

For Better or For Worse - Lessons From Old Testament Couples
Adam and Eve - The Intended Ideal

Lesson #1 for July 7, 2007

Scriptures: Genesis 1:26-28; 2:18-3:19.

1. The story of Adam and Eve as told in the Bible is fairly simple and brief. What are we supposed to learn from this story? The real story was taking place behind the scenes. What did the other beings in the universe think as they watched God creating this world in the very presence of the devil. (Revelation 12:9) Had they ever seen God create in this way before? How did they feel about God's work at the end of that first week? (Job 38:7)
2. God is the only One who knew what was coming. Did He create Adam and Eve specifically in preparation for the great controversy? What do you think was different about this creation from every previous creation?

All heaven took a deep and joyful interest in the creation of the world and of man. **Human beings were a new and distinct order. They were made "in the image of God," and it was the Creator's design that they should populate the earth** (*RH* Feb. 11, 1902). {1BC 1081.3}

Is our ability to procreate the primary difference between us and other intelligent creatures in the universe?

3. What did the onlooking universe think as they watched God forming Adam out of lumps of dirt? Did God perform CPR on Adam? Did the angels raise questions when they saw God take a rib out of Adam and make Eve? Why did God create Adam and Eve by this method instead of speaking them into existence like He did for other parts of creation?
4. Was the whole universe watching as Eve left the side of Adam (apparently inadvertently) and wandered closer and closer to "the tree"? What did they think? Did they want to stop her? How soon did Satan make a move? Was the universe aware of his tactics before Eve approached the tree? Did Eve's guardian angel ask permission to "turn her around" before she got too close to the tree? How many of the beings of the other worlds were focused on that conversation between Eve and "the snake"? How did they feel about Satan's behavior?
5. What should Eve have done? Nobody had ever lied to her before! For the first time in her life she was faced with two opposing claims that could not both be true! Why do you think she chose to believe and trust in a talking serpent instead of her Creator and Friend? Was she just overwhelmed by her emotional response to that strange situation?
6. Was the conversation at the tree the first time Satan had a chance to tempt either Adam or Eve? Or did Satan intentionally choose to pick on Eve? Apparently, both Adam and Eve had to go to the tree of life every day and eat the fruit. The tree of life was located very near to the tree of knowledge of good and evil, so they probably saw that "other tree" every day. (Genesis 2:9)
7. How was God feeling as He watched Eve move step by step toward trouble? Couldn't He have easily distracted her, making her go in a different direction? Only the Trinity knew that this beautiful planet was about to become the "theater of the universe." Did They ever regret not stepping in? Why didn't They step in?
8. What kind of a God would throw Adam and Eve out of the garden on their first offense?

Doesn't that seem harsh and severe, even arbitrary? Did Adam and Eve ever blame God for their predicament? (Genesis 3:12)

9. Why couldn't God give them some kind of punishment and then forgive them and give them one more chance? Or was it that after speaking so strictly about that tree, God had to carry through with His threat? Was it a mistake for God to make such a drastic pronouncement about the effects of eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil? (Genesis 2:17) Why do you think He made that dire prediction?
10. What do you think God would have done if Adam had refused to eat the fruit Eve offered him? Would Eve have been cast out alone? Would she have been replaced? What if Adam had said, "Let's wait and discuss this with God"?
11. When Eve and then Adam sinned, what kind of reaction do you think went through the universe? Did anyone suggest that God should just eliminate Adam and Eve and start over? Why didn't He?
12. Take a look at the story from a human perspective. Just try to imagine the potential that Adam and Eve started off with! Imagine that you were there for Friday of creation week. How long do you think God gave for Adam and Eve to become acquainted? Did God perform some kind of ceremony to marry them?
13. How do you understand Genesis 1:27: "So God created human beings, making them to be like himself. He created them male and female." (GNB) Were both Adam and Eve made in the image of God? Or was Adam made in the image of God and Eve made in the image of Adam? Clearly, God knew in advance what was going to happen. So why did He choose such a risky and dangerous way of populating planet Earth?
14. In what ways was Adam more like God than Eve? In what ways was Eve more like God than Adam? How could an ideal marriage serve to make both of them "in the image of God"? Can you ladies tell us what you have learned about God from your husbands? Can you men tell us what you have learned about God from your wives?
15. If we need to be married in order to learn more about God and to be more like God, does that imply that in heaven and in the new earth—to be like God—we will need to be married?
16. A number of the names of God in the Hebrew of the Old Testament are female in gender. What does that tell us? Is God the Father more masculine than feminine? What about Jesus? What about the Holy Spirit? They have each chosen various roles for Themselves. Are these roles gender inclusive?
17. There are a number of feminine images for God in the Scriptures. (Deuteronomy 32:11; Isaiah 49:15,16; 66:12,13; Hosea 13:8; Matthew 23:37) All of these texts suggest that God cares for us in ways similar to the ways that mothers care for their children. Can you think of any masculine images that God uses for Himself? What do those images imply about Him? Did creating human beings in two different forms make it easier for us to understand the Trinity?
18. Why do you think God created Adam and then Eve in the way He did? Was God trying to create within Adam a loneliness and a need for companionship?
19. Read 1 Peter 3:1-7; Ephesians 5:21-6:4. What do these passages teach us about the ideal marriage relationship? In Ephesians 5:25, Paul suggested that husbands should love their wives as Christ loved the church. Is that really possible?

20. Martin Luther in his notes on Genesis stated that in his opinion, if Satan had approached Adam first, Adam would have been the victor! Do you agree with that?
21. God stated clearly in Genesis 2:18 that Adam needed a companion suitable to him. Is that still true? If so, why do so many couples end up divorcing? Is the divorce rate among Christians, or even among Seventh-day Adventists, much less than in the general population? Why? Or why not?
22. Can love exist if there is only one person present?
23. It seems quite clear from the Bible and from Ellen White that Adam and Eve were originally created as equals. After sin Adam was apparently given the more dominant role. Does this suggest that if we were truly Christian, we would be able to return to an equal partnership?
24. Why do you think Eve was created in the way she was? Couldn't God have formed her from the dust or clay of the ground as He had formed Adam? How long had Adam been alive before Eve was created? Why do you think God waited until Adam felt a real need for a companion before He created Eve?
25. Was Eve created primarily to meet the needs of Adam? Or was she, in fact, the crowning act of creation?
26. Did God create a natural attraction between males and females? Think of all the ways in which that attraction has been perverted through sin!
27. Try to imagine how Adam and Eve viewed each other for the very first time. Did they immediately recognize their individual roles in marriage? Did God introduce them? Did Adam immediately recognize that he was missing a rib? Who do you think spoke first? Matthew Henry a well-known biblical commentator suggested that Eve was "not made out of his head to top him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved."
28. Some men have tried to make a great deal out of the fact that Eve was taken out of Adam. They seem to forget that every man since Adam has been taken out of woman!
29. Read Genesis 2:24. Why do you think God felt it was necessary to state that husbands should leave their fathers and mothers and cling to their wives? At the time of their creation, did Adam and Eve understand the concept of fathers and mothers?
30. Is it really possible for two human beings to "become one" in a marriage relationship and still not lose their individuality?
31. Marriage and the Sabbath are two institutions that still remain from the time prior to the fall of man. However, they were instituted after sin entered the universe. Were they given by God to answer questions in the great controversy—questions the inhabitants of the universe may have had regarding God and His character and government? Marriage and the Sabbath seem to have been intended to be a very special blessing for human beings. Why do you think Satan has made such special efforts to destroy those two institutions?
32. Do you think that Adam was with Eve at the time she was tempted? Why, or why not? Do you think that Satan had an opportunity to tempt Adam before he tempted Eve? Read Genesis 3:1-6. Notice the following particular details: 1) The serpent addressed only the woman. 2) Adam seemed absent and was not mentioned until Eve gave him the fruit. 3) Adam was cursed only for listening to his wife and not for listening to the serpent. These details seem to suggest that Eve was separated from Adam prior to the time when she was

tempted. Now read *Patriarchs and Prophets* pp. 53,54.

33. Do you think Satan would have succeeded in his temptations if Adam and Eve had remained together geographically?
34. Suppose that Eve had said to the serpent, "All that you say may be true, but let me first discuss it with my husband and with God. If the fruit is of such a wonderful benefit, it will still be here tomorrow." What do you think would have happened? So many temptations seem to be based on the idea that one should act immediately ! Why do you think that is?
35. Are men always supposed to take the leadership roles? Read 1 Timothy 2:11-14. What do you think is implied by these verses? Why do you think Peter suggested that if husbands don't treat their wives with respect and love, it will "hinder your prayers." (1 Peter 3:7)
36. How can we work in our individual marriages to make them more Godlike? Could husbands learn more about God from their wives? Could wives learn more about God from their husbands? What things do you think each should learn from the other?
37. In our day many marriages turn into abusive relationships. Why do you think that is true? Can the church help to support and protect spouses who are in abusive relationships? How could we do that better? Could Christians—this far from the tree of life—exemplify in their lives an ideal marriage?

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