

Th131 God's Plan

Lesson Th131-24 Man's Sinful Nature

In our previous few lessons we learned about the creation of Adam and Eve and how Satan, disguised as a serpent, deceived them. They did the one thing that God had told them not to do. Because of their disobedience Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden of Eden. Satan was also given the promise of future punishment. He was told that one day one of Eve's descendants would destroy his power and authority.

Satan had declared war on God. Mankind would be the battlefield. God had created mankind to be His children. But Satan would make every effort to destroy them and thus continue his revenge upon God. Added to Satan's hatred of God was a new hatred for mankind. Only a fool would ignore the things that God spoke and Satan was not a fool. If one of Eve's descendants was supposed to crush his head, then by all means possible, Satan would do everything that he could to destroy all of her descendants. The war had turned from one of revenge to one of survival. And Satan planned on being the one who survived.

For Adam and Eve life became hard. Food had been easy to find in the Garden, but on the outside, things were much different. They had to search for trees that bore fruit which they could eat. Then they discovered that the trees did not bear fruit all year round. Life outside the Garden was also dangerous. Here the wild animals hunted and killed each other for food. During the summer it was unbearably hot and in the winter they struggled to keep themselves warm. Adam attempted to grow crops to eat, but the earth yielded thorns and weeds and little harvest.

All of this made life hard but not as painful as the deep wound that they carried in their hearts. They had known God in a most unique way. He was their Father and would walk and talk with them each day. Their sin had broken this relationship and now there was a painful emptiness in their souls. A great theologian once described this hole in mankind. He said that within every man is a God-shaped hole and nothing can fill that hole except for God.

Now Adam and Eve had been given authority to rule over the earth. They had the power to rule over every living thing. But the hardest thing for them and their descendants was to learn how to rule over their own desires and sinful nature. Built within every man are instincts. We are born with these instincts. One might say that our instincts are our basic programming. All of our instincts are focused upon our self. We are born with the instincts of self-preservation, self-gratification, and selfishness or greed. No one has to teach a child any of these. They naturally and even subconsciously do them. One man summed it all up when he said, "It's all about me." These instincts for self are so powerful that people have a hard time building relationships and living in society. Many generations later God would give to the people of Israel the Ten Commandments. The first four commandments are about having a relationship with God. The last six are about having relationships with each other.

In the Garden of Eden Adam's and Eve's instinct for self was balanced with their relationship with God. But when they sinned and the relationship was broken, there was nothing to balance self. Ever since, mankind has sought ways to balance man's selfish nature. This is

why countries pass laws and why religions have rules. But none of these things can truly balance the selfish nature of man. It is these instincts that we call man's sinful nature. And it is usually the place where Satan attacks us.

Adam and Eve had two sons. The elder was named Cain and the younger was named Abel. Cain was a farmer and Abel kept flocks of sheep. Both of these men were born with the same instincts of self. Now a time came when Cain and Abel made offerings to God. Cain brought some produce from his fields while Abel brought an animal to sacrifice. God was pleased and accepted Abel's sacrifice but rejected Cain's. Cain was deeply embarrassed. His self-image and pride had been hurt. Besides that, he was selfish. He felt that he should have God's acceptance more than his brother. After all, he was the eldest.

Now Satan had watched the birth of both Cain and Abel with deep interest. Could one of these two descendants of Eve be the one to destroy him? Satan studied them both, looking for the opportunity. Abel had a good heart and was trying to do the right thing. But Cain was driven by his selfish instincts. In Cain he found just what he needed. Satan began to stir up within Cain all of those selfish instincts until one day Cain met Abel out in the field and murdered him! Satan grinned with his own selfish pleasure. He had succeeded in destroying both of them at one time! Manipulating humans was not going to be hard. He felt confident that with the help of his fallen angels they could corrupt and destroy every one of Eve's descendants. This would be a dark time for humankind. Men and women who had originally been created to be God's children of love found themselves pursuing their selfish instincts. Instead of being children of God, they had become children of evil and thus children of Satan.

This lesson is **important** because it reveals how Satan changed the nature of God's children, from people meant to love God into children of Satan and evil.

The **main point** of this lesson is that since the fall, people are controlled by their instincts of self-preservation, self-satisfaction, and selfishness or greed.

Let's **review** what you learned in this lesson.

1. What are the three basic instincts that men are born with? [Pause 5 seconds]
 - A. If you said, "The instincts of self-preservation, self-satisfaction, and selfishness or greed," you are correct.
2. How was mankind designed to balance his selfish nature? [Pause]
 - A. If you said that man's selfishness was designed to be balanced by having a relationship with God, you are right.
3. Why does Satan want to destroy Eve's descendants? [Pause]
 - A. If you said that God promised that one of her descendants would crush Satan's head or destroy his power and authority, then you answered correctly.

Your **assignment** is the review this lesson as many times as is necessary to understand the principles of mankind's selfish nature. Think about the ways that you battle the instincts of self in your own life. Then, have a discussion with someone about mankind's sinful nature.