

2. The Biblical Foundation Marred by Sin

God established the ideal marriage and laid the foundation for the family when He brought Adam and Eve together and made them one. However, that ideal marriage and family was marred by sin. That happened as a result of the choice to sin. There were five consequences of that sin. Today, we will look at the consequences because those consequences continue to have a major effect on family life. In fact, those consequences lead to the destruction of many families.

Before we look at the consequences of sin, let's look at how we are tempted to sin. In 1 John 2:16, we read, "For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world." Genesis 3:6 shows that Adam and Eve failed in all three of these areas, "So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate." We see:

The lust of the flesh – it was good for food

The lust of the eyes – it was pleasant to the eyes

The pride of life – it was desirable to make one wise

Romans 5:12 tells us the ultimate consequence of that sin for all mankind. That verse says, "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned." Many people want to blame Eve for that sin but Adam is the one that God held accountable. The last phrase of Genesis 3:6 says that Eve "gave to her husband with her, and he ate." Adam was standing right there with Eve and did nothing to protect her from the temptations of Satan. As a result, God held him accountable.

Genesis 3:8 shows the first immediate consequence of sin. That verse says, "And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden." God came to meet with Adam and Eve as He usually did and they hid themselves. Their sin led to immediate spiritual death which is separation from God. This consequence deals with man's relationship with God.

Genesis 3:10 gives us three more immediate consequences of sin. That verse says, "So he said, 'I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.'" Here, we see that this verse gives three consequences of sin:

Fear – I was afraid

Guilt – I was naked

Shame – I hid myself

These three consequences deal with man's relationship with himself.

Genesis 3:12 says, "Then the man said, 'The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.'" Here, we see that the fifth immediate consequence of sin is blame. First, Adam blamed God for giving him the woman. Second, he blamed Eve for giving him the fruit (remember he had been standing there with her). This consequence deals with man's relationship with others.

These five consequences of sin, separation from God; fear, guilt and shame within; and blame of others have been the five things that have motivated every person since the time of Adam. Every person is driven by fear until his life is transformed by Christ. In fact, many Christians are still driven by fear. As a result, they drive others. Only as we grow and mature in Christ and learn to be led by the love of Christ are we able to lead others instead of driving them. Remember, if we are driven by fear we will drive others. If we are led by the love of Christ, we will lead others. This is the reason that many families have created barriers in the family that separate the family members from one another. God wants us to replace the barriers with bridges so that we can minister to one another. Galatians 5:13 says, “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.”

To build godly families we must learn to reverse the effects of original sin. We will give a brief summary of how we reverse those effects in the rest of this topic. The first consequence of sin is separation from God. This is reversed by relationship and fellowship. God sent Christ to make it possible for us to reestablish our relationship with Him by becoming His children. John 1:12 says, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.” The second part of reversing this separation is fellowship. 1 John 1:3 and 7 say, “That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ...But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” Here, we see that we help people begin to reverse the effects of original sin by leading them to Christ and then showing them how to develop fellowship with Christ.

We help people learn to reverse the effects of fear by learning to take root in the love of Christ. In Ephesians 3:17-19, we have a model of the way we can pray for others when it says, “That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height--to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” 1 John 4:18 tells us that perfect love casts out fear, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.” Then, 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 tells us that we become motivated by love instead of fear, “For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.” As we help Christians take root in the love of Christ, that love will cast out fear and they will be led by the love of Christ and will lead others in love.

There are three key things that are involved in reversing the effects of guilt: forgiveness; cleansing and forgiving others. 1 John 1:9 says, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 2:1-2 tells us that the Father was satisfied with the payment that Christ paid for our sins. The Father showed that satisfaction by raising Christ from the dead. We want to help new Christians realize that all of their sins—past, present and future—were paid for by Christ on the cross and that when they repented of sin and

placed their trust in Christ that they were forgiven.

However, we need the moment by moment cleansing that comes as a result of confession of sin. The night before His crucifixion Christ gave Peter an illustration of the difference between forgiveness and cleansing as He was washing the feet of the disciples. John 13:10-11 says, “Jesus said to him, ‘He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.’ For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, ‘You are not all clean.’” Christ was showing Peter that Peter needed daily cleansing from sin, but that a disciple that Christ did not name (Judas) needed the bath that would only come through repentance and faith.

One thing that many Christians say is that they don’t always feel forgiven. At that point, we need to share Ephesians 4:32 with them which says, “And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.” The reason that they do not feel forgiven is usually due to the fact that they are unwilling to forgive someone else. Often they will respond that they cannot forgive a person for what they have done. At that point, ask them why God forgave them. You may have to read through the verse several times before they finally realize that God forgave them “for Christ’s sake”. People often cannot forgive in their own strength but they can pray that Christ will give them His strength to forgive for His sake.

We help people learn to reverse the consequences of shame as we help them to come to a full understanding of 2 Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” Most people try to change their outward appearance because of their shame. They will never succeed because shame comes from the inner man. Hebrews 10:19 and 22 say, “Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus...let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” In Christ, we can stand before the Father without sin because He looks at us through the righteousness of Christ.

We learn to help people reverse the consequences of blame as they learn to take responsibility for their own choices and the consequences of those choices. Instead of telling a person that he or she has to do something, ask them what their choices are in that situation. In most cases, there are five or six or more choices. Then, ask them what consequences will come from each of the choices. Ask them to cross out those sets of consequences that they do not want to happen in their lives. Then, encourage them to pray and ask the Lord to give them His peace about which of the remaining choices will be best for them in their situation. Share Philippians 4:4-9 and then help them understand that God promises to give His peace as seen in verse 7, “And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” May the Lord richly bless you as you help people learn to reverse the effects of original sin and learn to walk in fellowship with Christ and with the family of Christ.