

The World in Which a Man Lives

Father's Day

June 17, 2018

I'd like to start a five-part series for men. The bad news is this. Part 2 will be next Father's Day. Part 3 in 2020, etc.

DAY 1: The world in which a man lives his life

1. Adam and Eve were made perfect. They knew they owed their life and existence to God. They were beyond grateful. They enjoyed relationship with God that was pure, and relationship with each other for which every couple longs.

2. But that changed with Genesis 3. Sin entered the world, a diabolical rebellion against God, fueled by a diabolical pride that said, "I don't need God and He doesn't care about me or what I want." As a result, two fundamental things about life changed.

a. First, human nature became fallen. Each of us has a sin nature. We look out for #1 as top priority.

b. Second, the world is fallen. We no longer live in the idyllic Garden of Eden. Though both men and women live in the same world, the effects of this fallen world affect men and women are very different. Or rather, the effects of a living in a fallen world affect men and women differently at the core of our beings.

3. Today, being Father's Day, we'll just deal with the fallen world and how it affects men.

Genesis 3:17 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."*

4. What strikes you about these words to Adam? (and all his "sons") What kind of world is God saying that men will encounter?

5. The imagery God uses is farming or gardening. If you have ever tried to maintain a garden or grow fruits or vegetables, what kinds of obstacles did you face?

6. What "looks like" it should be a simple task ("What could be so hard about *that?!'*") turns out to be a lot more complicated than you imagined. What area(s) of your life that you once thought couldn't be that hard, yet, now you find them more frustrating than you once imagined?

DAY 2: The world in which a man lives his life (continued)

Genesis 3:17 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."

1. Let's take a closer look at these verses from Genesis.
2. The curse given to Adam and the curse given to Eve, though significantly different have some **commonalities**:
 - a. We no longer live in the Garden of Eden, shielded from evil and every heartache,
 - b. It is impossible, in this life, to return to an idyllic life while we live on Earth,
 - c. Both describe a **painful** life,
 - d. It will be **normal** for life to be difficult. **Problems** should not surprise us.
 - e. Both indicate that the issues each gender must deal with have the appearance of "making life work" (bringing the highest joys and satisfaction), yet life will be more complicated, confusing and sometimes "nerve-wracking" than we imagined.
3. The curse to Adam and every man is significantly different than the curse given to Eve and every woman. There are two profound **differences**.
 - a. The central objects of pain to every daughter of Eve is centered primarily in her closest **relationships**.
 - b. The central objects of pain to every son of Adam is primarily through **what he does**.
4. The imagery of farming is used as a metaphor. The following phrases are suggestive: "ground that is cursed," "painful toil," thorns," "thistles," "the sweat of your brow," and "all the days of your life" (and "until you return to the ground") depict three realities for me.
 - a. A sense of frustration,
 - b. A sense of failure,
 - c. A sense of futility.
5. If you've ever weeded a garden, several realities appear. The weeds you "weeded" last week seem, somehow, to "magically reappear." No matter how many times you weed the garden bed, you'll be doing it again ... and again ... and again. You can expect to battle insects that will eat leaves, fruit, blooms and roots. You can expect to battle plant disease. As blooms and fruit perish, you'll be pruning, starting the process all over again ... and again ... and again.
6. In our fallen human nature, every son of Adam will want to find his deepest satisfaction in what he does, instead of in God. He will find this mission incredibly frustrating. And we should not be surprised when this very expectation sets us up for a greater sense of futility and failure.
7. THANKFULLY, GOD USES THIS FALLEN WORLD TO CALL A MAN TO GOD!

DAY 3: Enemy thoughts, part 1

1. The frustrations, failures, and sense of futility have a cumulative effect.
2. Satan sees his “opportunity” to bring us misery by feeding us what I think of as “enemy thoughts.” In the next three days, we’ll highlight five of them. They are meant to discourage us, to throw in the towel on walking with God and living for Him.

3. 5 Enemy Thoughts:

- a. “It’s too hard.”
- b. “It’s not fair.”
- c. “It’s not what I want.”
- d. “I’m too tired.”
- e. “I’m the only one.”

Enemy Thought #1: “It’s too hard”

4. As we experience repeated futility and failure, Satan’s lie of, “It’s too hard,” tempts us to give up—on a marriage, on our responsibilities at work or at home, on our finances, or on life.

5. Stress and failure is meant to drive us to God as our greatest treasure, and our greatest hope for satisfaction and peace.

6. Part of the reason why failure is so discouraging and debilitating is that our success becomes our real “god,” an idol, and this false “god” is not coming through like we imagined it would.

7. When we failure and the discouragement that comes with it awakens us to our making success an idol, repentance is our first way through!

Psalms 40:4 Blessed is the man who makes the LORD his trust, who does not look to the proud, to those who turn aside to false gods.

Psalms 32:1 Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

² *Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.* ³ *When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.*

⁴ *For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Selah* ⁵ *Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"-- and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah*

8. God enables us to persevere through repeated difficulty!

Hebrews 10:36 You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.

³⁷ *For in just a very little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay.*

³⁸ *But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him."*

³⁹ *But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.*

9. What’s your biggest take away from today’s thoughts and verses?

DAY 4: Enemy thoughts #2 and #3

Enemy Thoughts:

1. "It's too hard."
2. "It's not fair."
3. "It's not what I want."
4. "I'm too tired."
5. "I'm the only one."

Enemy thought #2: "It's not fair."

1. When the blessings are "rolling in," it's easier to do what it right. But when pressure, stress and failure come knocking at our door, we look around and assume nobody has it as hard as I do.

2. Satan comes along and whispers in our ear that "God is not fair," or "life is not fair." The psalmist knew this enemy thought all too well!

Psalms 73:2 But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold.

³ *For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.*

⁴ *They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong.*

⁵ *They are free from the burdens common to man; they are not plagued by human ills.*

⁶ *Therefore pride is their necklace; they clothe themselves with violence.*

⁷ *From their callous hearts comes iniquity; the evil conceits of their minds know no limits.*

3. Notice how the Psalmist dealt with this enemy thought:

Psalms 73:16 When I tried to understand all this, it was oppressive to me

¹⁷ *till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny.*

¹⁸ *Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin.*

¹⁹ *How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors!*

²⁰ *As a dream when one awakes, so when you arise, O Lord, you will despise them as fantasies.*

²¹ *When my heart was grieved and my spirit embittered,*

²² *I was senseless and ignorant; I was a brute beast before you.*

²³ *Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand.*

²⁴ *You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory.*

²⁵ *Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you.*

Enemy thought #3: It's not what I want"

Proverbs 27:20 Death and Destruction are never satisfied, and neither are the eyes of man.

4. Our hearts are insatiable, a bottomless pit. When we think we can fill them and believe that we can make it happen, we set ourselves up for misery when we inevitably fail.

5. Notice Psalm 73:25, the last verse in the previous section, above. How is it we are to recalibrate our heart and desires?

DAY 5: Enemy thoughts #4 and #5.

Enemy Thoughts:

1. “It’s too hard.”
2. “It’s not fair.”
3. “It’s not what I want.”
4. “I’m too tired.”
5. “I’m the only one.”

Enemy thought #4: “I’m too tired.”

1. Sometimes being too tired is primarily physical. We are getting enough sleep, not enough exercise, or not eating healthy enough.

2. But oftentimes, what passes as being “tired” is deeper. We are tired of:

- a. Feeling like a failure
- b. Continuing to beat our head against the wall
- c. Getting criticized

3. God calls us to persevere. In the final analysis, we are putting our real truth in His promises, that our results, though sometimes seeming puny, will, in the end be abundantly rewarded.

Galatians 6:7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.

⁸*The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.*

⁹*Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.*

¹⁰*Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.*

Enemy thoughts #5: “I’m the only one.”

4. Satan tries to sell us the notion that nobody has it as hard as you. No has to deal with what y you have to deal with.”

1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. 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 stand up under it.

Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin.

A final word about how we think about “failure”:

Proverbs 24:16 (RSV) ...for a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again; but the wicked are overthrown by calamity.

5. What strikes you most from today’s devotion?