that he could not make a wrong choice?**

- *A: God wants to have a loving relationship with us. There is no love if love is not free. For example, a wife cannot be required to love her husband and have no choice in the matter. If she loves him, it is because she is freely choosing to love him. If she were forced to love him, it wouldn't be love at all. Love requires that free will exists.*

**Genesis 3:1-6:** *Now the snake was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the Lord God had made. He asked the woman, "Did God really say, 'You shall not eat from any of the trees in the garden'?" The woman answered the snake: "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; it is only about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, 'You shall not eat it or even touch it, or else you will die.'" But the snake said to the woman: "You certainly will not die! God knows well that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, who know good and evil." The woman saw that the tree was good for food and*

*pleasing to the eyes, and the tree was desirable for gaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.*

- **Q: What is the big deal about eating a fruit anyway? What are some thoughts about that?**

- *A: The correct answer is coming up but this is to give the group a chance to reflect on why the sin of Adam and Eve was in fact a big deal. You can let the participants contribute any answers they like before moving on to the next quote from the Catechism which explains why it's a big deal..*

**CCC 396 - 399:**

*396 God created man in his image and established him in his friendship. A spiritual creature, man can live this friendship only in free submission to God. The prohibition against eating "of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" spells this out: "for in the day that you eat of it, you shall die." The "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" symbolically evokes the insurmountable limits that man, being a creature, must freely recognize and respect with trust. Man is dependent on his Creator, and subject to the laws of creation and to the moral norms that govern the use of freedom.*

*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.*

*398 In that sin man preferred himself to God and by that very act scorned him. He chose himself over and against God, against the requirements of his creaturely status and therefore against his own good. Created in a state of holiness, man was destined to be fully "divinized" by God in glory. Seduced by the devil, he wanted to "be like God", but "without God, before God, and not in accordance with God".*

*399 Scripture portrays the tragic consequences of this first disobedience. Adam and Eve immediately lose the grace of original holiness. They become afraid of the God of whom they have conceived a distorted image - that of a God jealous of his prerogatives.*

- **Q: There are a lot of important points in those sections. Can we try to summarize them?**

- A: There are at least 5 points but there may be more:
  - i. *Man is a created being, he is not equal to God. In order to live in harmony, man has to live within the reality of his creaturely status.*
  - ii. *Man allowed Satan to fool him into not trusting God.*
  - iii. *Man disobeyed God.*
  - iv. *Man preferred himself to God and scorned God. He chose himself over God.*
  - v. *Man conceives a distorted image of God as being a God jealous of his prerogatives.*

(Explain to the Group) Let's look at what the consequences of their sins were.

**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 domination. 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.*

- **Q: Can we try to summarize the consequences of their sin?**

- A:
  - *Man's relationship with himself is damaged*
  - *Man's relationship with others is damaged*
  - *Man's relationship with the earth/creation is damaged*
  - *Man's relationship with God ultimately is broken through death*

- **Q: If Adam and Eve sinned, how is that our problem? We're not the ones who sinned?**

- A: *As their descendants, we inherit the broken state that Adam and Eve found themselves in. Similar to how a child born to two slaves is themselves a slave, born into slavery, so we are born into the broken state of sin.*

(Explain to the Group) If people would like to read the Catechism's answer to that question, you can read CCC 404. You can leave that reading optional in the interest of time.

**CCC 404:** *How did the sin of Adam become the sin of all his descendants? the whole human race is in Adam "as one body of one man". By this "unity of the human race" all men are implicated in Adam's sin, as all are implicated in Christ's justice. Still, the transmission of original sin is a mystery that we cannot fully understand. But we do know by Revelation that Adam had received original holiness and justice not for himself alone, but for all human nature. By yielding to the tempter, Adam and Eve committed a personal sin, but this sin affected the human nature that they would then transmit in a fallen state. It is a sin which will be transmitted by propagation to all mankind, that is, by the transmission of a human nature deprived of original holiness and justice. and that is why original sin is called "sin" only in an analogical sense: it is a sin "contracted" and not "committed" - a state and not an act.*

- **Q: Do you ever wonder if we're supposed to take the story of the fall of Adam and Eve as literal or figurative?**
  - *A: The Catechism has a direct answer to that question. Have someone read CCC 390*

**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.*

- **Q: Are there times when we sin in the same way as Adam and Eve? In particular, do we ever reject, even subconsciously, our creaturely status and feel entitled to some things with God? What would be some examples?**
- **Q: Have we allowed ourselves to think of God as against us, or holding out on us, as Satan insinuated to Eve?**
- **Q: What made Satan's lie so clever?**
  - *A: It was close to the truth. God did tell them not to eat of a particular tree, just not the one he said. His lies are powerful not because they are obvious, but because they're not.*
- **Q: What might it look like if we were to not believe Satan's lies and trust God as we were originally intended to?**

- *A: This is an important question as it is an opportunity to envision what trusting in God's goodness might look like, and inspire faith. The important point would be that God is our loving Father and we can trust him in that way. Jesus made this point many times. We need to resist Satan's lie that God is holding out on us.*

(Explain to the Group) This is the bad news. The rest of this series will focus on the good news. Next week, we'll talk about how God starts to "call together all men"