

The Salvation of Eve

If a Christian mother would seek a role model in the Bible, we would hardly expect her to choose Eve. She enticed her husband to sin, she hid from God, she blamed others for her mistakes, and she raised a very bad boy. The *mother of all living* is remembered for failing so badly that her mistakes are still affecting your life today.

A Perfect Beginning

Eve entered a world other women only dream of. She had a perfect body, perfect health, and a perfect marriage. She lived in a botanical garden with a perfect husband. She was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27) and placed in an environment without sin-guilt or death. Mothers, imagine your world today with those troubles absent!

Secondly, God created Eve as a perfect *complement* for Adam. A complement is the part or ingredient which joins another to form something completely new and whole. A marriage is not just additive completion, like $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2} = 1$. Nor is it merely like two puzzle pieces that fit together. Rather, a man and a woman form a unit that is larger than either of them and unlike either of them.

Eve was a help *meet* [well-suited and perfectly complementary] for Adam. With perfect Creator knowledge, God planned a woman to complete Adam in every aspect—emotionally, physically, spiritually. They needed no courtship to “get to know each other”. They were not scarred by selfish parents. Their union was not impaired by selfishness.

Thirdly, Eve was claimed and loved by a perfect man. “*This is now bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh*” (Gen. 2:23). New brides may feel they have been courted by a perfect man, at least for the first few months. Eve really was.

Lastly, Eve shared some kind of perfect power-sharing role with Adam. After Eve sinned, God clearly pronounced a judgment on Eve that altered the original state of her relationship with Adam.

Paradise Lost

Eve fell from this perfection through a series of poor choices. (Admittedly, our current culture is sensitive about men commenting on the actions or the character of women, and fools rush in where angels fear to tread, but we can at least investigate the Scriptural account.)

Eve committed five mistakes—errors in judgment that are quite familiar to all people. Even godly mothers today are not immune to them.

First, Eve's head was turned by her desires. Satan appealed to her vanity, especially the vanity of her mind. "You're being held back, Eve. You can be something more, something more intelligent, more attractive, more powerful, more confident."

She gazed at that forbidden tree and until she was consumed with desire for that beautiful fruit. The desire of her eyes, the desire for beauty and power seemed irresistible. Ah, how much heartache comes into a home when a mother lets the desires of her eyes, the desires of her mind lure her into choices that destroy.

Secondly, she forgot she had a spouse. God seems to have told Adam about the tree and then Eve was created later. Likely, Eve learned about the tree rule from her husband, and surely they must have discussed it sometimes.

God had created them to be a one-flesh entity, to be stronger and wiser together, but Eve went solo. When the Evil Salesman came calling, she surely had the opportunity to say, "Adam, come here. He says we *can* eat from this tree. What do you think?"

It's never an admission of weakness for a mother to say, "Children, we're going to ask Dad about that first." A Christian woman is stronger and wiser when she tells the salesman, "Let me check with my husband." It's not a sign of bondage under a tyrant husband. It is claiming the complementary power God intends in a marriage.

Thirdly, she pulled her husband into disobedience with her. Eve fell first in the temptation. She was deceived first, she ate first, and then she said, "Here Adam, have some—it's wonderful." Adam was surely disobedient in taking her offer, but Eve enticed him.

Sometimes a headstrong mother says, "We're going to do it this way." The father disagrees, but goes along with mama's plan to avoid a scene in front of the children.

Fourthly, Eve fumbled around with fig leaf solutions for her sin. Her innocence was lost, she felt exposed and ashamed. And she began to patch together a clumsy and inadequate coverup.

Mothers encounter real problems today too. Struggles with difficult children, personal health issues, a husband who doesn't seem to care. And sometimes in desperation they reach for fig leaf solutions. "If I could try a new diet, or a new medication. If we would just move to a new house, or move away from this awful school. If only my husband would agree to marriage counseling. If I had some real friends at this church who understood me..."

And God says, "No mama, that won't work. Let me make you real clothes."

Lastly, when God found the guilty couple hiding in the garden, Eve immediately shifted into blame mode. "It's not my fault. The serpent tricked me into eating the fruit."

The Sentence

For their rebellion, God pronounced a sentence on all three characters in the story. What exactly was the price this first mother paid for her willfulness?

God said two things would change for Eve. *“I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee” (Gen. 3:16).*

First, she would experience sorrow in childbearing. The word *sorrow* here is a Hebrew word that means “pain and trouble”. The process of bringing forth children would be overshadowed by physical and emotional distress. Every mother can attest that this sentence is still in effect today.

A mother’s sorrow doesn’t end after recovering from childbirth. The perfection of the Garden was ruined. We can imagine Eve later weeping over the body of her dear son Abel, bearing the guilt somehow in an unspeakable way that mothers ever since have wept over the failures of their children. This too, is part of the sorrow. Children cause mothers a lot of weeping.

But there was more for Eve. God said her relationship with Adam would change. She would find her desires somehow subservient and inclined toward him. Some translations render this “your desires shall be *against* your husband, but he will rule over you.”

What can be said about the past eighty years of the feminist wars in our culture? The battle for equality has been fraught with a lot of disappointments on both sides, undoubtedly. We have heard for decades that there's no difference between men and women. We are told a mother can be the breadwinner and the father can provide childcare as well as the other way around.

And yet, it hasn't worked that way. They say there is a glass ceiling, and there is stereotyping and bias, and there surely is.

They say that women were treated as second-class citizens in the past, and they surely were. They say that Christian wives and daughters are in bondage under domineering and patriarchal fathers, and that has surely been true too sometimes.

But the simple statement from the garden 6,000 years ago was, “Eve, your desires are going to be toward your husband.” A Christian mother who is constantly tugging for dominance in the marriage will raise children who at best will resent her, and at worst will grow up into bitter unbelievers.

Thankfully, the story doesn’t end with a sentencing. Our merciful Father always offers redemption from bad situations.

Salvation Through Children

God told Satan the seed of the woman would crush his head. (Gen.3:15) Paul the Apostle later says, *“As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive”* (I Cor. 15:22).

This was the first promise for Eve. “Generations from now, your offspring will ultimately crush the head of the one that betrayed you, the one that led you astray. The Destroyer of your innocence will be defeated.”

But there's another fascinating commentary on Eve's redemption in Paul's letter to Timothy. *"For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding, she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety"* (1 Tim. 2:13-15).

Unsurprisingly, this passage has caused controversy. Let's take a simple, redemptive view.

Paul is acknowledging Eve's subservient role under Adam in this discussion about women not teaching men. He points out her guilt in being deceived into disobedience. Yet in the same breath he pivots with *notwithstanding*, and says, "She shall be saved in childbearing."

In spite of the sentence upon all women through Eve's disobedience, there is some kind of redemption through bearing new life. The Hebrew word for Eve is *Hava*, or "life-giving one". Through the miracle of giving birth, the sentence of death would be rolled back! This is true literally. Through her children, a woman lives on, even though she grows feeble and eventually dies.

And of course, salvation from the sentence of death can only come by the blood sacrifice of Jesus—the offspring of the woman. But in a symbolic sense, the salvation of Eve came through her submission to the sorrow and miracle of bearing children.

Every mother partners with her Creator to bear new life. The chain of Life continues, the sentence of Death is defeated each time a child is born. The Devil is thwarted with every conception, because he can never create life. He can only kill and destroy. Every baby is a strike back at Satan's power of death.

It is the prominent rebellion of our culture that people are partnering with Satan to prevent life. The normalization of birth control, abortion, and free love has had a single message for women: "You do not need to submit to the distress of childbearing."

God gave mankind its primary mission: "Be fruitful and multiply. Replenish the earth with people to take your place after you are gone." Our society says, "No, that's irresponsible. Children interfere with professional success." Conception is viewed as a physical nuisance to be controlled with medical solutions. A fetus is a threat to a woman's health--to be removed like a tumor.

After decades of protesting and litigation, our culture is no closer to an ethical consensus on the sanctity of an unborn child's life. This battle is nothing less than the conflict of the ages between life and death. The conflict that began in the garden.

It is death versus life. Mothers, you can be on the side of life when you give birth to a child. Jesus said that after a child is born, the woman forgets all her travail, for joy that a man is born into the world. This may sound more poetic than all mothers would agree with, but Eve said a similar thing, "I've gotten a man from the Lord!"

Psalms 127 portrays the beautiful image of the wife as the fruitful vine, and the table ringed around with olive plants—a scene of domestic wealth.

But if your olive plants are throwing peas on the floor, and smearing jam in their hair, and setting your nerves on edge banging the cup on the table, remember that your name is *Eve*, the life-giving one.

Mothers, your hands are working salvation—through endless household chores, sleepless nights, and sorrows only a mother knows. The kingdom of death is rolled back through your labors.

~James Martin