

**Agony**  
to  
**Ecstasy**

**by Ron Christian**

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INTRODUCTION

SCRIPTURE: GENESIS 1-3; ROMANS 5:12-21

TEXT:

"For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:17 NIV)

INTRODUCTION:

Genesis 1-3 are three of the most important chapters in the entire Bible. Perhaps the word "Relationships" best describes these chapters. Within the brief compass of three short chapters, we are introduced to some of the most basic and important facts of life:

- (1) Man's unique creation,
- (2) Man's intimate fellowship with God,
- (3) Man's innocent relationship with woman,
- (4) The sanctity of marriage,
- (5) The fact of objective moral law,
- (6) The nature of temptation,
- (7) The tragedy of sin,
- (8) The mercy of God.

PROPOSITION:

Man was created for greatness - to fellowship with Almighty God. Man lost his greatness - through disobedience against God's clearly - stated law. Man can regain his greatness - through Christ, the "second Adam" whose work on the cross crushed the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:15).

THE AGONY WHICH SIN BRINGS TO MAN CAN BE REPLACED WITH ECSTASY WHICH CHRIST BRINGS TO MAN.

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## OUTLINE:

- I. CONDITIONS BEFORE THE FALL
  - A. Lucifer's Fall
  - B. God's Created Order
  - C. God's Creation of Woman
  - D. God's Assigned Task to Adam
  
- II. CONDITIONS DURING THE FALL
  - A. Man's Creation
  - B. Man's Unique Freedom
  - C. Man's Fatal Temptation
  - D. Man's Tragic Fall
  
- III. CONDITIONS FOLLOWING THE FALL
  - A. Mankind's Lost Greatness Through Adam's Fall
    - 1. Sin's Immediate Consequences
    - 2. Mankind's Ray of Hope
    - 3. Mankind's Universal Death
  - B. Mankind's Restored Greatness Through Christ's Righteousness
    - 1. The First "Adam" and the Second "Adam"
    - 2. The Bright Side of the Dark "Fall" of Mankind
    - 3. The "Much More" of the Last Adam - Jesus Christ

## CONCLUSION:

Because of God's creative power, mankind was born for greatness; because of mankind's willful disobedience, that greatness was lost; because of Christ's redemptive love, mankind can regain its greatness!

✧ Chapter One ✧

*Conditions Before The Fall*



PART ONE

What is Man? Is man an "angel" or an "ape", a "wonder", or a "worm"? Man is neither an "angel" nor an "ape", neither a "worm" nor a "wonder". Man is a creature made in the image of God, the "crown of God's creation", the "object of God's special love". This God-breathed creature was made for greatness, but he has lost his greatness! Whatever else can be said of man, this can be said with certainty: "What man is now, he was not intended to be at the time he was created!" Man has lost his greatness! Man was created to fellowship with God forever - to enjoy uninterrupted peace, unalloyed joy, and intimate love! Man was created by God and for God! But man was also created with a free will! We humans are not robots! As Suzanne de Dietrich so clearly states, "The thing that makes us uniquely human is that, unlike the other creatures, we are able to say 'yes' and 'no' to God. Man does not do the will of his Creator by necessity. The stars in the sky follow their prescribed orbits, the animals of the field obey their instincts, but man has this unique and frightening ability - he can refuse to be obedient to his Creator. For God does not want slaves, but sons". (God's Unfolding Purpose; page 36)

Man's freedom of choice allows man to ascend to the highest heights of moral development or to descend to the lowest depths of moral degeneracy. It is both frightening and fantastic to be a creature of freedom!

Genesis 1-3 are three of the most important chapters in the entire Bible. Perhaps the word "relationships" best describe these chapters.

**God's relationship with Himself**

(the doctrine of the triune God is first introduced here - "Let us make man in our own image");

**God's relationship with created nature**

("God saw all that he had made, and it was very good");

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**God's relationship with the seventh day**

("And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done");

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### **God's relationship with Man, the "crown of His creation"**

("So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female he created them");

### **Man's relationship to work**

("The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it");

### **Man's relationship to woman**

("The man said, 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh'");

### **The serpent's relationship to the Woman**

("Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'");

### **Woman's relationship to the Man**

("She also gave some of the fruit to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it");

### **Couple's relationship to Sin**

("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");

### **Guilty couple's relationship to God**

("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");

### **God's relationship to guilty Man**

("So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken").

Within the brief compass of three short chapters, we are introduced to some of the most basic and important facts of life:

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THE AGONY WHICH SIN BRINGS TO MAN CAN BE REPLACED WITH ECSTASY WHICH CHRIST BRINGS TO MAN.

### I. CONDITIONS BEFORE THE FALL

We can only imagine what it was like in the beautiful Garden of Eden, before the terrible fall of Man. Perfect health, exquisite beauty, undisturbed peace, unalloyed joy - perhaps these descriptions imperfectly picture the glory of Eden.

#### A. Lucifer's Fall

However, while all appears to be perfect in Eden, there is the presence of one in Eden whose purposes are far from righteous. Genesis 3:1 introduces this evil personality. "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"?'"

From whence came this tempter, in the form of a serpent? The Bible does not fill in all the details as to his origin. Neither does the Bible tell us why the serpent was permitted in the Garden. We can only speculate, but the following explanation is at least interesting to consider. Some think that when this world was created and fit for habitation Satan (before he became "Satan") was placed in charge of it, and it was then, as Isaiah declared, that Satan said in his heart - "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the 'Stars of God' (other ruling powers); I will sit also upon the Mount of the Congregation, in the sides of the North. I will ascend above the clouds; I will be like the MOST HIGH:" and that it was for this presumptuous

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act that the "Pre-Adamite World" became a chaos, and "without form and void", as described in Genesis 1:2. This would justify the claim of Satan that this world belongs to him, and that he had the right and power to transfer the 'kingdoms of the world' to Christ, if He would only acknowledge Satan's supremacy. Matt. 4:8,9. And it accounts for the persistent war Satan is waging against the Almighty to retain his possession of the earth.

"When Satan became unwilling to rule the Original earth as a subordinate, and determined to rule it independent of God, he put his own will in opposition to the Will of God. That was "Treason". That was SIN. There was the origin of sin. In thus exalting himself against God 'Lucifer' became 'SATAN' for 'Satan' means 'ADVERSARY'. To justify himself he accused God. In accusing God he became the 'DEVIL' for 'Devil' signifies 'Accuser'. Thus 'Lucifer' became both 'Satan' and 'Devil'. This answers the question - 'Why did God make the Devil?' He did not make him, he made himself." (The Spirit World; Larkin; page 11, 12)

Larkin continues, "As long as Satan chose the 'Will of God' there was no 'Evil' in the universe, but the moment he chose to follow his own will, then he fell, and by persuading others to follow him he introduced 'Evil' into the Universe. The root of sin is SELFISHNESS, and when Satan said - 'I will ascend into Heaven (from the original earth over which he was ruling), I will exalt MY THRONE above the 'Stars of God' (other ruling powers).... I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I WILL BE LIKE THE MOST HIGH' (Isaiah 14:12-14), then Satan was guilty of TREASON, and started a REBELLION AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD that will never cease until he and all his followers are cast into the 'Lake of Fire' to spend Eternity". (Ibid; page 14)

### B. God's Created Order

The above-mentioned ideas are only speculations. We cannot be dogmatic in our ideas regarding the origin of evil or regarding the rationale for the presence

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of Satan in the Garden of Eden. It is possible that Genesis 1:1 refers to the originally created earth, whereas Genesis 1:2 refers to the devastation of the earth as a result of Lucifer's rebellion against God. A 'formless' and 'empty' and 'darkened' world hardly meets the description of God's glorious creative powers. The Creator God is a God of order and fullness and lights - not disorder and emptiness and darkness! It is possible, then that Genesis 1:1 refers to the Original (Perfect) Earth, that Genesis 1:2 refers to the Chaotic (Fallen) Earth, and that Genesis 1:3-25 describes the Present (Restored) Earth.

E. Stanley Jones convincingly argues for the existence of God. A universal order argues for a universal Mind. "How could this universe come by chance into a cosmic orderliness that stretches from the molecule to the outermost star, and controls everything between? And how could this orderliness just happen to stay by chance through millions of years? That would be a stark materialistic miracle -- universal chaos by chance gives birth to universal order! The one who believes that must spell his 'chance with a capital 'C' and mean by it - God. How long do you think it would take for you to throw up a font of type into the air and have it come down by chance into a poem of Browning? I asked a printer that question and he replied, 'Both you and the type would wear out first'.

"Someone has figured out how many chances to one it would take for the world to have happened by chance, and the figures go round the world 35 times. 'A preposterous figure', says Dr. Millikan, the scientist. Sir James Jeans had figured out that it would take a hundred million years for a hundred thousand monkeys, pecking at random a hundred thousand typewriters, to happen by chance upon the plays of Shakespeare, and then, after they had happened upon the arrangement of the letters, they wouldn't know what the letters meant!"

"When I pick up a book and see that there is intelligence in it - that sometimes does happen! -

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then I know that behind that intelligence is an intelligent mind expressing itself through that intelligence. When I look at the universe, I find that its responses to intelligence can be intelligently studied. Intelligence has gone into it - into its very structure. Then the simple conclusion must be that behind that intelligence, which is built into the structure of things, is an intelligent mind, and since that built-in intelligence seems to be universal, I will have to spell it in capitals - a UNIVERSAL MIND." (Abundant Living; page 5)

"The heavens are telling the glory of God; they are a marvelous display of his craftsmanship. Day and night they keep on telling about God. Without sound or word, silent in the skies, their message reaches out to all the world." (Psalms 19:1-3, Living Bible)

When Genesis uses the word 'Day' in reference to God's creation, does it literally mean 24 hour days as we know them or does it symbolically represent eras of time? This is a question which has been unfruitfully debated for a long time. The important thing is not how or how long God actually took to create and to organize, but the important thing to realize is that God actually is the Creator of all things. The orderly universe is not an accident or chance happening. It is the intelligent handiwork of God. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork." (Psalms 19:1) It is much more difficult to believe that the orderly universe is the product of accident and chance, than it is to believe that the orderly universe is the amazing product of an intelligent and personal God.

It is interesting to note that Scripture teaches us that Jesus (the second person of the Holy Trinity) is the creative power of God. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is implicitly taught in Genesis 1:26, as seen in the use of the plural pronoun "US". "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in Our likeness, and let them rule, etc.'" As the

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second person of the Holy Trinity, Jesus was involved in the creation of the universe: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made." (John 1:1-3) Paul wrote, regarding Jesus: "Christ is the exact likeness and, in fact, Christ Himself is the Creator who made everything in heaven and earth, the things we can see and the things we can't....(Col. 1:15-16a Living Bible). The writer to the Hebrews declares the same truth: "Now in these days He (God) has spoken to us through His Son to whom He has given everything, and through whom He made the world and everything there is." (Hebrews 1:2, Living Bible)

It is true that no man can prove the existence of God, but it is also true that no man can disprove the existence of God. God's existence is a basic assumption in the Bible. The Bible says, "The fool hath said in his heart 'There is no god.'" It is by faith that we assume the existence of God, and it is also by faith that we declare that this world is the product of God's creative powers and genius. Notes the author of the letter to the Hebrews: "By faith - by believing God - we know that the world and the stars - in fact, all things - were made at God's command; and that they were made from nothing!" (Hebrews 11:3, Living Bible)

### C. God's Creation of Woman

The creation of Adam in God's own image was the 'crown of God's creation'. As God is a Trinity, so man too is a trinity, that is, man is a tri-unity. Man has a body, a mind, and a spirit. Man is 'three in one' - a tri-unity, just as God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - a tri-unity (trinity).

Why was Eve created? Genesis 2:20b-24 states: "But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the

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Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh, she shall be called "woman", for she was taken out of man'. For this reason a man will leave his father and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh."

What can be said about woman's creation?

(1) Woman was created as an "equal" to man. She is neither inferior nor superior to man, but is his equal. Equality is symbolized by the fact that she was created from one of the "ribs" of Adam. A rib is close to the heart of Adam. She was not created from a foot bone which would symbolize inferiority. Neither was she created from a shoulder or head bone which would symbolize superiority. The equality of woman with man is especially emphasized in the New Testament. Wrote Paul to the Galatians: "We are no longer Jews or Greeks or slaves or free men or even merely men or women, but we are all the same - we are Christians; we are one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28, Living Bible)

(2) Woman was created as a "suitable helper" for man. Notes Charles Swindoll, "On four distinct occasions He passed His approval of His creation.

....God saw that it was good (1:12)  
....God saw that it was good (1:18)  
....God saw that it was good (1:21)  
....God saw all that He had made, and  
    behold, it was very good (1:31)

But what do you notice about God's statement regarding Adam in Genesis 2:18? ....it is not good....

This is the first time in all the Bible that God says something is NOT good. What is not good? God declares it isn't good for man to be alone. This isn't just a passing comment. In the original Hebrew, the language in which the Old Testament

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was written, the negative is most emphatic, therefore, it appears first in the phrase. Literally it says, 'Not good, is man's aloneness...' God, the Creator, saw man, His creature, in an isolated, alone-condition. He announced that Adam's solitary state was not good. God cared about Adam's 'aloneness'." (Strike The Original Match; page 17, 18)

Most men are not complete without a companion - a loving wife. This is not to say that singlehood is a curse, for God is able to compensate for those who are single. Many a single or widowed person has found the companionship of God to be more precious to them than the companionship of a human companion, during their moments of loneliness.

In saying that woman was created to be a "suitable helper" for man, no feminine inferiority is implied. It is true that a woman is to be in loving submission to her husband, for the husband has been given the awesome responsibility of leader and head of his home. The 'head-ship' of the man does not imply superiority and the 'submission' of the wife does not imply inferiority. There is equality between male and female, but there is divinely-created order for the home. Husbands are lovingly to lead, wives are gladly to submit, and children are willingly to obey their parents. Ephesians clearly states these truths: "A man must love his wife as a part of himself; and the wife must see to it that she deeply respects her husband - obeying, praising, and honoring him. Children, obey your parents; this is the right thing to do because God has placed him in authority over you." (Ephesians 5:33-6:1, Living Bible)

- (3) Woman was created for the fellowship of love and to demonstrate the meaning of the I-Thou relationship between God and Man. Notes Suzanne de Dietrich, "God is, in his very nature, the one who gives himself. Thus a solitary individual cannot really reflect the God of

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love. Only a human couple, in the kind of unity that the family represents, can reflect something of what God is really like. Nothing could emphasize more clearly how wonderful it is to be a human being than the favor that God confers on man and woman, of being able to give themselves fully to each other, as he gave himself to them, and of being able, by means of this mutual giving, to create new life. Later on we find Paul taking up the same theme: 'Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her' (Ephesians 5:25)". (God's Unfolding Purpose; page 35) "The Christian reader will be struck by the fact that it is the man-woman community which is to reflect God. God does not create man in isolation. He creates him as a community, as man and woman. The Trinitarian God is a fellowship of love and can only be reflected on the human plane in a loving relationship. Only a human 'we' can reflect something of the divine 'us'...The man-woman relationship is the first nucleus of the wider community which is to be called into being. The I-Thou relationship between God and man is to be reflected in the I-Thou relationship of man and woman." (Suzanne de Dietrich; The Witnessing Community; page 22,23)

### D. God's Assigned Task To Adam (Blessedness of Work)

Genesis 2:15 states: "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it." Work itself is not a curse from the fall; it is the agony and the stress associated with work which is a curse. God created a 'good world' but not a "completed world". God willed to create a world in which man would have the opportunity to manifest creative abilities. From the raw products of the world, man is to create! Man and woman are to be co-creators with God in bringing children into the world. Man is to create a beautiful garden by laboring. Man is to create cities and to create nations. Man is a co-creator with God!

It is true, according to Genesis 3:17-19, that the ground was cursed after Adam disobeyed God.

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Therefore, work is more difficult now than it was before the Fall. As one man notes, "In Eden, Adam tilled and tended the garden as the Lord had instructed him because he wanted to; although he perspired and needed rest, necessity and desire were one thing to him. In exile Adam worked because he had to. He toiled as before, but the joy had gone out of it, and only necessity was left." (Christianity Today; Aug. 27, 1971; page 7)

However, even now after the Fall of Man, work can be transmuted from a mere necessity for earning a living into an opportunity for realizing personal self-hood and personal fulfillment. Through the redeeming grace of Christ, man can come to see work as a means of making and fulfilling himself, and not merely as a means of earning a livelihood. God created a world filled with raw products which man is creatively to work on, and through working on them, to make himself. "The highest reward that a man can receive for doing his best....is not what he gets for his work, but what he becomes by it." (Sermon Builder; Sept. 1971; page 23)

What is the Biblical understanding of "work"?

- (a) Work was a blessing given to Adam, long before he fell into sin. He was to dress and tend to the Garden of Eden. He was to prepare his own food from the trees of the garden (Genesis 1:29-30);
- (b) Work became more difficult following the "Fall", since consequence of the Fall was thorns and thistles (Genesis 3:17-19);
- (c) Work now provides opportunity for one to perfect his own character and to glorify God.

If work is basically a good thing (in spite of the fact that work is often fraught with difficulty because of the "Fall"), how then should a Christian youth choose his life's work? Notes Elton Trueblood, "The world is one, secular and sacred, and the chief way to serve the Lord is in our daily work."

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A person should look at work as an opportunity to perfect his own character, that is, work should result in one becoming a more disciplined person - a disciple of Jesus Christ. Notes one, "There is no salvation from work; there is only salvation in work - work, that is, caught up in discipleship." (Christianity Today; Aug. 27, 1971; page 8)

The work we do must contribute to God and to man and to the world, and not take away from any of these relationships.

A Christian youth, in choosing a job, must choose that type of work which will best benefit others and which will best glorify God. Rather than being self-centered, a youth must be God-centered and others-oriented when he decides what, professionally-speaking, he will do with his life. That is, a youth must see his job as a vocation or as a "holy calling" from God. Notes Elton Trueblood, "The concept of vocation changes radically and crucially the way in which a young person approaches his life work or preparation for it. Apart from this concept his major questions often have to do with probable income, personal advancement, manner of living and choice of location. There is no doubt that many now choose their work with these specific considerations uppermost in their minds, for it is the 'natural' way. However, one who chooses in the light of vocation has a wholly different standard. His central interest is not in money or professional advancement, but in how he can make the best strokes to help clean up the mess of the world before it is too late. His motto is, 'Work while it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work.' The young person who has caught the vision implicit in the idea of vocation looks out at the world and tries to see how its need can be matched by his own latent powers. This, as millions know, is the way in which Albert Schweitzer determined to study medicine after he had already proved himself successful in another profession. The man who lives by the principle of vocation has substituted concern for advancement." (Common Ventures; page 88, 89)

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Trueblood continues, "Our happiest moments are not those in which we ask how to be happy, but rather those in which we so lose ourselves in some creative task, which seems to us important, that we forget to take our own emotional pulse. When we plant trees, write books, build houses or make roads, we often find that we have been having a wonderfully good time and that we are not immediately driven to do something to have 'fun'. We had had, all along, something better than anything which commercialized and self-conscious entertainment can ever provide." (Ibid; page 93)

"The worldly-minded man says that leisure is man's true end, and so he builds one labor-saving device after another, shortens the work week, lengthens the pay and vacations, and waits for the day when machines will do all the work." (Christianity Today; August 27, 1971; page 7) And yet, with increase in leisure and commercial entertainment, there is an increase in boredom, which is another way of saying that life does not consist in the abundance of leisure and entertainment a man can consume, but rather in the amount he can give to his fellowman by means of the creative labors of his hands. Happiness comes not by grasping but rather by giving. Man is built to work, not to be idle.

Scriptures look upon the idle man with scorn:

"Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise." (Proverbs 6:6)

"A son who gathers in summer is prudent, but a son who sleeps in harvest brings shame." (Proverbs 10:5)

Note II Thessalonians 3:10-12 Living Bible.

In spite of the fact that, since the Fall, the ground has produced thorns and thistles and, in spite of the fact, that man must work by the sweat of his brow (Genesis 3:18, 19), work is meant to be seen as a blessing from God and as an opportunity for man.

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### CHAPTER 1

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Tell why you agree or disagree with the following statement: "Whatever else can be said of man, this can be said with certainty: What man is now, he was not intended to be at the time he was created!"
2. What is the most frightening capacity with which Man was created?
3. Name several of the "Key Relationships" which are revealed in the first three chapters of Genesis.
4. Based on speculation, what feasible explanation can be offered to explain the reason for Satan's presence in the Garden of Eden at the time of Man's creation?
5. From a logical viewpoint, what evidence is there that this Universe is the result of creative genius, not the product of accident or chance?
6. Cite Scriptural references that indicate that the second Person of the Trinity - i.e., Jesus Christ - was involved as creator of the world.
7. From a careful study of Genesis, chapter 2, what three statements can be made regarding Woman's creation?
8. Is there evidence from Scripture (Genesis 2) to indicate that "Work" was not a result of the Fall of Man, but that "Work" was a part of God's original plan when He created Man?
9. Tell why you agree or disagree with the following statement: "Even though joy had gone out of Work, following the Fall of Man, even now after the Fall of Man, work can be transmuted from a mere

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necessity for earning a living into an opportunity for realizing personal selfhood and personal fulfillment."

10. What factors should a Christian youth consider (in contrast to those factors that a non-Christian youth considers) in choosing a job or a profession in life? Why?
11. Tell why you agree or disagree with the following statement: "Our happiest moments are not those in which we ask to be happy, but rather those in which we so lose ourselves in some creative task, which seems to us important, that we forget to take our own emotional pulse."
12. Tell why you agree or disagree with the following statement: "Life does not consist in the abundance of leisure and entertainment a man can consume, but rather in the amount he can give to his fellowman by means of the creative labor of his hands."

✧ Chapter Two ✧

*Conditions During The Fall*



PART TWO

II. CONDITIONS DURING THE FALL

A. Man's Creation

Man is different from all other creatures because he is made in God's own image. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Genesis 2:7) God is a Tri-une Being of intelligence (Omniscience), and so man is created a rational being. God is a Being of temperament (Love), and so man is created an emotional being. God is a Being of action (Omnipotence), and so man is created a volitional being with the capacity to act. God, whose dominance is supreme, has shared that dominance with mankind.

Look at Man's dominance. God is Creator and Lord of the earth, but God put Man in charge of the earth. Man must exercise his dominance over the earth with a constant sense of his stewardship before God. (Genesis 1:28, "God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'") God gave man dominion over all things, not to abuse the world of nature, but to govern and creatively to use the world of nature to serve mankind and to glorify God. Man is not to use his call to domination over the world as an excuse to exploit the world's natural resources, such as lumber, coal, oil and the soil. God is the giver of all good and perfect gifts. Man is to receive those gifts gratefully and selflessly. God's creator-hood reveals His grace and love.

B. Man's Unique Freedom

We are looking at the nature of Man from various perspectives, as recorded in the early chapters of Genesis.

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Look at Man's limitation. God placed one limitation upon Man. "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.'" (Genesis 2:16-17)

This tree represents God's sovereign knowledge which belongs to God alone. Man must depend completely upon God and not try to assert himself as God's equal. The tree reminds Man that God alone is all-knowing, and that Man must acknowledge his utter dependence on God, who as Creator, is infinitely greater than the creature.

Look at Man's freedom. Only as man could freely choose to obey and to serve God, could man's love for God be proved and developed. A slave is forced to obey and serve his master even against his will. The attitude of the slave's resentment for his master is vastly different from the attitude of love with which a son willingly performs duties for his father. Only the son, who has the power of choice, can prove his love for the father.

Love could not be tested without the presence of a standard by which to determine obedience or disobedience. God's commandment forbidding Man to eat from the tree was the standard by which to either praise Man for his obedience or to condemn Man for his disobedience.

Obedience or disobedience means nothing if there is no objective standard by which to judge. The tree in the Garden provided that standard, making possible the exercise of Man's frightening freedom!

Notes Elton Trueblood, "Always men have broken laws; that is nothing new. What is new is the acceptance of a creed to the effect that there really is no objective truth about what human conduct ought to be. The new position is not merely that the old laws do not apply, but rather that any moral law is limited to subjective reference....If

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there is no objective right, then there is not even the possibility of error, and intellectual and moral confusion are bound to ensue.....Failure to honor particular moral standards is one thing; rejection of the very idea of an objective moral standard is another." (A Place to Stand; Elton Trueblood; page 15-16)

Is it not ironical that our contemporary society which prides itself for its moral freedom and its total liberations from any so-called legalistic restraints, is the same society that is withering and dying socially and even physically? Note the "AIDS" epidemic which threatens to destroy the very fabric of our society! Thousands will die because they want to throw off all moral restraints and do their own thing. With the denial of an objective moral standard by which to judge the rightness and the wrongness of a moral decision, there does not come a corresponding moral freedom. Instead, there comes intellectual confusion and moral bondage. When everyone does that which is right in his own eyes, social chaos and anarchy are the eventual consequences.

God's command regarding the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden symbolizes forever God's objective moral standards by which we will be judged for obedience or for disobedience. Later in history, the Ten Commandments provided God's objective Moral Standard (Exodus 20). The New Testament introduces an even higher objective moral standard: "Pay all your debts except the debt of love for others - never finish paying that! For if you love them you will be obeying all of God's laws, fulfilling all His requirements. If you love your neighbor as much as you love yourself you will not want to harm or cheat him, or kill him or steal from him. And you won't sin with his wife or want what is his, or do anything else the Ten Commandments say is wrong. All ten are wrapped up in this one, to love your neighbor as you love yourself. Love does no wrong to anyone. That's why it fully satisfies all of God's requirements. It is the only law you need." (Romans 13:8-10, Living Bible).

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Wrote James, "If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, 'Love your neighbor as yourself', you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers." (James 2:8-9, NIV)

Man is free to choose because there is the presence of an objective moral standard (or law). Without such an objective moral law, there would be no such thing as right or wrong. In such a situation - the situation of moral relativism - everyone does what seems right to him, and, in such a situation, no one has any authority to judge the actions of another person or another group of persons (a nation). It seemed "right" to Hitler to eliminate the Jewish people. If there is no objective moral law - i.e., if there is no law such as "Thou shalt not murder" and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" - then no one can justly condemn Hitler's actions on the basis of moral injustice and "sin"!

If the Genesis story of Man's Fall teaches anything clearly, it teaches most clearly the fact of God's objective moral laws, with attending rewards for obedience and attending punishment for disobedience! To deny the fact of objective moral law is not only to reject the revelation of Holy Scripture, but it is also to forfeit all possibility of clear intellectual understanding and moral freedom!

### C. Man's Fatal Temptation

Consider Man's rebellion. Man, possessed with the freedom to choose, determined his own destiny. Man yielded to the subtle temptation of Satan and was enticed by Satan's allurements.

Satan implanted the seeds of doubt into Eve's heart. Appealing to the gratification of Man's desire, Satan succeeded in getting Man to overstep his God-imposed limitation, and thus to challenge God's sovereignty.

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Satan, whose own fall is attributed to the drunkenness of pride (Ezekiel 28:1-10), became the instigator of Man's pride, which caused Man's fall. When Man ate of the tree, he declared his independence of God and his desire to "run his own life".

When Man invaded God's territory of personal knowledge through eating from the tree, Man yielded to the temptation to play the part of God. Man's relationship to the Creator was made to be one of servant to master. Man attempted to usurp God's mastership when he yielded to Satan's evil suggestions.

Let us look again at the nature of man's temptation. "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?"' The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, 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."' 'You will not surely die,' the serpent said to the woman. 'For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and was 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." (Genesis 3:1-6)

What approach did the serpent take in plotting mankind's fall into sin? Satan was successful in causing Eve to question God's Word (Doubt), to overstep God's clearly-defined limitations (Disobedience and Rebellion), to gratify selfish desires (Self-centeredness).

It must be said that there was no sin in Eve being tempted. In fact, what was from Satan's viewpoint a temptation - intended to destroy the woman - was from God's viewpoint a test - intended to perfect

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the woman. Eve had an opportunity, during the temptation, to demonstrate her loyalty to God and to mature her walk with God. But Satan's temptation of Eve was fatal, for Eve yielded to the temptation. Look more carefully at this fatal temptation.

### (1) Questioning God's Word (Doubt)

"Right away the serpent insinuated a doubt into Eve's heart: 'Did God (really) say....?' (This is like the doubt insinuated with the words 'If you are the Son of God....' in the story of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness, as reported in Matt. 4:3-6) A deadly chink is opened up in the creature's love for his creator. And into this chink a little wedge is thrust in the form of the assertion: 'You will not die. For God knows that when you eat (the fruit) your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil' (Genesis 3:4-5)." (God's Unfolding Purpose; Suzanne de Dietrich; page 37-38)

### (2) Overstepping God's Clearly Defined Limitations (Disobedience)

Temptation tends to magnify man's desires for the forbidden and to erase the clearly-defined boundaries of God's laws. Satan seeks to befuddle the mind and, at the same time, to stimulate the lower desires of human nature during the hour of temptation. The forbidden tree did not look so forbidding after Eve began to rationalize! The Bible says, "There is a way that seems right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death!"

To the man who has learned to rationalize, it "seems right" for him to live with a young lady who is not his wife, or to date a young lady who is still married to another man, or to "fudge" on his income tax returns, or to tell a "white lie", or to take a "pleasure trip" on Sunday when he should be worshipping at church, or to glance at the center page of a "Playboy" Magazine when no one is looking, or to use the tithe money to pay an overdue bill, or

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to watch an "educational program" on television instead of spending time praying and reading the Bible!

### (3) Gratification of Desires (Self-centeredness)

This temptation to Eve was fatal, for the temptation appealed to the desires of body, soul, and spirit. "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." (Genesis 3:6)

#### (a) "Good for Food" (Appeal to Body)

Sin can be defined as fulfilling a legitimate desire in an illegitimate way or at an illegitimate time. It was not wrong for Eve to desire food, for food is a basic necessity of physical life. But it was wrong for Eve to desire the fruit of this specifically forbidden tree.

There are many physical desires, all of which are God-given and legitimate. For instance, there is the strong, God-given, physical desire for sexual gratification. But seeking to fulfill this legitimate desire in the wrong way (through adultery or through homosexuality) and at the wrong time (before marriage), results in sin.

When Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness to turn stones into bread to satisfy His hunger after a forty-day fast, it was an attempt on the part of Satan to get Jesus to fulfill a legitimate desire (satisfaction of physical hunger with food) through illegitimate means (by Jesus' use of His extraordinary power to perform a miracle at a time which was incompatible with Jesus' mission of full identification with mankind).

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(b) "Pleasing To The Eye" (Appeal to Soul)

The forbidden fruit was not only good for food (physical appeal), but it was also pleasing to the eye (aesthetic or soul appeal). Man is created to appreciate beauty. To appreciate the beautiful in life is not sinful. Seldom does Satan offer that which is ugly and repulsive to a person. Satan seeks to deceive people by appealing to their aesthetic nature in order to get them to partake of the forbidden. Much of the so-called "sex therapy" today is based on the desire of man for the beautiful, the shapely, the attractive, the affectionate, the romantic. Just as the fruit on the forbidden tree was most beautiful to behold, so there is much of the forbidden today that appears as beautiful. That which does not belong to us, and that which we are tempted to covet, appears as emotionally appealing and as aesthetically attractive. Someone else's beautiful woman, or beautiful house, or beautiful car, or attractive job - these are some of the more obvious objects of covetousness, all of which can (like the fruit in the Garden) appear to be most "pleasing to the eye". Many are ensnared in sin because of the aesthetic attraction of the temptation. Again, seeking to fulfill a legitimate desire (enjoyment of a beautiful object or subject which appeals to our aesthetic nature) in an illegitimate way or at an illegitimate time is what constitutes sin.

(c) "Desirable for Gaining Wisdom" (Appeal to Spirit)

The fruit was appealing to the Body, for it was "good for food". The fruit was appealing to the Soul (or aesthetic nature), for it was "pleasing to the eye". Also, the fruit was appealing to the Spirit, for it was "desirable for gaining wisdom".

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There is an insatiable quest for knowledge and wisdom in our world today. To gain wisdom is to gain a most wonderful possession - a possession which will protect you throughout your life. The writer of Proverbs considers the possession of wisdom to be all-important: "Wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her....My fruit is better than fine gold; what I yield surpasses choice silver....For whoever finds me finds life and receives favor from the Lord. But who ever fails to find me harms himself; all who hate me love death." (Proverbs 8:11,19,35,36)

Surely, to desire wisdom is a good thing. Eve cannot be faulted for wanting wisdom, any more than she can be faulted for wanting physical food or aesthetic enjoyment. What was wrong was Eve's attempt to find wisdom through a forbidden means (by eating the forbidden fruit). As in the case of Eve, there are many today who wish to be wise and understanding, but who are attempting to find wisdom and insight through forbidden means - such as spiritism and witchcraft and horoscopes and mediums. Others seek to be wise through the study of worldly philosophy or psychology. Still others seek to be wise through their involvement in false religious systems - cultism or the occult or oriental religions. All of these above-mentioned examples are "forbidden fruit".

What, to the world, appears as "wisdom", is to God as "foolishness", and that which is the essence of true wisdom - the "cross of Christ" - is utter foolishness to the world. Wrote Paul, "For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. Jews demand mi-

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raculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength." (I Corinthians 1:21-35)

Seeking wisdom is a natural and legitimate desire. But seeking wisdom in the wrong ways and in the wrong places is both folly and sin. Say "No" to the "forbidden fruit" of the world which promises to make you wise if you eat of it. Christ alone is the source of all true wisdom! "Christ Jesus has become for us wisdom from God - that is, our righteousness, holiness, and redemption. Therefore, it is written, 'Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.'" (I Corinthians 1:30,31)

It is not religion or philosophy or education that can give you wisdom; it is Christ alone who can make you wise unto salvation! Boast alone in Christ who is the Wisdom of God!

### D. Man's Tragic Fall

Notes Suzanne de Dietrich, "The third chapter of Genesis tells, in story form, of a three-fold break in relationship: between God and the human couple, between man and wife, between man and the world that surrounds him. The essential theological truth revealed in this chapter is that all the tensions and disruptions of mankind go back to a fundamental disruption produced by the will to autonomy of the creature as over against the Creator. 'You will be like God.' (Genesis 3:5) In snatching at equality with God, in wanting to be their own masters and to stand in their own right, woman and

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man destroy the child-like trust that makes them open to God's love and purpose and to one another. Lust for power has entered the world and will henceforth be at the root of all antagonism between sexes, between brothers, between groups, nations and races. Having lost our at-one-ness with God, we become like self-centered tops, turning round and round upon ourselves. We do this as individuals; we do it collectively on a world scale." (The Witnessing Community; page 23)

Adam disobeyed a direct command. God created Adam with a free will, and with the ability to love. Love is the property of free will. As was noted in the introduction of the message, "The thing that makes us uniquely human is that, unlike the other creatures, we are able to say both 'Yes' and 'No' to God. The stars in the sky follow their prescribed orbits, the animals of the field obey their instincts, but man has this unique and frightening ability -- he can refuse to be obedient to his Creator. For God does not want slaves, but sons." (God's Unfolding Purpose; Susanne de Dietrich; page 36)

Love must be tested. God commanded Adam and Eve not to eat of the fruit from the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. (Genesis 2:17)

Adam disobeyed a direct command and overstepped his God-imposed limitations. Adam took things into his own hands, and set himself up as a "little god". Adam's sin was the sin of playing the part of God.

Adam's sin is the central sin of all humanity -- the sin of making one's self into a god, placing self and selfish desire at the center of one's universe.

"The person who plays the part of God makes himself into the center of his universe, whether that universe be large or small; he seeks his own glory rather than the glory of God, he wants to 'run his own life'; instead of recognizing it as a gift from the hands of God. In briefest terms, he wants

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to be his own master rather than God's servant; he wants to dominate rather than to serve." (Ibid; page 38)

Notes Donald Joy, "Since our first parents' crime was treason - for the purpose of putting themselves up as their own masters - the infection shows up in us in much the same way. Its symptoms are violent independence, selfishness, self-assertiveness, pride - anything which puts oneself on the throne". (The Holy Spirit and You; page 84-85)

Noted Donald Demaray, "What do we mean when we say the nature of sin is pride? We mean that man commits no wrong which is not traceable to pride; to put it another way, every sin man commits is the product of a desire to protect ego or self. Murder, adultery, stealing, falsifying, and any and every sin that man has ever committed or ever will commit is the result of pride. It was so with Adam and Eve. It has been so with every man since that time." (Basic Beliefs; page 51)

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### CHAPTER 2

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What evidence is there that man is uniquely created in God's own image?
2. Practically speaking, how is man to exercise his God-given dominance over the earth and at the same time practice his God-required stewardship in the earth? Cite practical examples of how this dual responsibility is carried out by sensitive believers.
3. Why did God place a limitation on man's freedom in the Garden of Eden, according to Genesis 2:16, 17?
4. Was the exercise of man's will in the Garden of Eden an authentic exercise of freedom, or was it simply an apparent exercise of freedom which was really predetermined by a sovereign God?
5. What is the most distinctive feature of man that makes him a creature uniquely created by God, different from all other creatures of the earth?
6. What made Satan's temptation in the Garden of Eden so appealing to our first human parents and what is there about that first temptation that is common to all subsequent temptations which all humans face?
7. What is the essence of all sin, as seen in the actions and attitudes of Adam and as seen in the actions and attitudes of all of Adam's fallen race?
8. Do you agree or disagree with Donald Demaray's statement: "Every sin man commits is the product of a desire to protect the ego or self." If you agree, then share some illustrations demonstrating the truth of this statement.



❧ Chapter Three ❧

*Conditions Following The Fall*

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PART THREE

III. CONDITIONS FOLLOWING THE FALL

A. Mankind's Lost Greatness Through Adam's Fall

(1) Sin's Immediate Consequences

Recognize man's fall. Man's disobedience to God led to Man's fall. Man failed to stand the test and thus prove his love for the Creator. Man fell from the height of splendor to the depth of despair, from the beauty of perfection to the vileness of distortion, from the joy of fellowship to the anguish of separation, from the freedom of innocency to the bondage of guilt, from the strength of health to the weakness of disease, from the glory of life to the corruption of death, from the fullness of knowledge to the shamefulness of ignorance.

Sin replaced innocency with guilt and caused man to clothe his nakedness. No longer could man reveal himself as he really was, but he was compelled to hide his true identity.

Sin also caused man to run from God's presence and hide. (Genesis 3:8) No longer could Man enjoy intimate fellowship with God, but Man instead became an alienated, estranged rebel afraid to face God.

Neither was willing to accept personal moral responsibility. The man blamed his actions on the woman and the woman, in turn, blamed her actions on the serpent. The transgressor often scapegoats, blaming his actions on his background or friends or society or heredity. Man seeks to sooth his conscience through rationalization, but God cannot be fooled.

"God establishes the relationship of the human couple on a new foundation. He humbles the woman by subjugating her to the man. He humbles the man by forcing him to struggle with a creation that has likewise become rebellious, because of what he has done, and that resists his attempts to control it.

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Thus, God, subjects the man and the woman to a discipline of suffering appropriate to each. They are not deprived of the joy of work. But these things become theirs only at the price of struggle and suffering. From now on there will be pain and heartache connected with everything the man and the woman do. Those who accept this situation will discover that it can be transformed into a blessing." (God's Unfolding Purpose; Suzanne de Dietrich; page 39)

"And the Lord God said, 'The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.' So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life." (Genesis 3:22-24)

### (2) Mankind's Ray Of Hope

Immediately following Man's fall, a brilliant ray of hope shone over the horizon of Man's history, revealing God's future plan for Man's salvation. That ray of hope was found in the curse God pronounced on the serpent: "I will put enmity between you and the woman; also between your offspring and her offspring; He will crush your head and you will crush his heel." (Genesis 3:15)

This prophecy refers to Jesus who was born of the virgin Mary, a descendant of Adam and Eve. Although Satan inflicted injury on Jesus, the Son of God, Jesus crushed and destroyed the works of Satan through His redemptive death on the cross, and He proved to be victor over Satan through His glorious resurrection. (Hebrews 2:14-15) Man's bondage to Satan was broken through the conquering power of the resurrected Lord. Through the seed of Eve, Man would be reconciled or brought back to fellowship with God. Through Christ, Man would be "born again" and receive a new nature.

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### (3) Mankind's Universal Death

We must now begin a serious study of Romans 5:12-14. This passage describes the process by which Man lost his greatness in the Fall. Is it possible for Man to regain his lost greatness?

Man is made for the stars! Man may wallow in the mud, but he can never forget the stars! Man was born for greatness! Man has lost his greatness, but he can never forget the destiny for which he was created! The God-shaped image upon man may be distorted, but it can never be totally destroyed! Man can never really forget that he was made for God-likeness!

Says Carl Jung, the great psychiatrist, "The central neurosis of our time is emptiness." But man cannot stand a vacuum. That vacuum is meant to be filled with God!

A caged eagle wishes to be freed to soar in the heights. Man is made for the spiritual heights and will never be satisfied to remain in the cage of his sins.

It is possible to attain everything that life can physically offer, and yet be deeply dissatisfied and disillusioned. "The quest for spiritual renewal and personal fulfillment is rooted in the depths of human nature, and the motivation to be what a man ought to be spiritually springs from interior depths. Man feels unhappy when he looks at his soul, dwarfed by a secular spirit and blighted by sin. He feels restless in his estrangement from God. He then reaches toward God. 'Thou hast made us for thyself and our heart is restless until it reposes in thee.'" (Personal Renewal Through Christian Conversion; Mavis; page 12)

Man lost his greatness in the Fall of Adam, resulting in the problem of inherited moral depravity and a propensity to overtly sin against God's

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laws. Man can regain his greatness by confessing his sins and by committing his life to Christ. Sin's power is great, but God's power is greater!

Sin came into the world through Adam's disobedience. (Romans 5:12) Romans 5:12 describes what in theology is called "Original Sin". Notes Bishop Bastian, concerning original sin, "It is that evil tendency with which every individual is born, a tendency which disposes him to do wrong and thus to become not only by nature, but by personal choice as a sinner." Why is it that when you tell a child not to do a certain thing, he tends immediately to do it anyway?

Romans 5:12 says, "Sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned." This verse, perhaps more clearly than any other verse, declares what is called in theology "The Doctrine of Original Sin".

Bishop Donald Bastian says that original sin "is explained by the universal law of natural generation that like begets like. Adam, by the personal exercise of his own free will fell into sin, thus becoming a sinner. The son born to him was like him not only in physical structure, but in his moral image as well. From Cain to the present all his descendants have inherited from him a nature depraved and prone to sin like his own." (Genesis 6:5,12, Jeremiah 17:9, Mark 7:21-22)

The fact of original sin and the universality of sin is recognized in most branches of theology. Even unbelievers "have to admit and to confess this, that there is something which is spoiling and ruining life. They have to admit further, that mankind at large seems to prefer to do that which is wrong rather than that which is right; that if you tell a child not to do a thing, he will want to do it immediately and will, as often as not, proceed to do it." (Lloyd-Jones; Romans 5; page 190)

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Perhaps you have heard of the mother who told Johnny to sit down in a chair, as means of discipline and punishment. Some minutes later the mother wanted to check out Johnny's obedience, and from another room she called out, "Johnny are you sitting in that chair?" Johnny replied, "Yes, I'm sitting down on the outside, but I'm standing up on the inside!"

One does not have to train a child to be selfish - another indication of the fact of "original sin".

Romans 5:12 teaches us that "we all have sinned, in some sense, when Adam sinned. We were not there in a real way, sinning when he sinned, as Augustine taught; but we sinned because our representative did and suffered loss even as an entire school might if its representative loses at a track meet. John Wesley says, 'As by one man - as being the representative of mankind, Sin entered into the world ....Even so death passed upon all men.... in that....all sinned in Adam'." (The Word and Doctrine; Kenneth Geiger; page 76)

Does man sin because he is a sinner or is man a sinner because he sins? Man is born with a proneness to sin! Is there any hope?

Notes Bishop Bastian, "Methodist theology clearly teaches a doctrine of original sin, but does not hold to a doctrine of original guilt. The human race is not held to be guilty of Adam's sin, even though it is by his sin involved in moral ruin". (Genesis 2:17, 3:17)

"It should be frankly acknowledged that the sin nature is not sin in the fully ethical sense, for the volitional and accountable elements are missing. 'The sin remaining in the regenerate believer....is not sin strictly speaking, which is any "transgression of the law" incurring guilt; but depravity - an inherited, inborn, sinward inclination - a depraved bias'" (The Word and the Doctrine; Kenneth Geiger; page 112)

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No person is personally responsible for inheriting moral depravity from Adam. However, while one is not personally responsible for inheriting moral depravity, one is responsible for not availing himself of cleansing from moral depravity, made available through Christ's atonement.

Further, one cannot put the blame for his personal sin onto the fact that he inherited moral depravity. One cannot say, when he is engaging in personal acts of transgression, "I couldn't help it, for my inherited moral depravity caused me to sin!" There are others who, when sinning say, "Something made me do it" or "The devil made me do it" or "After all, we're only human, you know". All such statements reflect personal irresponsibility and deny the exercise of human will, made possible by God's grace which places man in both a saveable and in an accountable state of grace. "Whereas the sin nature constitutes a strong impulse toward sin, it is not an irresistible cause-and-effect situation." (The Word and the Doctrine; page 115)

Related to this whole question of original sin and inherited depravity, is the question of guilt and condemnation, especially as these apply to infants. Says one about the atonement of Christ, "The atonement has come to all man and upon all men. Its coextensiveness with the effects of Adam's sin is seen in that all creatures such as infants and insane persons, incapable of refusing it, are saved without their consent, just as they were involved in the sin of Adam without their consent. The reason why others are not saved is because when the atonement comes to them and upon them, instead of consenting to be included in it, they reject it. If they are born under the curse, so likewise they are born under the atonement which is intended to remove that curse; they remain under its shelter till they are old enough to repudiate it; they shut out its influence as a man closes his window-blind to shut out the beams of the sun; they ward them off by direct opposition, as a man builds dikes around

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his field to keep out the streams which would otherwise flow in and fertilize the soil". (quoted in Elect in the Son; Robert Shank; page 104-105)

Unless or until a small child actively resists the grace of God when he is capable of personal moral choice, that child continues to enjoy the saving benefits of Christ's atonement. Is this to say that some children do not need to experience personal repentance or exercise personal saving faith in Christ? Hardly, for what child, old enough to exercise general volitional powers, has not wrongly exercised his volition morally? Even a small child, say four or five years old, knows something about personal guilt because of wrong moral choice. But it is true to say that some persons exercised positive volition in choosing Christ at such a young age, that they cannot, as adults, remember when they were not Christians!

My wife has a cousin who is a daughter of missionary parents and who has been herself a long-time missionary in Africa. She never remembers when she was not a Christian.

There are children whose first exercise of meaningful volition was in their acceptance of Christ as Saviour, perhaps as early as the age of three!

The streams of God's mercy early flowed in and fertilized their soul! These young children who enjoyed the saving benefits of Christ's atonement when they were incapable of refusing it, gladly received the saving benefits of the atonement when they were first barely able to exercise personal saving faith in Jesus Christ! Said Jesus, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these". (Mark 10:14 NIV)

We can summarize the teachings, both explicit and implicit, of Romans 5:12. "Sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned."

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Sin came into the world through Adam's personal disobedience. Adam's original sin caused all mankind to inherit moral depravity. All are involved in mankind's moral ruin as a result of Adam's sin. However, while all are involved in the affects of original sin, none are originally guilty when born into the world. Original sin, or better stated, inherited depravity as a result of Adam's original sin concerns itself with liability to penalty, not personal blameworthiness. None are personally responsible for inheriting moral depravity, but all are responsible for yielding to the pressure and influence of moral depravity. Outward sin can be resisted and inward sin can be purged. Every man inherits moral depravity, and most if not all, yield to that downward moral tendency which disposes one to do wrong. When one yields to that tendency, he becomes not only by nature, but by personal choice, a sinner.

Every man has given counsel to the presence of original sin (moral depravity) in life, and has chosen willfully to disobey God, thus incurring personal guilt. E. Stanley Jones says that innate depravity "is the self surrendered to nothing except itself--the self become God". (Song of Ascents; page 52)

All men are thus personally responsible for willfully committing personal transgressions, for willfully allowing self to assert itself as god of one's life. Sin is seen as "self" ruling life. Man is responsible for yielding to the tendency towards self-rule.

Romans 5:12 tells us that death reigns over mankind. "When Adam sinned, sin entered the entire human race. His sin spread death throughout the entire world, so everything began to grow old and die, for all sinned." (Living Bible)

All have been born in sin. All have willfully sinned. The penalty of sin is death. Therefore, all men face sin's penalty which is death.

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"Death" according to the Bible, is threefold. There is physical death, spiritual death and eternal death.

The universal consequence of sin's entry into the world is physical death. When Adam fell, all of mankind fell - fell from health to weakness, fell from life to death. Man is born to die. Sin brought death into the world. Never blame God for funerals!

Another consequence of sin's entry into the world is spiritual death. Many are alive physically, but dead spiritually. Says Ephesians 2:1-2: "You were spiritually dead through your sins and failures, all the time that you followed this world's ideas of living, and obeyed the evil ruler of the spiritual realm--who is indeed fully operative today in those who disobey God." (Phillips)

The final and terrible consequence of sin's entry into the world is eternal death. Eternal death is sin's final punishment, experienced by those who persistently and ultimately resist the offer of God's mercy and forgiveness. "And death and hell were thrown into the Lake of Fire. This is the Second Death--the Lake of Fire. And if anyone's name was not found recorded in the Book of Life, he was thrown into the Lake of Fire." (Revelation 20:14-15; Living Bible). It is not God's will that any perish. God's perfect will is that all be saved. But God's permissive will allows a man to spurn the mercy of God, and be eternally lost. God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Hell was not prepared for man, but was prepared for the devil and his fallen angels (demons). God never intended for a human being to suffer in hell, but the man who serves Satan must suffer Satan's fate. The servant must dwell with his master. God wishes to save all men from that terrible place of destruction and torment. God never sends anyone to hell; a sinner sends himself there by willful refusal of the offer of mercy.

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Have you responded to God's offer of mercy and forgiveness? Are you willing to surrender control of your life to Christ?

### B. Mankind's Restored Greatness Through Christ's Righteousness.

#### (1) The First Adam and the Second Adam

Romans 5 teaches us that mankind universally lost greatness through sin's great power. (Romans 5:12-14) But Romans 5 also teaches that every person has the potential of regaining greatness through Grace's greater power. (Romans 5:15-21)

A young person is heard to say: "If Adam had not sinned, we would not have all of these problems in the world". When Adam sinned, all mankind sinned. You and I were in Adam when he sinned. When he sinned, death came as a consequence to Adam. Because we were in Adam, we too (as an entire human race) received death as a consequence!

Perhaps you find yourself saying, "That's no fair! I cannot help it that Adam sinned! I should not be held responsible for Adam's sin!" But let me respond by asking a couple of questions: "Is it fair that you should get the beneficial results from Christ's righteousness? Is it fair that you should be treated so mercifully and kindly simply because God looks favorably upon Christ's righteousness?" You are not personally to blame because of Adam's transgression, even though you have to bear, along with Adam, sin's consequences, since you were in Adam from the beginning. That appears grossly unfair! However, is it just and fair that you should so abundantly enjoy the benefits of Christ's righteousness, which is life and peace, simply because you are in Christ, although your personal commission of sins should result in death for you? Although you involuntarily inherited original sin because you, by physical birth, are a descendant of Adam, you may voluntarily receive life and peace and justification through spiritual birth, by faith in Christ's righteousness. Being "in" Adam

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means receiving Adam's lot--condemnation and death! Being "in" Christ means receiving Christ's lot--righteousness and peace and eternal life and glory!

You personally had no choice in being a descendant of Adam and in automatically (at physical birth) becoming a member of a fallen race which is universally infected with sin and subject to death.

You lost your greatness due to Adam's original transgression and due to your own indulgence in personal sins, but you may regain your greatness due to Christ's atonement and due to your personal repentance and faith in Christ's atonement. You lost all "in" Adam; you may regain all "in" Christ!

You had no choice as to your physical descent from the first "Adam", but you do have a choice as to your spiritual connection to the second "Adam". Some things were decided and determined for you before you were born, but in some things you make decisions--decisions so important that an eternal destiny is determined by your decisions!

It is true that you personally had no choice in being a descendant of Adam, but it is also true that you had no choice in being an object of God's special love and mercy! You had no choice in being a member of a human race for whom a universal atonement has been provided by Christ!

In some important things you do have a choice! You chose to succumb to personal transgression, admittedly made more appealing because of the pull of original sin within your heart. But just as you chose to sin, you may choose to yield to the pull of God's grace working within your heart and mind to bring you to a place of true repentance. You can choose to stay "in" Adam or you can choose to get "in" Christ. You can choose to remain in death or you can choose to receive new life in Christ!

It must be acknowledged, of course, that there is a difference between what you lost in Adam and what

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you regain in Christ. In Adam, the results of his sinful actions are automatic. Those who are born to Adam automatically inherit the taint of his sin (original sin). The results of Adam's transgression to his descendants, are actual and universal, and come through biological heredity.

In Christ, the results of His righteous actions are not automatic. Human beings do not, without the exercise of their will, receive the righteousness of Christ as their own righteousness, whereas, human beings, without the exercise of their will and choice, automatically receive the taints of Adam's sin. In Christ, the benefits of His righteous actions to the human race are potentially universal. However, these benefits must be received individually, not by involuntary biological birth, but by voluntary spiritual rebirth. We did not personally choose to be "in" Adam. We must personally choose to be "in" Christ. It is by nature that we are related to the first "Adam". It is by grace that we are related to the second "Adam", the Lord Jesus Christ.

Mankind is universally and automatically lost through sin's great power. However, the sins of all mankind are universally atoned for through Christ, making possible the individual salvation of every person. Sin's power is great, but grace's power is greater!

### (2) The Bright Side of the Dark "Fall" of Mankind

The Fall of Adam (and the consequences of that Fall upon all of humanity--sin, pain, etc) provides the "raw materials" from which man and God, working together, produce holiness and happiness.

Let us examine this statement together. Before doing so, however, let it be stated that we must never turn sin and rebellion into a virtue. Adam fell from God's originally-created state of grace. God did not will that Fall, but in spite of that Fall (and even through that Fall) God has brought about great good to humanity. God did not will sin,

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but God has used sin (as represented in the Fall) to provide good for humanity. God is the great redeemer, even producing good out of evil.

Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. The Fall was terrible since it represents human rebellion in opposition to divine love. However, the cross is far greater than the Fall is terrible, since the cross of Christ represents divine restoration of the chiefest of sinners. Man's lost greatness through sin's power is great, but man's restored greatness through grace's power is greater!

The evil resulting from the Fall is not worthy to be compared with the good resulting from the free gift of God's Grace in Christ Jesus. "God saw that to permit the fall of the first man was for the best for mankind in general; that abundantly more good than evil would accrue to the posterity of Adam by his fall; that if 'sin abounded' thereby, over all the earth, yet grace 'would much more abound', yea, and that to every individual of the human race, unless it was his own choice." (Wesley's Sermon; God's Love To Fallen Man; page 43)

What good has accrued to the posterity of Adam, as a result of the Fall? Without the Fall there would have been no cross, and without the cross there would have been no opportunity for God to visibly demonstrate His eternal love in its greatest intensity! The Fall caused all men to be constituted as sinners (for "in Adam all die"). It is because all men are in need of salvation that a Saviour was provided. Fallen humanity is capable of experiencing God's love in a way that not even the unfallen angels can experience God's love. The race of beings which have fallen to the lowest depths are capable of experiencing God's love at the highest heights! God redeemed the Terrible--the Fall--into the Tremendous--the experience of Calvary love! Without the Terrible there could be no Tremendous!

"What good has accrued to the posterity of Adam, as a result of the Fall?" We said that it was the

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Fall that called forth the necessity of the Cross of Christ, and in the cross the eternal heart of Divine Love is revealed to humanity! So, God redeemed the Terrible into the Tremendous! Without the Fall there could be no cross. Without sin "abounding", grace could not "much more abound".

We can also answer the above-stated question by saying that the whole experience of justification by faith and redemption in the blood of Christ could have had no existence, apart from the Fall of man. Only because Adam and the sons of Adam fell from grace, does Adam's race have the need and the capacity to experience forgiving love in the Son of God. The highest heights of God's love ("redeeming love" not merely creation love) can only be experienced by a race of beings who have fallen into the lowest depths of sin. The unfallen angels personally know nothing of God's redeeming love. It is only fallen man who can experience redeeming love!

Notes John Wesley, "The fall of Adam produced the death of Christ...If God had prevented the fall of man 'the Word' had never been 'made flesh'; nor had we ever 'seen his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father'. Those mysteries never had been displayed, 'which the very angels desire to look into'... Unless 'by one man judgement had come upon all men to condemnation', neither angels nor men could ever have known 'the unsearchable riches of Christ'...According to the counsel of his own will, the plan he had laid before the foundation of the world, he created the parent of all mankind in his own image; and he permitted all men to be made sinners, by the disobedience of this one man, that by the obedience of one, all who receive the free gift, may be infinitely holier and happier to all eternity!". (Wesley's Sermon; God's Love To Fallen Man; page 48-49)

The immensity of man's sin is great, but the immensity of God's love is greater. When sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

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You can be sure that if one stays connected with the Old Adam (with all that he represents by way of disobedience), he will experience both physical and eternal death. You can be "much more" sure that if one gets connected and stays connected with the Last Adam--Christ--he will experience both abundant life here and eternal life hereafter!

Only the pained can appreciate pleasure; only the hurting can appreciate healing; only the sinning can experience a Saviour; only the fallen can know redemption. Even though God did not will the Fall of Mankind, He graciously provided the Recovery of Mankind! What a wise God!

### (3) The "Much More" of the Last Adam - Jesus Christ

If death is certain through Adam, how "much more" certain is life through Christ? "If God's justice and his righteousness led to punishment, 'much more' will His love and grace and mercy lead to salvation." (Assurance; Exposition of Romans 5; Martyn Lloyd-Jones; page 231)

"If we can say (as we can) that God's essential and eternal justice led to man's punishment and death, oh how infinitely more certain and sure can we be - and especially having seen it all displayed in a living manner in Christ - that His love is really going to do for us that which He has said He would do, namely, give us life." (Ibid; page 231)

There were great losses because of Adam's Fall. There are greater blessings because of Christ's salvation!

What we all lost in Adam was great! What we all gain in Christ is much greater!

The condemnation which we earned as a result of our fall from grace, is not as great as the fellowship we freely receive as a result of our salvation in Christ. Condemnation is something we have earned and deserved (because of our racial and personal

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involvement in sin). "Salvation is something which has been given to us and which we receive absolutely freely as the gift of God." (Ibid; page 233)

The process of death, as a result of Adam's sin, abounds, but the process of life, as a result of Christ's righteousness, much more abounds. The process of life and fruitfulness is greater than the process of death and disintegration!

If sin is a cruel tyrant whose reign is death, how much more is Christ a loving King whose reign is life and love! "Adam's one sin brought the penalty of death to many, while Christ freely takes away all sins and gives glorious life instead. The sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to be king over all, but all who will take God's gift of forgiveness and acquittal are kings of life because of this one man, Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:16-17, Living Bible) "Adam was made lord of creation, but he lost that position. We shall not only have that back, we shall have infinitely more. We shall share a throne with the Son who shares the throne of thrones with His Father. That is the prospect awaiting us!" (Lloyd-Jones; Ibid; page 226)

What we lost in the first Adam, we more than gain in the second "Adam" - Jesus Christ! Are you living in the first or second Adam?

What we have lost because of our racial connection with Adam and because of our own personal involvement in sin, we have now regained because of Christ's universal atonement for sin and because of our own personal appropriation of Christ's forgiveness! God's grace is lavish! We regain in Christ far more than we ever lost in Adam!

If we lost a righteousness in Adam's fall, we gain a much greater righteousness in Christ's salvation! The righteousness which was the property of creation, lost in the Fall, is not as great as the righteousness which is the gift of re-creation, gained in conversion. The righteousness which Adam enjoyed as a property of his unique creation, is not

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to be compared with the righteousness which the sinner receives as a gift of his glorious conversion! The righteousness of Adam may have been great, but the righteousness of Jesus Christ is infinitely greater! Where sin abounded, in that it stole from Adam his original righteousness, grace does much more abound in that it imparts to Adam's fallen race the very righteousness of Christ (giving man right standing with God!).

How is that righteousness imparted to sinners, apart from anything that a sinner can do? All a sinner can do is to accept by faith the free gift of Christ's righteousness. This righteousness is of grace - it all depends on God's love and Christ's obedience! "As we were constituted sinners because of Adam's one sin, and apart from any action on our part, so we are constituted righteous persons entirely apart from anything that we do. It is entirely and only because of Christ's obedience." (Assurance, Exposition of Romans 5; Martyn Lloyd-Jones; page 276)

"The burden of the New Testament is not sin-fixation, but a Christ-fixation. Its emphasis is not the incurable persistence of sin, but the illimitable triumph of Calvary! Not sin reigns, but grace reigns! The final words are not 'sin' and 'defeat', but 'grace' and 'victory'."

"Dark the sin that soiled man's nature,  
Long the distance that he fell,  
Far removed from hope and heaven,  
Near to deep despair and hell.  
But there was a fountain opened,  
And the blood of God's own Son  
Purifies the soul, and reaches  
Deeper than the stain had gone."

(Insights Into Holiness; Kenneth Geiger;  
page 72)

"The principle taught, then (in Romans 5), is that what grace has done is not merely to counteract exactly what sin has done. In fact there is not

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comparison; it is superfluity, an abounding, an engulfing, it is an overflowing on the side of grace." (Ibid; Lloyd-Jones; page 299)

"O God, I openly confess that all my own righteousness is like 'filthy rags' in your sight (Isaiah 64:5), for my righteousness is tainted by human pride. The taint of pride is deep. Wash me thoroughly with your blood and clothe me beautifully with the garments of Christ's righteousness! I believe! I believe!"

### CONCLUSION:

What general conclusions and applications can be drawn from a brief study of Genesis 1-3?

- (1) God is the Creator of all of life; therefore, God has the right to rule in each man's life. Each person is responsible to use his body and soul and mind for God's glory. To abuse one's body, mind or soul is to sin against one's Creator.
- (2) Man's call to domination over the earth is not a call to careless exploitation, but to responsible stewardship. The God-granted power to dominate can become a temptation to "lord over" other people and to exploit the world's resources for selfish use. Man's lordship over the earth is subject to God's lordship over all of created matter.
- (3) Satan often tempts man by calling into question the truthfulness of God's Word. (Genesis 3:1)
- (4) Sin can be defined as disobedience against the known laws of God and rejection of the revealed love of God. Because God, by nature is just, wrong moral choices always result in tragic moral consequences. The penalty of sin is death.
- (5) Because God is a loving redeemer by nature, He has provided a redemptive plan for mankind's salvation.

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"O God, because of your creative power, I was born for greatness; because of my willful disobedience, I lost my greatness; because of Christ's redemptive love, I can regain my greatness. Thank you! Amen."

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### CHAPTER 3

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What were some of the immediate consequences of the fall of Adam and Eve, and in what ways are these consequences the consequences which modern-day persons face when they sin?
2. How do you interpret Genesis 3:15, as this verse relates to God's provision for lost mankind's restoration?
3. What is the threefold definition of "death" according to the Bible?
4. What did you, as a member of the human race, involuntarily inherit from Adam, and what are you, as an object of God's special love, capable of voluntarily receiving from Christ?
5. What has been provided for every human being, as a result of the death of Christ on the cross?
6. What is meant by the expressions: "The first Adam and the second Adam"?
7. What good has accrued to the posterity of Adam as a result of the Fall?
8. What realities can we be sure of because of our natural relationship to Adam; what realities can we be even more certain about because of our supernatural relationship to Christ?
9. Describe the righteousness which the believer enjoys, both in terms of its source and in terms of the method by which it is received.
10. What is the main thrust of the teaching of the New Testament in regards to sin and to grace?