

**Read Genesis 3:6.**

Let us step back from the minute details of the passage before us, to consider for a moment its simplicity. Though Yahweh God knows His future plans for humanity, the two *first* humans are ignorant of all that. As yet there is no (Mosaic) Law, no Ten Commandments, no details about Levitical regulations for sacrifice and atonement; there is no Messiah to be the once and final sacrifice for sin, but who will also bring His *own* commandments for righteous behavior (John 14). This scene is pre-Law and pre-gospel; there is no written word of God to be dissected and argued by man.

Here we have just two, solitary human beings given verbal instructions by their Maker. It is a very simple and direct relationship, without the clutter of scholarship and interpretation. The first man is told by the One who has just created him, along with everything else he sees around him, that if he eats from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil he “will surely die.” Subsequently the woman, unaware that he speaks for Satan, is told by just another of the created creatures that if she eats from the tree she “surely will not die.”

We can debate what the *woman* knew of Yahweh’s command, but we cannot do the same for the man; he had full knowledge of what the Creator had said. So the man made a clear, informed choice to disobey the God of his creation—his Father, as it were—and obey the created serpent.

**...she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.**

There were not yet any moral grays in the world—only blacks and whites. The man and woman chose black. When we digest this fateful scene, along with others such as the fall of Satan himself, we can only recognize the evidence that all created beings—humans, angels, beasts of the field, et al—do indeed have instilled in them from their moment of creation *hekousios*, free will (Philemon 1:14). They are God-created good—“very good” (Genesis 1:31)—yet with the inherent ability to make wrong—even evil—decisions.

*“with her”*

Before we move on to v7 I would like to draw our attention to two small words near the end of v6. My guess is that most of us have typically pictured the scene roughly this way: The woman is one day out wandering about the garden by herself and comes across a serpent who opens a dialogue with her. They converse for a while, and the result is that Eve takes fruit from the tree and bites into it. Just about then the man happens by, and the woman offers some of the fruit to him, which he eats.

It is possible that most of us, after the apostle Paul, have understood that the man bears the guilt for this sin because he was the woman’s corporate head.

### **Read Romans 5:12-14.**

Our text says, simply, “she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.” The ESV and NIVs add, “*who was with her*” (emphasis added), which hints at a different arrangement of the scene.

*Matthew Henry:* She gave also to her husband with her. It is probable that he was not with her when she was tempted (*surely, if he had, he would have interposed to prevent the sin*), but came to her when she had eaten, and was prevailed upon by her to eat likewise. (emphasis added)

What evidence do we have that Henry’s supposition might be true? None whatsoever. In fact, we have considerable evidence to the contrary. If the first man, being there, would have “prevent[ed] the sin,” he surely would have refused the offer of the fruit from his mate!

There is nothing in the text to preclude the man being there all along—“with her” as the ESV and NIVs suggest. And if so, this would make a rather powerful statement about Adam (2:20). I have long marveled at the humility, faith, and trust in God exhibited by another “husband”—Joseph the betrothed of Mary. What a guy, what a beautiful example for *every* husband, willingly giving of himself to protect his “wife.” But if Adam was with the first woman all along, during the temptation of the serpent, he exhibited just the opposite.

- If he was there, why didn't he stop her?
- Why didn't he speak up for the law of his Lord and Maker?
- Why didn't he protect his wife from suffering the consequences of such a betrayal?
- And why did he silently—*silently*—go along with it?

What a wimp.

Something Paul wrote to Timothy leads some to think that Adam was held to account *solely* because he was the woman's corporate head. That it was all the woman's fault.

### Read 1 Timothy 2:12-14.

Verse 14 says only that "it was not Adam who was deceived"; that not only does not mean he was blameless, it suggests a deeper level of culpability in him. *He wasn't deceived*; when he took a bite from the fruit he knew *exactly* what he was doing. The woman may have ignorantly bought into the serpent's lie, but Adam's act was one of naked rebellion against Yahweh God. ❏

### Read Genesis 3:7.

Leupold considers this "one of the saddest anticlimaxes of history," then quotes a commentator, "they eat, they expect marvelous results, they wait—and there grows on them the sense of shame" (Procksch).

Note the contrast between vv1-6 and v7: The first six verses—and especially v6 itself—focus on the woman exclusively until the very end of v6. Verse 6 has "Then the woman," "so she took from its fruit," and "she gave also to her husband." But then in v7 suddenly—but naturally, since *both* have now sinned—they are united in the result of their mutual sin, in their actions following, and in their mutual shame. ❏

How are we to define this sudden sense of shame? Where does it come from? Where stems the impetus for their need to cover themselves—and to specifically cover their sexual organs? We need to be careful with this, since too many commentators make assumptions that the text does not seem to support.

I freely confess that my suggestions—I would not call them "positions"—regarding how long Adam accompanied Eve at the tree, and the interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:14 are not necessarily mainstream. Most commentators posit different interpretations. However, I am convinced the text allows for my interpretations.

I must admit that the contrast between vv1-6, with its focus on the woman, and v7 can easily lead one to conclude that the man is nowhere to be found in the scene until the end of v6.

*And the eyes of both of them were opened,*

The Hebrew for eyes, *ene* (eyene), is the word for the physical eyes, but I think we can safely take this to mean something more expansive than simply that the man and woman's eyesight was improved. Remember what the serpent told the woman in v5: "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

*Alexander MacLaren:* The promise of knowing good and evil was indeed kept, but instead of its making the sinners 'like gods,' it showed them that they were like beasts, and brought the first sense of shame. To know evil was, no doubt, a forward step intellectually; but to know it by experience, and as part of themselves, necessarily changed their ignorant innocence into bitter knowledge, and conscience awoke to rebuke them. The first thing that their opened eyes saw was themselves, and the immediate result of the sight was the first blush of shame. Before, they had walked in innocent unconsciousness, like angels or infants; now they had knowledge of good and evil, because their sin had made evil a part of themselves, and the knowledge was bitter.

What the serpent held out as a carrot was intellectual enlightenment; what the man and woman got instead was an injection of moral degeneracy. Now they knew that they had once been innocent—"good"—but were now evil. A poor bargain.

*and they knew that they were naked;*

What has just happened here? What is the nature of this change in the first man and woman? We must answer this question, for Adam and his wife were created with a nature utterly different from our own, from the nature with which *we* were born.

Citing passages such as Psalm 104:1-2, some, such as Donald Barnhouse, contend that prior to the Fall, the man and woman were actually clothed in light: "It is more than probable that they were clothed in light before the fall, and when they sinned the light went out." I reject this utterly. There is little difference between one's nakedness being covered by light and by fig leaves; both are coverings, and the point of the scene is destroyed. Prior to the Fall a covering was not necessary:

**And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. (Genesis 2:25)**

Bless Yahweh, O my soul!  
O Yahweh my God,  
You are very great;  
You are clothed with  
splendor and majesty,  
Wrapping Yourself with light  
as with a cloak,  
Stretching out the heavens  
like a tent curtain.

The man and woman were created righteous, sublimely innocent—the very opposite of how man and woman will be born after them. They knew no other way, unabashedly walking the paths of the garden with God, who likewise was not offended by their naked state. There was nothing in their naked state to produce shame, thus nothing that required a covering—even of light.

No, the point of this verse is that physically nothing had changed. One moment they were naked and *unashamed*, the next (after consuming the fruit), they were naked and ashamed. What changed in that fatal instant was their *nature*, and hence, their apprehension of their own bodies.

While it is true that the fallen Adam and Eve are closer to us than they were before the Fall, we must constantly restrain ourselves from interpreting this scene in the garden by our contemporary standards. Just as the first man and woman in their created innocence knew nothing of shame, we know nothing *but* shame. Barnhouse wants to claim that, of course, they had to have *some* sort of covering before the Fall. Well, no, they didn't. They were as physically naked as we would be—even before holy God!—and everybody was fine with that. They knew nothing else.

Verses 6 and 7 are the turning point for all that—a turning point that will change not only Adam and Eve, but all creation.

*and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.*

Some commentators, wondering *why* the man and woman now specifically cover their sexual organs, rather than some other region of their bodies, once again interpret from *our* perspective and experience instead of theirs. For example, Leupold writes,

That the sense of shame should concentrate itself around that portion of the body which is marked by the organs of generation, no doubt has its deeper reason in this that man instinctively feels that the very fountain and source of human life is contaminated by sin. The very act of generation is tainted by sin.

But whether or not the man and woman have heretofore engaged in sexual relations, there has been no issue. We have no basis to conclude that they, at this point, would associate the sexual act with childbearing—unless, of course, they had observed it in the animals about them.

Others, such as Keil and Delitzsch, disagree with that, and assign the action to a more spiritual or psychological impetus.

*K&D*: It was here that the consciousness of nakedness first suggested the need of covering, not because the fruit had poisoned the fountain of human life, and through some inherent quality had immediately corrupted the reproductive powers of the body... nor because any physical change ensued in consequence of the fall; but because, with the destruction of the normal connection between soul and body through sin, the body ceased to be the pure abode of a spirit in fellowship with God, and in the purely natural state of the body the consciousness was produced not merely of the distinction of the sexes, but still more of the worthlessness of the flesh; so that the man and woman stood ashamed in each other's presence, and endeavoured to hide the disgrace of their spiritual nakedness, by covering those parts of the body through which the impurities of nature are removed.

This seems like a better approach. And at first I discounted that last line about "... covering those parts of the body through which the impurities of nature are removed," but in our conversation about this Linda reminded me of the passages that contain two dictates set down by Yahweh to Israel regarding the clothing for the priesthood and the location of camp latrines.

**Read Exodus 28:42-43.**

Similarly He states in Exodus 20:26 that "You shall not go up by steps to My altar, so that your nakedness will not be exposed on it." Finally, the camp of the Israelites was to be kept holy since Yahweh walked there.

**Read Deuteronomy 23:12-14.**

With the introduction of sin into the lives of the first man and woman, their shame may have been informed by their new, tortured relationship with Yahweh God. K&D may be correct about that.

Most commentators I read want to associate their making of coverings with a newfound shame *between the man and woman*—but I disagree. I am not convinced that their ultimate motivation is to cover themselves *from each other*, but that something within them—spiritual, psychological, an emergence of the conscience—now drove them to cover themselves before *God*. That is, in their sin, they were now cognizant of a change in their relationship with Him—as we see played out more tangibly in v8. I wonder if it might have been, in their now-fallen state, an impetus similar to what occurs within me on very hot and humid days in the summer, when my articles of clothing at home might be at a minimum. While I am without shame in the environment of our own home, if I am going to go into my prayer closet to commune with God, I am compelled to add more covering. For me in that moment it feels presumptuous and disrespectful to sit there in my skivvies before my God.

So as pertains to Adam and Eve, I interpret v7 as a preamble to v8.

Whatever the details of their newly realized sense of shame, what is clearly evident is that the man and woman are now changed—and not at all for the better.



# SESSION 24

## And Then, Shame Genesis 3:6-7

### No Excuse

We can debate what the *woman* knew of Yahweh's command, but we cannot do the same for the man; he had full knowledge of what the Creator had said. So the man made a clear, informed choice to disobey the God of his creation—his Father, as it were—and obey the created serpent. ...she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

### When Did Adam Show Up?

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