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Genesis

Chapter 3 - God's Grace Questioned

The Toil of Disregard (vs. 17-20)

Genesis 3:17-20: Then to Adam He said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat from it’;

Cursed is the ground because of you;

In toil you will eat of it

All the days of your life.

“Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you;

And you will eat the plants of the field;

By the sweat of your face

You will eat bread,

Till you return to the ground,

Because from it you were taken;

For you are dust,

And to dust you shall return.” Now the man called his

wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all the living.

We come to Genesis, and it is a book about the beginning of God's grace upon us, as well as His reconciliation of bringing us back. It's impossible to really understand this book if in fact you don't see Who it is that actually was creating things and Who it is that's actually doing the reconciling.

If you'll take a moment with me and look and Hebrews 1, it will reveal to us the very One who is creating all things and had created all things for us, but more specifically, it's identifying the motivation of why things were created. So, if you look with me in Hebrews 1, you'll begin to see that the heart of God is being revealed through the person of Jesus Christ.

(Hebrews 1:1) “God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,

(Hebrews 1:2) in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.”

The Scripture is telling us that all things were created by the word of His mouth.

We read in the Gospel of John, John 1, that the Word created all things.

The Book of Psalm will reiterate this in Psalm 33:6.

As we go on, it says this in verse 3 (Hebrews),

“And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

Scripture is telling us that this is the motivation of God; for creation of all things, for the reconciliation of all things.

In fact, if you look with me in Colossians 1, you'll see this goal of reconciliation being conveyed at the very beginning of this particular Epistle.

(Colossians 1:16) “For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.

(Colossians 1:17) He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

(Colossians 1:18) He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

(Colossians 1:19) For it was the Father’s good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him,”

Once again, exact representation of God's nature.

(Colossians 1:20) “and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

(Colossians 1:21) And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds,

(Colossians 1:22) yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body...”

Scripture is letting us know that from the beginning, God's intent was to bring us back. So, as we see in the creation not only the grace of God, but we also see in the ramifications of the things that we do, the reconciliation of God at the very earliest of stages. When God gives these, we would call in some way consequences, of the things that we did, God is not just throwing out things to torture people. I mean, quite frankly, if God wanted to declare torture as His main goal, He would have said, “You're going to be in pain the rest of your life. You're going to have diseases, and I'm going to put these things on you all the time.” But He doesn't. He begins to direct the woman as well as He will direct the man into an area that will ultimately draw them into reconciliation. So, as the woman has that proclivity to desire and long for something, God will use that to then ultimately desire and want the coming of the Messiah. He will use the woman to be the venue in which the Messiah will come. “It will be

through your seed, and I'm going to give you something good to long for; something that will purify your thoughts; something that will literally bless you in every perspective. I'm going to have you want the coming of a child, and instead of your longing for death, you're going to be longing for life.”

So, God uses that initial desire and wanting for other things, which is certainly a part of women, to then long for the things that are far greater and you're going to desire your husband. You're going to desire relationship over the things of the world. I mean, that one would desire things and knowledge and pleasure over relationship, over truth and fidelity is just such a horrible thing. God says. “We're going to switch that. We're going to use the desires to long for the relationship over the things.” So, God was ultimately pointing her back, directing her back through what we might perceive initially as God was cursing her for this; it doesn't say that He cursed her. It says that He cursed the serpent, but He begins to direct the woman back into reconciliation

through the difficulty, through the very things that she would long for; even her very nature to long for things, God is going to use to bring her back to Him. Clearly, the desire is that she not only longed for relationship, but she longed for a relationship ultimately with God.

You read in the New Testament of different women and one of the women that you read of in Luke 8 is the woman, Joanna, who was married to a steward of Herod; what we understand is that somehow, she got mixed up with this guy that works for Herod. I would say, how do you get a job like that or what would attract you to an individual like that? Scripture is revealing to us that there were women that began to minister to Christ that at first were searching for and desired all kinds of other things. Then, ultimately found the very one that they had been wanting all along and were drawn to Christ.

So, in Luke 8 it says that Joanna was one of the ones that was actually supporting Christ out of her own private means. It's pretty interesting, isn't it? As well as it will list Mary Magdalene, who at one time had seven demons.

Now, that's somebody that's searching and looking for something, and then she finds Jesus. There are very few women that we know of in Scripture that is as close as Mary Magdalene to Christ. She would be the one that would first see the resurrected Christ.

It would be the woman at the well that had been searching for maybe a relationship with five different men and the one that she's living with is not her husband. Then, Christ would come on the scene, and she would realize, "That's what I've been looking for."

So, God is going to take the very desires and the longings that we have, and He's going to direct us back and really transform these longings into something that would reconcile us to Him.

The same is going to be true with the man as we come to the passage. As we look at this passage, it almost seems up to this point, that man is getting off scot-free until God begins to deal with the man.

(Genesis 3:17) “Then to Adam He said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree...”

I think sometimes people initially, you know, maybe misunderstand this particular passage, and probably quote it to their wives, “I'm not supposed to listen to you.” That would be a misquote.

It's interesting when you go into passages like Genesis 16, and you begin to realize that one of the problems that Abraham had was that he listened to his wife too.

However, as you go to Genesis 21, Sarah tells him, “You need to get rid of this guy in our house because he's causing division.” And God turns to Abraham, and this is a direct quote, He says, “Listen to your wife.” So, it's not whether or not listening to your wife is good or bad, it is that you have to put God first. In other words, listen to the voice of God first. If your wife is saying something that is pointing to Christ, listen to your wife. That's the thing that you should do.

“... “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat from it’...””

In other words, “You listened to your wife that went against what I told you to do. Because of this, cursed are you, Adam.” No, it doesn't say that.

“Cursed is the ground.”

Once again, it's very interesting that God is keeping the curse away from man and away from women. Even though sin will be part of the curse of the earth, He does not want to curse man. He wants to reconcile man to Himself. So, He's going to use the very thing in which man came out of, which was the ground. In fact, the word ground here is “'ăḏāmâ,” where we get the word “Adam.” The passage is conveying clearly that “I want to teach you a lesson.” God is teaching us, He's correcting us. He's calling us back to Himself. It is not the will of God that any man should perish. If you can read Jesus in the text, you know that to be true. Jesus did not have a vindictive bone in His body. His whole desire was to reconcile man to Himself and even in His rebukes, it was to correct so that

they might be saved. “While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” That's the same Creator that is declaring what He's declaring here in the passage. So, to see this as some negative oppressive curse would be inappropriate. God is beginning the process of reconciliation.

So, we come, and it starts off,

“Cursed is the ground because of you...”

He's telling the man, “You have a responsibility in this.” The decisions that you make affects others. This would kind of be an epiphany at this moment for man, because man has a tendency to be a little on the fixated side of whatever he's doing, and not really very much aware of many of the things that are happening around him. It's just the way, usually, most guys are. So, it is interesting that Adam doesn't seem to be very much aware of anything that's going on in this whole text. In the whole temptation of Eve and her talking to the serpent, he should have been saying something like, “Who are you talking to? What are you guys talking about? What are you doing over here?” You don't see any of those

questions. All we see is Eve does what she does, and then she goes, “You want some?” And he goes, “OK.” It’s virtually kind of a clueless moment, and we see he's kind of detached in the thing which obviously is not a male thing, but kind of out of it, so to speak.

“... Cursed is the ground because of you;

In toil you will eat of it

All the days of your life.”

Now, the word that he uses for “toil” is actually the same word that is used for the woman in the pain of childbirth. It makes reference clearly to sorrow, labor, hardship, grief and all these things are going to come. It was the very thing that man and or woman thought they were missing out on with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That “What is evil like?” So, God goes, “Ok, you're going to find out. Here it is pain, sorrow.” Here again, the definition of evil is all of those things. So, man would want the wrong things for the wrong reasons, but God would take those things that he longs for and make them for the right reasons. God is causing all things to work together

for good to those who love him, and God is wanting to reconcile them back.

“... In toil you will eat of it
All the days of your life.”

Now, that particular phrase is actually telling us what God is intending to do for man in this text, and that is cause him to labor for something. The fundamental question in all of this is, what caused man to be indifferent? Actually, the word is “disregard.” The reason I put “disregard” is it kind of fits in with being apathetic towards things and maybe ignoring the things that need to be done; kind of indifferent and neglecting what is really important. What really is important if you think about it, is this relationship with this woman, what she is doing, the things that could be hurt. In fact, even the way that Adam reacts, he should be thinking, “I wonder how God feels when I blame Him for this. I wonder how she feels (i.e. Eve) when I blamed her for this. I wonder how Eve felt when I just literally threw her “under the bus?” There's no consideration over these things because he seems to be in total disregard of the things that are really important.

The question is, what caused this apathy? Why is he in disregard? I would say, and if I just put it in modern vernacular and just sum it up, is he has no skin in the game. The whole point of the matter is that he has no sweat equity. He hasn't learned to work for something. If in fact you don't work for something, you don't really appreciate anything, but you also don't have any heightened understanding or comprehension of what's going on because you weren't involved in it. You take things for granted.

One of the statements that's made in Proverbs 20:21, “An inheritance gained hurriedly at the beginning will not be blessed in the end.”

Now Scripture is telling you don't give someone too much too fast. They won't appreciate it. They won't understand how to take care of it. It will oftentimes use the individual called the “sluggard” in the Book of Proverbs to describe this person that hasn't worked.

In fact, the way that it's put in Proverbs 20:4 is,

“The sluggard does not plow...”

It also says in Proverbs 21:25, a sluggard refuses to work.

“Don't make me work. Don't make me do anything. Why should I want to work?” Well because work builds character. It starts you on the path of something that perhaps you wouldn't naturally have, and that is unselfishness. It's one of the reasons why you begin to read in 1 Thessalonians, as well as 2 Thessalonians, Paul continues to admonish the Thessalonians and says, “If you're not working, you need to start working. Work hard with your hands. Don't be in in the need of anything.”

Ultimately, he says in 2 Thessalonians 3, “If you don't work, you shouldn't eat.” In other words, what was one of the problems that the Thessalonians were having? They were becoming hopeless and indifferent to the things around them. It starts off with you just having time on your hands and everybody handing you things. If you want to see a miserable person, I'll show you a person that everything has been given to them, and they don't ever appreciate anything that's happened. They don't

know what it's like to care for anything. So, work begins to put you on the path of unselfishness. It builds a sense of fortitude. It will cause a sense of responsibility to come up. "I'm responsible for something." God's going to take him through this the hard way.

There's an interesting passage in Proverbs 26:16, it reads, "The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who can give a discreet answer."

You know why he thinks he's so smart, don't you? Because he gets out of work. Yeah, a sluggard goes, "I'm smarter than those guys. I got out of work." And God goes, "That's the very thing that you need to do in order to build the very things that are most important to you." But man thinks he's smart by getting out of work. I think one of the things that work does and I found this true in my life when I first started working at very early age, that I remember thinking, "What's so hard about that?" I see people struggling going to work and everything like that. I'm going, "Get a life. There's nothing hard about that." Of course, at that point I really wasn't working. Then I

started working and something began to happen in my life. It was the thing called humility, and humility started coming. Then, something else started budding, and that was empathy because I began to see other people doing the very same thing, and I go, "Wow, I really admire those people coming day after day, clocking in, clocking out." I mean, you think about doing every single day of your life the same thing, sweating under the sun, all the things when we're in construction. Have you ever shoveled rock? Especially when it's big, it just doesn't want to go on the shovel. God begins to cultivate all these things that are missing in your life, and I would say all of these things are literally missing in the life of Adam. There is no sense of empathy or care of what's happening towards God or towards his wife. He doesn't care about putting blame on her or putting the responsibility on her, because he's never taken responsibility. So, God goes, "You know what we're going to do? We're going to go and train you, and you're going to start working hard. In fact, you're going to work so hard that you're going to start sweating."

The way that it's put in verse 18 is,

(Genesis 3:18) “Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you;

And you will eat the plants of the field.”

The reason why he uses the word “field” here is it's a picture of a property or land that has not been cultivated. So, he's going to have to cultivate it. He's going to have to plow it. That's going to make it harder. If you think about it, that's exactly what Adam is, uncultivated. He never had to really suffer. He's never really had to do anything that would cause him any pain or sorrow or hardship. He's never had to really work for anything.

“So, you shall eat the plants of the field and there are going to be thorns and thistles that come up.” Why do you think God does that? Well, I would say this, it is interesting that Hebrews 6:8 makes reference to that God causes the rain to come and some come up and they bear fruit, and others bring thorns and thistles. You begin to work with people, and you wish that everybody you sacrificed for, everybody that you served, everybody that you helped would just prosper and be fruitful and be

wonderful, but sometimes the very people that you help are the people that are the thornier. I think there are times as Josh might have said, "Why did I do that?" And I think you have to say, "I did that for God." Because you're going to have thorns and thistles grow, even in spite of all your all your work.

Scripture will make reference to this as it talks about the parable of the soils, whether it be in Mark 4 or Luke 8, as it begins to describe the parable of the soils; one having the thorns and the thistles growing up. Why would it be important for Adam to experience that? Well, in a way, God is reaping that with Adam. God has blessed Adam. He's done all these wonderful things for Adam. How is Adam responding? How has Eve responded? There's been a rejection, rebellion, and disobedience. I mean, talk about thistles and thorns coming up and how it pricks you.

I don't think it's a mistake that when Christ was crucified, He had a crown of thorns around His head because it literally is a picture of the husband having the thorns of

his labor coming to rescue us. So, interesting picture in the passage.

“Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you;

And you will eat the plants of the field;

(Genesis 3:19) By the sweat of your face

You will eat bread,

Till you return to the ground...”

God is wanting them to know, “Adam, do you even know where you came from?” We have a tendency to perceive ourselves as so wonderful and great, and He goes, “You're just dust.”

“... Because from it you were taken;

For you are dust,

And to dust you shall return.”

Through this, God is doing a humbling and a cultivating in the life of Adam. He is allowing him to be a part of a work as well, that God is not only wanting to reconcile the world to Himself, but He's actually wanting us to be a part of that reconciliation.

If you look with me in 2 Corinthians 5, Paul will say that we're actually ambassadors for Christ.

(2 Corinthians 5:18) “Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation,

(2 Corinthians 5:19) namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”

It's an interesting parallel of this whole thing of farming because a farmer has to deal with breaking up that hard soil with weeds and stuff growing up. The farmer doesn't give up because he knows that there's going to be fruit.

I think that's why we read in Galatians 6, don't grow weary in doing good because in due season you shall reap if you don't grow weary. He puts it in the context of horticulture or agriculture; that is this interesting picture of I guess you could get mad at the soil, but it wouldn't

make any difference. You just keep at it, and you keep doing the work.

God actually allows us to work together with Him. How do we know that? Look in 2 Corinthians 6:1, how does it start off? “And working together with Him.” And Paul, will talk about this in 1 Corinthians 3 that some watered, some planted the seed, but God was giving the increase. We have a wonderful opportunity to be a part of this reconciliation.

Now, it's interesting that this whole thing of agriculture is the very thing that God is using to help us see that through ministry, reaching out, and reconciling people to Christ, that there's going to be hardship, but there's also a certain way to minister. In other words, one of the things that was totally missing in Adam's life was the ability to really observe what was needful. I mean, it was necessary for him to be a part of his wife's life. It was necessary for him to know what was going on. It was necessary for him to observe that the serpent was talking. In fact, God actually did some training in that respect when He began to have him name the animals so that he would become

more observant to the things around him. Once again, man tends to be fairly fixated. So, God says, "Look at the things around you. Start understanding things."

1 Peter 3 says that the husband has a responsibility to live with his wife and in an understanding way. It will never tell the wife to do that. It will tell the husband, "This is your responsibility." And it is not a natural inclination of man to be understanding, but when you start working in a garden, you have to understand the soil. You have to understand the things that you plant. You have to understand how to sow. You have to understand how you reap.

This is clearly seen in Isaiah 28, and if you look there with me, you see that once again, God is the teacher that is teaching man through these venues. You go to a job and one of the reasons why you sweat at your job is for you to in some way grow a sense of empathy, a sense of care for the things around you to begin to notice things. I mean, if you're on a job and there are certain things that you don't notice, they're going to tell you, "You should have noticed

this.” And it begins to heighten the things that have been lacking in your life.

(Isaiah 28:23) “Give ear and hear my voice,
Listen and hear my words.”

(Isaiah 28:24) Does the farmer plow continually to plant seed?

Does he continually turn and harrow the ground?”

I think that there's certain ground that we just want to beat to death because it's so stubborn.

(Isaiah 28:25) “Does he not level its surface
And sow dill and scatter cummin...””

Some of these that are mentioned, I'm not real sure of, but “dill” is actually “fitches” within the text, which is actually a microscopic type seed. So, you almost don't see it.

It says you shall “sow dill and scatter cummin,” and they would oftentimes just broadcast, just throw those on the edges of the field. It's an interesting point, because really what you're dealing with is a freer way of dealing with cummin, and the way that you deal with them is you

don't plant them in rows, it'd be too difficult to plan them in rows. God is saying, "With different ones, you act and respond differently." We men like to think in terms of, "Well, you do it here, you do it over there." And we create a formula that we can use on everybody, and God goes, "Why don't you maybe observe what this is like?" So, He does this through farming, it's interesting.

"... sow dill and scatter cummin
And plant wheat in rows..."

Ok, so others may need more discipline. Pretty obvious.

"... Barley in its place..."

An appointed place.

Leviticus 19:19 says that you can't plant the two seeds together, which is showing some sort of distinction; perhaps in some way conveying that you don't compare others with others when you're ministering. Have you ever ministered to somebody and said, "Why aren't you more like...?" Don't do that.

(Isaiah 28:26) "For his God instructs and teaches him properly."

(Isaiah 28:27) For dill is not threshed with a threshing sledge..."

You'd bury it, then it wouldn't exist anymore.

"... Nor is the cartwheel driven over cummin..."

They'd have these cartwheels that they'd literally actually put spikes on the wheels. It was used for a particular purpose, but it wasn't used to drive over cummin.

"... But dill is beaten out with a rod, and cummin with a club.

(Isaiah 28:28) Grain for bread is crushed,

Indeed, he does not continue to thresh it forever.

Because the wheel of his cart and his horses eventually damage it..."

God's not seeking to damage. God's seeking to bring forth fruit. The whole purpose of all of this is to bring forth fruit.

"... He does not thresh it longer.

(Isaiah 28:29) This also comes from the LORD of hosts, Who has made His counsel wonderful and His wisdom great."

Scripture is telling us that God had made all these things not only to display to man that you need to be observant, but also to cause him to be involved in lives; to put once again, skin in the game.

Isaiah 5 makes reference to the fact that sometimes you're going to be ministering, and all your toil, effort and hardship will just come oftentimes to disappointment. The picture that is given in Isaiah 5 is as God begins to describe that He had this wonderful vineyard that He had grown. The way that it's put is,

(Isaiah 5:1) “Let me sing now for my well-beloved
A song of my beloved concerning His vineyard.
My well-beloved had a vineyard on a fertile hill.

(Isaiah 5:2) He dug it all around, removed its stones,
And planted it with the choicest vine.
And He built a tower in the middle of it...”

Sometimes you can do everything right.

“... And also hewed out a wine vat in it;
Then He expected it to produce good grapes,
But it produced only worthless ones.

(Isaiah 5:3) “And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and
men of Judah,
Judge between Me and My vineyard.

(Isaiah 5:4) “What more was there to do for My vineyard
that I have not done in it? ...”

You realize that there are times that you are ministering,
but once again, God goes, “Don't give up, you will reap.”
And what's interesting is ultimately, if you drop on down,

(Isaiah 5:6) ““I will lay it waste;
It will not be pruned or hoed,
But briars and thorns will come up.
I will also charge the clouds to rain no rain on it.””

So, the passage is giving this interesting picture of a sense
of hopelessness, but in Isaiah 4:2, He gives a wonderful
prophecy,

“In that day the Branch of the LORD will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth will be the pride and the adornment of the survivors of Israel.”

God's word will not return void, and you begin to realize the great power of God.

There is another passage that I just wanted to equate with this, and it's found in Hosea 10:11. It begins to describe the children of Israel as being “Ephraim,” which is one of the tribes in probably the wealthiest area, and it says,

“Ephraim is a trained heifer that loves to thresh...”

The point of the matter is it uses all its energy to create selfish, pleasurable things. So, it loves to work, but it loves to work for itself.

“... But I will come over her fair neck with a yoke;

I will harness Ephraim,

Judah will plow, Jacob will harrow for himself.

(Hosea 10:12) Sow with a view to righteousness,

Reap in accordance with kindness...”

“Sow with a view to righteousness” is basically saying work to do the right thing; the thing that is pleasing to God. That's the thing that you ought to pursue, and you ought to look for loyalty and devotion, which would be another word for kindness within the passage.

Then it uses this phrase in verse 12,

“... Break up your fallow ground...”

That's an uncultivated ground, untrained, unprepared, unthoughtful, inattentive, uncaring ground. I have found that oftentimes God will put hard labor in my path, difficulty, hardship, pain, sorrow. You know what it begins to do in my life? It breaks up this old, unproductive ground. I have a lot of unproductive in me because I don't have a tendency to notice things that need to be done. Oftentimes, I don't listen to my wife the way that I should. I don't care about what's happening in her life, and Scripture is revealing, “Ok, let's do some hard labor.” And as I begin to do some hard labor, I not only become more thoughtful and quite a bit humbler, but I've also become more observant, because the very things that God has me

do is causing me to be more observant in the things that I do.

It goes on and says the problem that you have,

(Hosea 10:13) “You have plowed wickedness, you have reaped injustice,

You have eaten the fruit of lies.

Because you have trusted in your way, in your numerous warriors.”

In other words, you've done it your way. You've trusted in your power and your strength, and that's the reason why you have this field of nothing. You're reaping nothing, but if in fact you'll do it God's way, you will reap righteousness.

Over and over again, God will refer to His people as obstinate. He says that in Exodus 32:9, Exodus 33:3-5, Exodus 34:9, Isaiah 48:4, and Ezekiel. I guess I could go on, but He repeats over and over again, “You are an obstinate people.” You know, some of us take a lot of tilling. Some of us need those big wagon wheels coming over us. God is

certainly gracious, but the call of God is, "Let's work together to reconcile; to have the right heart; to think like Me." I mean, how wonderful the good soil is.

In Luke 8, when it talks about the parable of soils, it actually describes the good soil as having a good, honest, and honorable heart. That's an interesting picture of a good soil, and that really only comes by going through the difficulties and hardships. The question is, why should I care about what's going on around me? You see this subject brought up throughout Scripture over and over again.

For instance, in Romans 14, Paul brings it up and he says, "You need to take notice that the things that you say could actually hurt somebody; that your opinions could actually be destructive." So fundamentally, Romans 14 is about how your opinions, or 1 Corinthians 8, the places that you could go could hurt somebody. I could just see a guy going, "What?" I can see me doing it, "What does it matter? What's the big deal?" The same thing is true when you come to 1 Corinthians 10. In all of those

passages, he goes, "You need to think about others." And it's the things in our life that God begins to bring. If you're wondering why you're going through all the hardship, toil, pain and all the sorrow, God's not punishing you, He's training you. He's bringing you to the point in which you can minister if you will allow this to be good in your life. If you will listen to what He's doing, watch what He's doing. If you'll respond in an appropriate way to the things that He's doing. I know that oftentimes man has a tendency to just choose the easiest way. Quite frankly, your wife says she wants to talk, it's easier to say, "Can we do it later?" Or it's easier to say, "What?" and then just have a blank stare and not really hear anything she's saying. I mean, we choose the path of least resistant, and God goes, "You need to work. You need to start working on this."

As the passage will end, if you look with me in Genesis 3. I know I'm coming to a close and there are a lot of other texts that I'd like to go to, but let me just show you the end of this passage as it ends this way,

(Genesis 3:20) “Now the man called his wife’s name Eve...”

So, up to this point we really don't have her named. Now, exactly when this happens, I'm not sure, but I have an idea. My idea is that he's already done some work. He's already gone through some hardship. Remember what he had done to begin with? He threw his wife under the bus. He blamed her, “My wife, the one You gave me, she messed this up.” You just feel like looking at Adam and going, “Do you know what you're doing? Do you know how you're making her feel?” But he's just oblivious to it.

Now, he's done some work, and he turns, and he goes, “You're the one that's going to give us life. I'm going to name you “life giver”.” And at this moment, he appreciates his wife. Don't you think that's interesting? God's beginning to reveal to us the things that are necessary, and when God tells us that we should be serving the body, these are things that make us better people. It cultivates not only faithfulness, but it cultivates character; it cultivates kindness; it cultivates patience;

cultivates empathy. It takes us out of that world of selfishness.

“Now the man called his wife’s name Eve, because she was the mother of all the living.”

That's far more complementary than it was in the garden.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we want to give You thanks for directing our paths and our thoughts to think right. Lord, we, as men in particular, have a tendency to be self-absorbed and to be focused perhaps on the things that we're focused on. We tend not to be observant, nor even really to care. We find ourselves detached in some ways and clearly unfocused about the things that are most important. Lord, in Your graciousness, You do not step on us, but You put us to work. We realize that is in this labor, in this toil and the hardship, the very thing that we oftentimes try to avoid, that You will build the greatest things in us; that will begin to see things as You and we'll become a husbandman like Yourself. That even in the midst of all the thorns and the

thistles, You will not give up, but a redeeming life will come forth; a tender shoot will come up and You will save the world.

Your heads bowed and your eyes closed. Just a reminder, the things that God is bringing into your life is not because He hates you, but it's because He loves you, and He has great things in store for you. The very thing that Adam and Eve wanted and was drawn to more than anything else as a serpent would say, "If you eat this, you'll be as God." And God turns and says, "I want you to be like Me. Work together with Me. See what it's like to feel the things that I feel; to care for the things that I care for." As His word tells us in Matthew 5, "Therefore, you are to be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect." We are being transformed into the image of Christ. It is His goodness that is doing this. Thank Him for this today.