

Discipleship 103

STEWARDSHIP & Financial freedom

Lesson Two: God's Ownership Over All

As Christian stewards we must realize that in Christ “we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28). In this lesson, you will see the basis of God’s claim on your life.

27 His purpose was for the nation to seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward Him and find Him – though He is not far from any one of us. 28 For in Him we live and move and exist. As some of your own poets have said, “We are His offspring.” 29 And since this is true, we shouldn’t think of God as an idol designed by craftsmen from gold or silver or stone.

God is in His creation and close to every one of us. But He is not trapped in His creation – He is transcendent. God is the Creator, not the creation. This means that God is sovereign and in control, while at the same time He is up close and personal.

Creation and Fall of Man

1. According to Genesis 1:26, after what pattern did God create man?

Then God said, “Let us make human beings in *our image*, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground.”

God did not make us in His exact image, because God has no physical body. Instead He made us as a reflection of God’s glory which includes love, patience, forgiveness, kindness and faithfulness; our entire beings, not just one aspect of our being; to be in special relationship with Him, to rule and reign over creation as His ambassadors (Stewards, Servants, having Stewardship over) and administration on earth.

Our image provides us with a solid foundation of who we are and whose we are. Our being and worth is not based on possessions, achievements, physical attractiveness or public acclaim. It is based on being made in God's image and because of this we can feel positive about ourselves

2. Turn to Genesis 2:19, 3:10, and 3:6. What do these scriptures tell us about Adam and Eve?

Then God said "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him." So the Lord God formed from the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the sky. He brought them, to the man to see what he would call them, and the man chose a name for each one. He gave names to all the livestock, all the birds of the sky, and all the wild animals. But still there was no helper just right for him.

3:10 Then the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" He replied, "I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked."

3:1-7 The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the Lord God had made. One day he asked the woman, "Did the Lord God say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?" "Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden," the woman replied. "It's only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, "You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die." "You won't die!" the serpent replied to the woman. God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil. The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it too. At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.

3. **According to Genesis 3:1-7, what did man do to bring about separation between himself and God?**

Notice what Eve did: She looked, she took, she ate, and she gave; the battle is often lost at the first look. Temptation often begins by simply seeing something you want. One of the realities of sin is that it effects spreads; after Eve sinned, she involved Adam in her wrongdoing. Let's be honest, when we do something wrong, often we try to relieve our guilt by involving someone else.....

4. **How did the sin of man affect his:**

(A)Intellect: 2 Corinthians 4:2, 4?

We reject all shameful deeds and underhanded methods. We don't try to trick anyone or distort the word of God. We tell the truth before God, and all who are honest know this. If the Good News we preach is hidden behind a veil it is hidden only from people who are perishing. Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don't understand this message about the glory of Christ who is the exact likeness of God.

**Reject/Renounced-to turn away from or to repent
Shame-ugly or disgraceful
Hidden things-refers to the secret immoralities, hypocrisies and the sins hidden deep in the darkness of our lives**

(B)Emotions: Jeremiah 17:9?

The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is? But I, the Lord, search all hearts and examine secret motives. I give all people their due rewards, according to what their actions deserve."

God makes it clear why we sin – it’s a matter of the heart. Our heart, the heart where life flows, is inclined toward sin from the time we are born...

(C)Will: Romans 6:20?

When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the obligation to do right. And what was the result? You are now ashamed of the things you used to do things that end in eternal doom.

It is impossible to be neutral. Every person has a master – either God or sin. A Christian is not someone who cannot sin but someone who is no longer a slave to sin, because that person now belongs to God.

5. According to Romans 5:12, how did man’s act of rebellion affect the world?

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned—

When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam’s sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.

How can we be declared guilty for something Adam did thousands of years ago? Many feel it isn’t fair for God to judge us because of Adam’s sin. Yet each of us confirms our heritage with Adam by our own sins every day. We have the same sinful nature and are prone to rebel against God and we are judged for the sins we commit. Because we are sinners, it isn’t fairness we need – it is mercy and GRACE.

Reconciliation: Refer to the flipchart!!!

1. In Romans 5:8-10, how did God reconcile us unto Himself?

But God showed His great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation. For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of His Son while we were still His enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of His Son. So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ had made us friends of God.

2. According to John 14:26, what has God given us to enable us to live for Him?

But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative – that is, the Holy Spirit – He will teach you everything I have told you. 27 “I am leaving you with a gift – peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid. Remember what I told you; I am going away, but I will come back to you again. If you really loved me, you would be happy that I am going to the Father, who is greater than I am.

Jesus promised the disciples (us) that the Holy Spirit would help them remember what he had been teaching them. We can be confident that the Gospels are accurate records of what Jesus taught and did, right??

(1Corinthian 2:10-14) The Holy Spirit can help us in the same way. As we study the Bible we can trust him to plant truth in our minds, convince us of God's will, and remind us when we stray from it.

Our Responsibility

1. **1 Corinthians 6:19-20 tells us that God has restored us to a position of fellowship similar to what Adam had. What does that declare about our personal relationship with God?**

19 Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.

When we become Christians, the Holy Spirit comes to live in us. Therefore, we no longer own our bodies. That God bought us "with a high price" refers to slave purchases at an auction, Christ's death freed us from sin but also obligates us to His service. Because our body belongs to God, we must not violate His standard of living.

2. **According to Romans 12:1-2, what, then is to be our response to God?**

1 And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice – the kind he will find accepted. This is truly the way to worship Him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

Paul is simply telling us not to copy the behavior and customs of the world. Wise Christians, with our renewed minds, decide that much worldly behavior is off limits for them because it is usually selfish and often corrupting.

Our refusal to conform to this world's values must go even deeper than just behavior and customs; it must be firmly planted in our mind "let God transform us into a new person by changing the way we think" This is only accomplished when the Holy Spirit

renews, reeducates and redirects our mind then we are truly transformed. (Romans 8:5)

To joyfully, give ourselves as living sacrifices for His service.

- 3. Many people attempt to compromise and give God less than full allegiance. How did Jesus regard that practice in Matthew 12:30?**

30 Anyone who isn't with me opposes me, and anyone who isn't working with me is actually working against me.

In other words it is impossible to be neutral about Christ. Anyone who is not actively following Him has chosen to reject Him. Any person who tries to remain neutral in the struggle of good against evil is choosing to be separated from God, who alone is good. To refuse to follow Christ is to choose to be on Satan's team.

- 4. In Revelation 3:15-16, how did Jesus describe His attitude toward those who will stand neither for nor against Him?**

15 "I know all the things you do, that you are neither hot nor cold. I wish you were one of the other! But since you are like lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth!"

Laodicea was one of the wealthiest of the seven cities (seven churches that Paul wrote letters to) they were known for their banking industry with poor water supply. The city has poor water supply it was neither hot nor refreshingly cool only lukewarm. The church in Laodicea had become this way hence the letter from Paul was to tell them about how they have become distasteful and repugnant (offensive.) The believers did not take a stand for anything; indifference had led to idleness.

Therefore, there is nothing more disgusting than a halfhearted nominal Christian who is self sufficient. In other words let's not settle for following God halfway. Let Christ fire up our faith and get us into action.

5. In 1 Kings 18:21, what logical choice did Elijah present to the people?

Then Elijah stood in front of them and said, “How much longer will you waver, hobbling between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him! But if Baal is God then follow him! But the people were completely silent.

He challenged the people to stand to follow whoever was the true God.

Why do you think the people waivered between the two? Do you think some people were not sure? Or did they know that the Lord was God, but they enjoyed the sinful pleasures and other benefits that came with following Ahab?

It is important to take a stand for the Lord. If we just drift along with whatever is pleasant and easy, we will someday discover that we have been worshiping a false god, ourselves.

Life Application

- 1. Read Isaiah 48:17-19. What blessings would you lose by going your own way and failing to recognize God's ownership?**
- 2. How much of your life are you willing for God to control?**
- 3. How much of your life does God control?**
- 4. Is there something in your life that you have not surrendered to the control of your heavenly Father?**
- 5. What is it and how will you now deal with it?**
- 6. What do you think God will do with your life if you surrender it all to Him?**