Lesson One

Adam and Eve: All About “I”

_Focal Text_
Genesis 3

_Background_
Genesis 2:4—3:24

_Main Idea_
Disastrous consequences occur when people reject God’s call to live in God’s world in faithfulness to God.

_Question to Explore_
How are you anxiously trying to meet your perceived needs rather than living in faithful trust in God?

_Quick Read_
When we refuse God’s provision for our needs, our sin damages our relationship with God and his creation.

_Commentary_
The Bible warns us, “You may be sure that your sin will find you out” (Numbers 32:23). There are no exceptions. Consider a fellow from Austin, Texas. He decided to rob a pizza restaurant. He wore his motorcycle helmet to conceal his identity. It seemed like a good idea, since it had a full
face visor with darkened plastic. Nobody would recognize him, he thought. And nobody did, but his name was printed on the front of his helmet. He was soon arrested.

Then there were the car thieves running from the scene of the crime in Larkspur, California, a few years ago. They jumped over a fence—the barrier surrounding the San Quentin prison. They had broken into prison. *Be sure your sin will find you out.*

Why are we tempted? And by whom? What do we do when temptation finds us? As we begin our study of Genesis, the biblical book of origins, we start with a discussion that is tragically relevant to every human being.

**Know your enemy (3:1)**

Our text begins: “Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made” (Genesis 3:1). Who and what was this “serpent”?

He was a created being: “God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kids, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good” (Gen. 2:25). He was among “the wild animals the LORD God had made.”

He did not originally move on his belly along the ground. As a result of the fall, “You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life” (Gen. 3:14). He was not originally frightening to women: as a result of the fall, “I will put enmity between you and the woman” (Gen. 3:15). His conversation with Eve at the beginning of chapter 3 was not adversarial but seems normal and natural.

The text calls him “crafty,” which is not typically a negative term in the Bible. It means *to be wise* or *adroit*, occurring in this sense in Proverbs and in Job. Note that the woman did not appear to be surprised that the serpent spoke with her.

So, what is the identity of the serpent? Let’s gather together what Genesis 3 tells us:

- The serpent lies to the woman: “You will not surely die” (3:4). This is not an ability associated with God’s created wildlife. To be in God’s “image” and “likeness” (Gen. 1:26) means that we alone in his creation have moral free will and spiritual knowledge. But Satan is “a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44).
- The serpent misrepresents God: “God knows that . . . you will be like God” (Gen. 3:5). Misrepresenting God is Satan’s typical tactic, as with the wilderness temptations of Jesus.
- The serpent’s lies lead Adam and Eve to spiritual death. Creatures do not have this ability, but Satan has come “to steal and kill and destroy” (John 10:10) for “he was a murderer from the beginning” (John 8:44).
What can we learn from the rest of Scripture? The Book of Revelation clearly pictures Satan as a serpent: “The great dragon was hurled down—the ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray” (Revelation 12:9). And again: “He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years” (Rev. 20:2). It seems clear, therefore, that Satan used the created and “crafty” serpent to perpetrate his deception.

At this point, many in your class may want to learn more about the origin of Satan. Here’s what we know about this difficult subject:

- He is a created angelic being, so that he “masquerades as an angel of life” (2 Corinthians 11:14).
- He was originally in heaven. Revelation 12 tells the story of his eviction from the heavenly presence of God.
- “Satan” (a title for the devil) means accuser. Some believe that he was given the role of testing God’s people as part of his created purpose (see Job 1), but that he took this role to sinful and rebellious extremes.

The fact is, we don’t know as much about his origin as many people think they do. The Bible (beyond Revelation 12) does not describe the actual event during which he was cast out of heaven. Isaiah 14 is usually cited as describing the fall of Satan:

How you have fallen from heaven,  
O morning star, son of the dawn!  
You have been cast down to the earth,  
you who once laid low the nations!  
You said in your heart,  
“I will ascend to heaven;  
I will raise my throne  
above the stars of God;  
I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly,  
on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain.  
I will ascend above the tops of the clouds;  
I will make myself like the Most High.”  
But you are brought down to the grave,  
to the depths of the pit (Isaiah 14:12-15).

This poetic description is behind Milton’s familiar depiction of Satan’s fall from heaven:

Th’ infernal Serpent: hee it was, whose guile  
Stir’d up with Envy and Revenge, deceiv’d  
The Mother of Mankind; what time his Pride  
Had cast him out from heav’n, with all his Host
Of Rebel Angels, by whose aid aspiring
To set himself in Glory above his Peers,
He trusted to have equall’d the most High,
If he oppos’d; and with ambitious aim
Against the Throne and Monarchy of God
Rais’d impious War in heav’n and Battle proud
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power
Hurl’d headlong flaming from th’ Ethereal Sky
With hideous ruin and combustion down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In Adamantine Chains and penal Fire,
Who durst defy th’ Omnipotent to Arms.¹

However, the context of Isaiah’s statement makes it clear that the text relates to a man, not a supernatural being. Continue reading:

Those who see you stare at you,
they ponder your fate:
“Is this the man who shook the earth
and made kingdoms tremble,
the man who made the world a desert,
who overthrew its cities
and would not let his captives go home?”
All the kings of the nations lie in state,
each in his own tomb.
But you are cast out of your tomb
like a rejected branch;
you are covered with the slain,
with those pierced by the sword,
those who descend to the stones of the pit (Isa. 14:16-19, italics added for emphasis).

Ezekiel 28 is another text commonly understood to describe the “fall” of Satan:

You were the model of perfection,
full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.
You were in Eden,
the garden of God;
every precious stone adorned you:
ruby, topaz and emerald,
chrysolite, onyx and jasper,
sapphire, turquoise and beryl.
Your settings and mountings were made of gold;
on the day you were created they were prepared.
You were anointed as a guardian cherub,
for so I ordained you.
You were on the holy mount of God;
you walked among the fiery stones.
You were blameless in your ways
from the day you were created
till wickedness was found in you.
Through your widespread tread
you were filled with violence,
and you sinned.
So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God,
and I expelled you, O guardian cherub,
from among the fiery stones.
Your heart became proud
on account of your beauty,
and you corrupted your wisdom
because of your splendor.
So I threw you to the earth;
I made a spectacle of you before kings (Ezekiel 28:12-17).

Once again, the context makes clear that the text refers to a man, not a supernatural being. It is addressed to “the king of Tyre” (Ezek. 28:11). His sins resulted from his “widespread trade” (Ezek. 28:16). As a result, God says, “I reduced you to ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching. All the nations who knew you are appalled at you; you have come to a horrible end and will be no more” (Ezek. 28:18-19). Clearly Satan has not yet ceased to exist.

The Bible is a practical book, but we are speculative people. We are fascinated with such subjects as the age of the earth and the end of history. Scripture tells us what we need to know, not all we would like to know. If your class had all their questions about the origin of Satan answered, how would such information change their lives?

The Bible doesn’t tell us much about the origin of Satan, but it tells us what we need to know about dealing with him now:

- “Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8). Note that lions only roar when they are about to attack—otherwise they would warn their prey.
- “Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:12).
Genesis 3. Adam and Eve: All About “I”

- “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).

What is Satan’s end? “The devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Rev. 20:10). It has been well said: the next time Satan reminds you of your past, remind him of his future.

Refuse his strategy (3:1-5)

How did the serpent deceive Eve? In the same ways our spiritual enemy deceives us. Because human nature doesn’t change, we are susceptible to the same temptations that worked in the Garden of Eden. What is his strategy in tempting us into sin? How can we defeat him today?

How does the enemy tempt us?

**He begins with your needs.** His conversation with Eve began with the fruit of the trees in the garden (see Gen. 2:8-17, where God created these trees for beauty and food, prohibiting humans only from eating “from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil,” 2:17, lest they die). These trees were God’s means for meeting the woman’s physical needs. The serpent didn’t begin his conversation by talking about a sunrise or sunset, the moon or the stars, or even Adam or the other animals on the earth. He began with the fruit of the trees, because that was what she needed most to survive.

Satan knows what you need today. Expect to be tempted where your needs are the greatest. If your self-esteem is low, expect to be tempted at the point of pride and fame. If you struggle with substance abuse, know that your enemy will engage you on that front regularly. If popularity is important for you, expect to be tempted to compromise your character for your friends. If you measure success by money, know that materialism will want to be your god and that you will be given chances to compromise your faith to gain it.

For a pastor who wants his church to grow, there are unethical ways to count attendance and attract people. For a teacher who wants to impress you with his or her knowledge, it’s always easier to plagiarize or fabricate. Satan will tempt you at the point of your need, the trees in your garden today.

**He questions God’s provision for those needs.** “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’” (Gen. 3:1b). If that were true, she and her husband would starve to death. Your enemy wants you to believe that God cannot be trusted to meet your needs; that God’s will won’t make you as popular, or rich, or famous as you want to be; that your class may not grow as you want it to grow or your members may not be as impressed with you as they should be. He claims that God’s will is not in your best interest.
He minimizes the risk of disobedience. The woman replied that if they eat the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, they would die (3:2-3). Satan retorted, “You will not surely die” (3:4a). The risk is exaggerated, he claims. God loves you. He would surely not punish you as you fear. The downside is overstated. In our context, he whispers that we can always repent later. No one will know. No one will be hurt. Or, they deserve what they get. Or, they started this. He finds ways to convince us that disobeying God is to our good, and that it’s worth whatever it costs.

He offers a shortcut to your desires. “God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (3:4b). Friedrich Nietzsche was right to claim that the “will to power” is the basic drive in all human nature: “A table of excellencies hangeth over every people. Lo! it is the table of their triumphs; lo! it is the voice of their Will to Power.”

Satan wants you to believe you can be self-sufficient, in charge of your own life and future and needs. You’ll know good and evil, just as he knows it. No more rules for you. You’ll call the shots. You’ll get the popularity, or money, or physical satisfaction, or fame you want.

Why do it God’s way, when there’s a shortcut? Especially when no one will get hurt, least of all yourself? Oswald Chambers defines “lust” as the desire to have it right now. Whatever it is. Satan is always happy to help you seek that.

Think about the last time you experienced significant temptation. Did the enemy not start with something you thought you wanted or needed? You knew God’s word and will on the subject, but somehow you were unsure that they were the best way to go this time and thought that you could ignore the risk of disobedience. If you went this other way, you could have what you wanted now. Is this not the perennial strategy behind all temptation?

How do we defeat him?
Take these steps the moment your next temptation attacks you. First: remember that Satan hates you. Why? Because he hates your Father.

If a terrorist cannot get at the president, he’ll attack his people. The closer to home, the better. There is a war going on between God and the devil, and you are on the front lines. Everything Satan puts into your head is designed to destroy you, no matter how much it appears to meet your need and minimize the downside right now. Every time you are tempted, know that the tempter wants to destroy you. You’re signing a contract with your enemy.

Billy Sunday was right: “One reason sin flourishes is that it is treated like a cream puff instead of a rattlesnake.” A few years ago a snake got into our house, so I killed it. I
didn’t think twice about it. If only I were so decisive with the serpent who lives in my mind and my world. How do we kill him?

Two: see the end from the beginning. How did their decision to eat the forbidden fruit work for them? They got the fruit, to be sure. And they lost the Garden where the fruit was found. They lost paradise, and innocence, and joy. They gained punishment, and toil, and death. Satan was more than willing to give up a momentary pleasure to get an eternity of pain.

Scripture is clear on the result of sin:

When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death (James 1:13-15).

See the end from the beginning. Your enemy is willing for you to gain the sensual pleasure of sexual sin now, so long as he can lead you into adultery, the destruction of your marriage, the devastation of your family, and the ruin of your witness. He’s patient. He’s happy for you to have the possessions purchased by your theft, the popularity that comes from your gossip, the power that results from your manipulation. For now. He’s perfectly willing for you to climb as high on the ladder of success and recognition as possible, so your fall will be all the more visible and destructive.

C. S. Lewis’s masterpiece, The Screwtape Letters, contains the correspondence of a senior tempter to a junior apprentice. It is a remarkable glimpse into Satanic strategy. For instance, Screwtape advises,

Doubtless, like all young tempters, you are anxious to be able to report spectacular wickedness. But do remember, the only thing that matters is the extent to which you separate the man from the Enemy [God]. It does not matter how small the sins are provided that their cumulative effect is to edge the man away from the Light and out into the Nothing. Murder is no better than cards if cards can do the trick. Indeed the safest road to Hell is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts.³

Three: turn immediately to God and his word. The serpent was “more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made” (Gen. 3:1). He is smarter than you are. This is a battle of wits and wills that you cannot win in your strength, intelligence, and ability.
If Eve had stayed with God’s word, she would have stayed in the Garden. If Adam had put God’s word ahead of his wife’s, he would have stayed there with her. They tried to fight the battle themselves, and they lost miserably. So will we.

There are temptations you can defeat in your strength. For instance, I do not struggle with alcohol, for reasons that have nothing to do with me. It’s just my circumstances and makeup. So I am never tempted by alcohol. No one ever asks me out for a drink, or tries to give me a fifth of whiskey for Christmas. But there are other areas where I am tempted, and these I face regularly. Satan is a great economist. He won’t waste his time with issues he knows I can defeat. Rather, he brings those he knows I cannot.

So every time I am tempted, I must recognize the fact that this is a test I cannot pass, or it wouldn’t be before me. I must give it instantly to my Father, going to his word and will, asking for his strength and support. So should you and your class.

Oswald Chambers’ analysis of temptation was profound:

A man’s disposition on the inside, i.e., what he possesses in his personality, determines what he is tempted by on the outside. The temptation fits the nature of the one tempted, and reveals the possibilities of the nature. Every man has the setting of his own temptation, and the temptation will come along the line of the ruling disposition.

Temptation is a suggested short cut to the realization of the highest at which I aim—not toward what I understand as evil, but towards what I understand as good. . . . Temptation yielded to is lust deified, and is a proof that it was timidity that prevented the sin before.”

Temptation will never be easier to resist than it is right now.

**Fear God’s judgment (3:6-19)**

Tragically, Adam and Eve did not see the serpent as their enemy, understand the end from the beginning, or turn immediately to God’s word and help:

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 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 (Gen. 3:6-7).

There are three ways we know everything we know: the practical, the intuitive, and the rational. You use your computer practically, without understanding in detail its
operations (unless you are a computer engineer). You meet people and know intuitively that you like them or not. You balance your checkbook rationally.

Temptation comes to us in all three ways as well. Practically, the woman saw that “the fruit of the tree was good for food.” Intuitively, she sensed that it was “pleasing to the eye.” Rationally, she determined that it was “desirable for gaining wisdom.” Ignoring the warning of God, “she took some and ate it.”

Note that she was able easily to give some to Adam, “who was with her,” so that “he ate it” as well. He was in close proximity to his wife, perhaps during her conversation with the serpent but certainly as she chose to sin. He could have stopped her, but chose to participate in her sin and make it his own.

Immediately the couple “realized they were naked,” so they “sewed fig leaves,” the largest leaves in that part of the world, and “made coverings for themselves.” The figs could symbolize fertility as well, so that they were even more appropriate for covering the private parts of the couple.

Then, as was apparently a regular event, “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” (Gen. 3:8a). “The cool of the day” translates a Hebrew phrase that reads literally, the wind of the day. Rather than referring to a time of day, the verse probably describes God as coming in the wind, perhaps similar to the “gentle whisper” by which he spoke to Elijah (1 Kings 19:12-13).

This time, however, “they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden (Gen. 3:8b). Trees given for beauty and food (Gen. 2:9) were now used by humans to hide from their Creator. Similarly on Mt. Sinai, “When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance and said to Moses, ‘Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die’” (Exodus 20:18-19).

Now God had to search for the race he created for intimacy with himself: “But the LORD God called to the man, ‘Where are you?’” (Gen. 3:9). Adam’s reply was spoken for all of us: “He answered, ‘I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid’” (3:10).

God is omniscient—his next question was not intended for his sake but for Adam’s: “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” (3:11).

Now comes the first example in history of behavior known to psychologists as transference, blaming others for our mistakes and failures: “The man said, ‘The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it’” (3:12). The
Hebrew syntax is emphatic: The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it. To Adam’s mind, the fault lay with God and Eve, not with himself.

Next God tried to lead Eve to confession and repentance: “Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?‘” (Gen. 3:13a). But she followed her husband’s lead in avoiding the issue: “The woman said, ‘The serpent deceived me, and I ate‘“ (3:13b).

God turned to the serpent in judgment, without asking first for his confession (perhaps a hint of the Satanic element in the event): “So the LORD God said to the serpent, ‘Because you have done this,

Cursed are you above all the livestock
and all the wild animals!
You will crawl on your belly
and you will eat dust
all the days of your life.
And I will put enmity
between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will crush your head,
and you will strike his heel‘’” (3:14-15).

He had been “crafty” (arum); now he was “cursed” (arur). He would “crawl on [his] belly,” a non-threatening position for a snake (as opposed to his posture when he coils and raises his head to strike). And he would “eat dust,” a sign of abject humiliation and punishment. Even when God creates “new heavens and a new earth” and “the wolf and the lamb will feed together,” still “dust will be the serpent’s food” (Isaiah 65:17, 25).

Much has been made of God’s reference to the woman’s “offspring” (NRSV), literally her seed. Given that the seed of life comes from the man, many see here a reference to the Virgin Birth and thus to Jesus’ defeat of Satan on the cross and at the end of history (see Rev. 20:10). This application of the text, while not expressed with obvious clarity, is certainly consistent with Scripture.

God now turned his judgment to Eve: “To the woman he said,

I will greatly increase your pains in childbirth;
with pain you will give birth to children.
Your desire will be for your husband,
and he will rule over you (Gen. 3:16).
Her punishment was not in “childbearing,” for she and her husband were always intended to “be fruitful and increase in number” (Gen. 1:28). Nor was it that she would be married to her “husband,” for God always intended them to “become one flesh” (Gen. 2:24). Rather, her punishment was in the “pains in childbearing” which God would “increase” as a result of her sin. Such pain can be unspeakable, as biblical references to its intensity show:

- “Terror will seize them, pain and anguish will grip them; they will writhe like a woman in labor” (Isaiah 13:8).
- “At this my body is racked with pain, pangs seized me, like those of a woman in labor” (Isa. 21:3).

In addition, her husband would “rule” over her. Sin poisoned the partnership of equality intended in creation (Gen. 2:18), then and today.

Finally, God said to Adam, “Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat of it’,

“Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return” (3:17-19).

Prior to the fall, the man was “free to eat from any tree in the garden” (2:16). While he was put in the Garden of Eden “to work it and take care of it” (2:15), this was a joyous duty of stewardship, not a painful punishment.

Now the ground would be “cursed . . . because of you” so that it produced “thorns and thistles” rather than the fruit of the trees; man would eat “by the sweat of your brow” until he dies and is returned to the ground from which he was taken.

Scripture teaches that our sin affected all of God’s creation: “the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God” (Romans 8:20-21). As a result, one day there will be “a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away” (Rev. 21:1).
Only then will God walk with his people once more: “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God” (Rev. 21:3). Only then will God reverse the curse of Eden, finally and forever: “He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away (Rev. 21:4).

In the meanwhile, we are fallen people living on a fallen planet. God deals with us as gently as he can or as harshly as he must.

**Trust God’s grace (3:20-24)**

By God’s mercy and grace, our story does not end with the fall of our first parents:

Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living. The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. 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 (Gen. 3:20-24).

“Adam” means man; “Eve” means, as Adam said, “mother of all the living.” Now that their nakedness had become a shame for them “the LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them” (3:21). Here we find the first animal sacrifice in Scripture, a result of the sin of humanity; God himself made the sacrifice and provided the gracious clothing for them.

As a further act of grace, God prevented the sinful humans from eating from the tree of life, lest they “live forever” in their fallen state (3:22). Can you imagine spending eternity in your body as it ages and decays? God allows our earthly bodies to die so we can live forever in glory: “I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable” (1 Corinthians 15:50). One day “the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality” (1 Cor. 15:53).

In the meanwhile, the first man and woman were expelled from the Garden to the “east,” so that the cherubim were placed “on the east side of the Garden” . . . “to guard the way to the tree of life” (Gen. 3:24). This direction east would lead toward Babylon: “As men moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there” (Gen. 11:2). Cherubim appear many times in Scripture, usually in connection with the glorious presence of God.
(see Psalm 18:9-10; Ezekiel 10); giant gold-covered statues depicting cherubs were placed inside the Holy of Holies in Solomon’s temple (1 Kings 6:23-29).

As a result of the fall of humanity, God came to our first parents because they could no longer go to him. God covered their shame and sin with the first sacrifice in human history, and then with the Sacrifice that redeemed all of human history. He cast them from the Garden, but his Son’s agony in another Garden paved the way for their entrance back into the Paradise of God.

One day we will be permitted access to the “tree of life” from which we were barred at the primordial beginning of our race:

> Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever (Rev. 22:1-5).

Sin destroys and scars. The nail can be pulled out, but the hole remains. However, our God can redeem and bless. He had a use for David after Bathsheba, and Jonah after the fish, and Peter after his denials of Jesus. He still has a use for you.

**Conclusion**

Erasmus, the brilliant Greek scholar, offered this practical advice in 1504:

> Use temptation as a means to virtue. If your inclinations are to be greedy and selfish, increase your donations to charity. If you tend toward boasting, make a deliberate effort to be humble in all things. This way you can find in temptation a renewed determination to increase in piety. This procedure is the one that most galls Satan. It makes him afraid to tempt you because nothing is more hateful to the Author of Evil than that he should be responsible for some good.5

The problem of our world is I trouble. The middle letter of *sin* is *I*. The middle letter of *pride* is *I*. I trouble is my trouble, and yours. Where has such temptation found you today?
See www.baptistwaypress.org for additional study materials on

**The Book of Genesis:**

*People Relating to God*

and on more than thirty-eight other Bible studies by BaptistWay Press®,

or call 1-866-249-1799
(M-Th 8:30 a.m.-6:00 p.m.; Fri 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. central time).

A recent book by Dr. Denison, *The Bible—You Can Believe It: Biblical Authority in the Twenty-First Century*, is also available from BAPTISTWAY PRESS®. The cost is only $4.95 each plus shipping and any applicable taxes. A *Teaching Guide* is available for only $1.95 plus shipping and any applicable taxes.

♦

To receive Dr. Denison's free daily e-mail, “GodIssues: Today's news in spiritual perspective,” see www.InformedFaith.com. The brief essay discusses current events and issues in light of God's word and provides practical applications to life.

♦


