

Gen 3:14 ff
Four Separations

One of the most enduring motifs that has arisen in our culture is what might be called the Battle of the Sexes. Books, movies, and comedy routines have covered the topic for generations. One of the most famous lines of stand-up comedy is “Take my wife, ...please”.

There is something built into the husband-wife relationship that tends to bring out a certain level of rivalry and competition. Some of the fiercest game nights occur when the teams are the husbands against the wives. If you don't believe me, just try it.

Why is this? How did we get from “This is now bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh” and “the man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife” to a level of rivalry that is well illustrated by shows such as Everybody Loves Raymond?

On multiple levels, that show demonstrates the distortion and tension brought into the world by the Fall of Gen 3.

14 The Lord God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, And dust you will eat All the days of your life;

15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman,

And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.”

16 To the woman He said,

“I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you will bring forth children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you.”

17 Then to Adam He said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat from it’;

Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life.

18 Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field;

19 By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return.”

Francis Schaeffer notes that the fall into sin ushered in several types of SEPARATION: (Genesis in Space and Time – chapter 5)

Man from God

Man from himself

Man from others

Man from nature

“In trying to be what he could not be (God, the maker of truth and good and evil), he lost what he could be – in harmony with God, self, others, and nature.

Despite the Fall, mankind still has the privilege and responsibility of being Image Bearers. We are broken and twisted, but still in the image of God.

EX: at a previous church, Linda and some ladies had their group they called the “Twisted Sisters”.

If you ask a simple question to most people you will get the same answer – ‘NO’.

The question is, “Are things the way they are supposed to be?”

Ask a follow up question, “WHY?” and the answers are all over the place.

People just know that something isn't right with the world, but the secular mind has no good answer as to why. The Christian knows why...Gen 3.

The secular worldview lives with a tension of feeling that things should be better, but knowing that what is is simply normal.

As believers, we know that we live in an abnormal world. The secular mindset hopes for some sort of evolutionary improvement. We understand that there has been a MORAL Fall by those created in God's image and it impacted the flow of human history.

The Four Separations:

Man from God – that one is clear and it is the cause of the other three separations. The vertical separation from God results in the horizontal separation in human relationships.

The guilt free communion with God is broken by sin, which is cosmic rebellion. Man no longer has an unfettered relationship of love and intimacy with God. Sin taints the relationship as guilt pulls us away from God. Our hearts are dulled and we no longer trust His heart as we should.

Man from himself

Sin has put us in a state of disorientation and self-deception about God and ourselves. We experience fear and crises of the heart and mind that are abnormal from our created condition. We easily fall into a state of misery, worry, depression and PTSD – Post Traumatic SIN DISORDER.

Man from others

This is the horizontal separation that is first seen between Adam and Eve. There is blame-shifting and mistrust and it entails a level of curse from God Himself.

16 To the woman He said,

“I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you will bring forth children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you.”

Note the two parts: the first relates to the blessing of being fruitful which now has pain that is multiplied. The second relates to her relationship with her husband.

Admittedly, there are differing perspectives and nuances on this verse.

No matter how the term 'desire' is interpreted, the result is that in some way her husband is able to rule over her.

Dr. Kaiser points out that this is in the context of a curse, not a promise or blessing.

The reality of sin means that sinful desires and motivations will infest the husband-wife relationship. The mutual relationship described in Genesis 2 is now distorted. The Battle of the Sexes has begun.

As noted in earlier in this series, the woman was created to be a “helper, one who corresponds” to Adam. She had equal status and they were partners in the management of the garden. It was a most beautiful working relationship. He had fellowship with the woman, he could depend on her, and he had the help and companionship that animals could not provide.

This passage of Gen 3 can be badly used to support whatever sexist ideology one might desire. While this verse is a judgement on the woman, it does not mean that when a man says he needs to rule, manage the woman he is following the created norm. He is reinforcing the Fallen state and not God's original intent.

After redemption, status is reestablished in God's eyes, however, we will strive to make this work until final GLORY.

Kaiser (Concerning Women)

Rather than viewing this as a normative and prescriptive text found in the Mosaic Law and revealed by God, it is in a curse passage that predicts what will happen when women “turn” toward their husbands instead of turning to God. In effect, if God were explaining this in today's plain

speech, God might have phrased it thus: “The truth is that, as a result of the fall, do not be surprised, my good lady, if that guy just plain lords it over you.”

It doesn't make sense that the Hebrew means “the man must (shall) rule over you.” If it were a divine ‘must’ then it would happen, and we don't see it in every case. Also the same meaning would relate to v. 18 that “the ground must produce thorns and thistles”. In that case, farmers and gardeners would have to stop using weed killer so that the thorns and thistles could grow. If it must happen then we must let it happen.

The grammar and logic would indicate that the results given in v. 16 and 18 are the consequences of sin and the curse of God. They are NOT normative prescriptions for marriage or farming. In this fallen world, the husband-wife relationship will be distorted and thorns and thistles will infest your garden.

Eve “turned” from her Lord and instead placed all her dependency on her husband only to find out that he, as a fallen sinner, would take advantage of her and rule over her. Thus, instead of the resulting gender hierarchy being the norm that God had prescribed, it turns out that it displays the curse that has fallen on humanity, and on women in particular, because of the Fall described in Genesis 3:1–13. (Kaiser IBID)

Sadly, the result of the Fall creates a difficult struggle for the woman. She will “long” for her man. Why is this judgement?

Through sin and the curse, she has lost the natural “corresponding” position she had with Adam and now the Female will have struggle to obtain equal status again. Always, trying to be equal but never really obtaining it....because both male and female are fallen.

It's easy to see this in the history of all cultures. The man will “rule” over the woman....not as God desired but as a part of her judgement.

The ideal for the Christian home is to recognize that we are fallen and will struggle with this issue. However, the ideal is for husband and wife to work together in respect, love and in agreement (submission). It is Very difficult to obtain because we are fallen....but it's beautiful when it works through the power of Christ in our lives.

Albert Baylis p. 51

What was formally a highly compatible arrangement will become beset by the difficulties of fallenness on both sides.

In the NT, Paul brings some Gospel clarity and perspective to the marriage relationship as he shows that it is a picture of the relationship of Christ and the church.

In the familiar passage of Eph 5 Paul connects the love a husband should have for his wife to the way that Christ loves His Bride, the Church. He then references back to Genesis 2:24, which is also affirmed by Jesus in Matt 19 and Mark 10

For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great, but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

As such, the husband takes his cues from Christ to bring sacrificial love to the marriage, and the wife takes her cues from the church to bring a posture of submission. This is not servitude or slavery. Paul finishes Eph 5 by saying husbands, love your wives, and wives respect your husbands.

In a fallen world, by the power of the Holy Spirit, that is as good as it gets.

Separation #4 is

Man from nature

A common theme in these post-Fall curses is TOIL – the serpent goes upon his belly; the woman has multiplied pain in childbirth, i.e. LABOR; the man has toil in his work.

Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life.
18 Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field;
19 By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return.”

There was work before the Fall. Adam and Eve were given dominion and were to ‘tend and keep the garden’. But now it has become toil. There is a divine curse by fiat that changes the dynamic of the relationship of man to nature.

Schaeffer notes...

We read, for example, in Genesis 5:29, which speaks of the world before the flood: “And he [Noah’s father] called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toll of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD hath cursed.” The name Noah itself simply means rest or comfort. The Scripture says that at this point in the flow of biblical history, men knew very well that the toil of their hands was a result of God’s having changed the earth.

Man shall have bread by the sweat of his brow and will one day return to the ground.

I’ve mentioned four separations, but here we see a FIFTH – the unity of man is torn asunder as body and soul are separated in death. They will be reunited again in the final day of judgement, but this earthly death is a result of the Fall.

As Christians we know why things aren’t the way they’re supposed to be.

There was a revolt against the first normal of the created order and that brought in an Abnormal state of affairs for mankind and nature.

Despite all of these separations, man is not separated from his / her being as an Image Bearer.

We are not animals or machines, despite the current efforts of transhumanist to treat us or turn us into some sort of humanoid robot. (Uval Harari – WEF; Mary Harrington -staying human in the Meat Lego Matrix; 1985 Cyborg Manifesto; 2001 Space Odyssey; Westworld

Man as created in the Image of God, male and female, still has eternal value and has the high calling from God to Reign as His vice-regents, Reproduce a godly heritage, and Reflect the nature and reality of God for all to see.

The GOOD NEWS of the Gospel is that while were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

He reconciled us to God by His perfect obedience and by His blood shed for us.

He rose from the dead to vindicate His righteous life and secure eternal life for us.

Friends, these are not just religious sayings. They are truths on which we can build our lives.

To remind us and seal these truths to our hearts, Jesus gave us the Lord’s Table.

THE TABLE

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=npfShBTnp3Q>