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CHAPTER 21

Humanity Repurposed by Satan

Lesson from Lucifer

After failing to become *“like the Most High”*, Satan tempted Eve to enhance her capacity beyond human excellence.¹ Posing as a serpent, Satan fueled Eve’s selfish ambition and leveraged her bent for independence. Void of the truth, *“the father of lies”*² misled Eve by saying,

*“You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will **be like God**, knowing good and evil.”* (Genesis 3:4-5 NKJ)

Satan used a divisive scheme to deceive an aspiring woman. By exploiting legitimate appetites for food, beauty, and wisdom, Satan aroused three deviant mind-sets—lust, pride, and self-will. Convinced that she would evolve into a more god-like person, Eve fell irreverently in a contradictory direction.

*So when the woman saw that the tree was **good for food**, and that it was a **delight to the eyes**, and that the tree was to be desired to **make one wise**, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.* (Genesis 3:6-7 ESV)

Satan served three diabolical appetizers, which Eve readily swallowed. He fraudulently asserted:

1. “You will not surely die”
2. “Your eyes will be opened”
3. “You will be like God, knowing good and evil”

¹ Isaiah 14:14 NAS

² John 8:44 NAS

Garnished with ulterior motives, this lie-laced meal beguiled the first woman and man away from God and away from His perfect provision. Trusting Satan's claims at face value, Adam and Eve ingested a fatal fruit spiked with propaganda poisoning. Their willful disobedience triggered a relational catastrophe. Eating this forbidden fruit became a deal-breaker steeped in universal liability. By embracing Satan's toxic quest, Adam and Eve disconnected from God and His source of supply. The generational consequences were severe and costly.

First, Adam and Eve surely died. Separation from God and His tree of life inflicted a lethal wound on the human race. Jesus labelled Satan *"a murderer from the beginning"*.³ This fatal act undermined humanity's ability to *"be like God"*.

Second, their eyes were opened to blinding perversions. Satan exposed Adam and Eve to a dose of evil that God alone was equipped to process. Knowing evil polluted their heart, poisoned their conscience, and darkened their sense of discernment. Having rejected God's protective filter, this harmful revelation left an indelible impression that extends from generation to generation. Horrified and frightened, Adam and Eve retreated into a cocoon of self-protective independence.

Solar light rays are both indispensable to life on earth and dangerous. Without an appropriate filter to block harmful radiation, staring at the Sun results in blindness. Merely glancing at this bright star when eclipsed by a dark moon causes visual damage. Even a momentary glimpse can lead to blurry vision, blind spots, color distortions, and light sensitivity. Solar retinopathy occurs when solar radiation burns the fovea, a point in the retina responsible for sharp, central vision. When Eve rejected God's warning and ate the forbidden fruit, she removed her protective filter and damaged her vision. Satan's blinding influence prompted Paul to write, *"the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ"*.⁴ Loss of filtered innocence shatters our confidence and demoralizes our outlook.

Third, Eve's arrogant ambition for godhood impaired her design as an informed worshiper. Though made in God's image, Eve came to believe that an alternate resource would make her more like God than she already was. Eve reached out for a provision that God was not offering, to satisfy a need she did not have, to become more *"like God"* than she already was. Rather than becoming

³ John 8:44 NAS

⁴ 2 Corinthians 4:4 NAS

ing more like God, Eve became less human than God designed her to be. Encountering demonic evil left more than a bad taste in her mouth; it compromised her ability to recognize the truth about good and evil. More importantly, it perverted her view of God.

Wanting to be like God

From the start, Satan advanced a hidden agenda fraught with destruction. His goal was to repurpose the human race. The father of lies persuaded the mother of humanity to pursue a path resembling his own. By emulating Lucifer's quest to *"be like the Most High,"* Eve further distanced herself from God's image. This pride driven ambition not only provoked God to expel Satan from heaven, it constrained Him to eject Adam and Eve from Eden. Instead of becoming more like God, Adam and Eve became more like Satan. Knocked off balance, they leaned toward evil. To protect humanity from pursuing this satanic ambition, God *"has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts...."*⁵

Rebelling against God exposed Adam and Eve to panoramic perversion in graphic detail. Evil came into focus from every direction. Immersed in deception, they opened their eyes to a baptism of depravity. Apart from the Holy Spirit, corrupt images and perverse ideas assaulted their soul and warped their thinking. As notions of good fused with evil concepts, Adam and Eve lost their ability to assess facts and evaluate reality. Blending conflicting views of good and evil confused their attitude about God, self, and others.

The word confuse comes from Latin *confundere*, which means, to pour together. This verb literally means to "mix or mingle things so as to render the elements indistinguishable."⁶ The human race lost its ability to distinguish good from evil. Individuals struggle to understand the human condition because they neither appreciate sights nor interprets sounds with divine precision.

Though created in God's image, Adam and Eve never had an omniscient mind—they were not all-knowing. From the beginning, they relied on God to answer questions and address curiosities. The future holds great promise as we acquire the knowledge of the truth directly from its source—the spirit of truth.

In Eden, God's curriculum for learning did not prevail because Satan convinced Adam and Eve to take a shortcut in their education. A hasty crash course circum-

⁵ John 12:40 NAS

⁶ <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=confusion> (accessed 1/2/2012)

vented the tutelage and timing of God's lesson plan. Rather than allowing God to teach, Adam and Eve opted for a lesson in sinister sagacity. Through independent study, they cheated their mind with detrimental knowledge using an illicit informant.

By rejecting God's sovereign authority, Adam and Eve deprived the human race of a divinely optimized context for learning. Premature knowledge of good and evil proved catastrophic because God alone has the wisdom required to selectively dispense and integrate this knowledge for our benefit.

Satan injected diabolical wisdom into the human race—a demonic substitute for God's wisdom. James put it this way, *"This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic."*⁷ By twisting sacred standards and warping holy precepts, Satan's wisdom confused Adam and Eve as they sought to make decisions. Rather than opening their eyes to the truth, toxic opinions interfered with their ability to recognize God for all He's worth.

Adam and Eve attempted to function *"like God"* in a way they were not prepared to operate. As pseudo-deities, they did not understand the implications of what they saw, heard, and felt. Attempting to be knowledgeable, Adam and Eve floundered beneath waves of insecurity. They were not God enough to assign proper meaning to their knowledge. Indeed, they were no longer human enough to determine an appropriate application for it.

As self-made gods, they failed to compensate for their fatal flaws. Following Satan's advice, the human race lost its intellectual, emotional, and spiritual advantage. They did not possess wisdom from above to make accurate distinctions on their own. Without a moral compass, they made incompetent value judgments.

Identity Crisis

Wanting to be like God, Adam and Eve attempted to redefine themselves. With fig leaves masking their reproductive anatomy, they remained emotionally bare, intellectually exposed, and spiritually stripped. Forgetting why God made them in His image, the first man and woman lost sight of their divine design. Not bowing down before His glorious majesty, they failed to live up to their human potential. Because Adam and Eve no longer knew how to act in God's presence, they improvised behind a fig leaf cover up.

⁷ James 3:15 NAS

Adam and Eve were victims of a high-stake identity theft. Satan came to steal their identity, kill their faith, and destroy their life. Inoculating them with doubt and insecurity created an identity crisis, which confused their God-given potential. Infected with suspicions and competing interests, the human race replaced God with surrogate deities—and they replaced themselves with inflated illusions.

Eating from Satan’s menu activated a severe case of spiritual indigestion. Unable to digest fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the human race suffers from a chronic case of sin-induced heartburn-out.

Where’s the Worship?

Rather than being promoted to an elevated class of beings as the serpent implied, the human race found itself demoted to death. Overwhelmed by shame and underwhelmed by God, Adam and Eve adopted a new purpose for living. Blind-sighted by evil, they underestimated God’s attributes, misjudged His achievements, and trivialized His promises. This abridged assessment crippled their ability to worship God in spirit and truth. Because they no longer recognized Him as God, Adam and Eve were unable to connect as they once had. Plagued with congenital pride, their response as true worshipers failed to materialize.

Adam and Eve became misinformed worshipers, esteeming what they did not know and idolizing what they could not understand. To the woman at the well, Jesus said plainly, *“You worship what you do not know...”*⁸

The more like God Adam and Eve thought themselves, the less likely they were to recognize His exclusive eminence. Lust blurred their view and pride slanted their appraisal. Motivated by arrogant ambition and distracted by inordinate desires, they failed to respond with awestruck reverence.

After Adam and Eve disconnected from God in the Garden of Eden, worshipers assumed a missing profile. The next 2,000 years of biblical history does not include a single reference to anyone worshiping God. Worshipers sought by their Heavenly Father made neither the inspired headlines nor a parenthetical side note with any cited gesture of worship. The Bible does not mention a word normally translated as worship until either Job or Abraham.

The loss of Job’s children, servants, and livestock triggered a precedent-setting response: Job *“fell to the ground and worshiped”* God.⁹ If Job predates Abraham,

⁸ John 4:23 NAS, ESV

⁹ Job 1:20 NAS

this response broke 2,000 years silence regarding worship in a biblical narrative. Ironically, an act of Satan (albeit with God's permission) triggered one of the first if not the first descriptions of worship in the Bible.

If Abraham predates Job, breaking the worship barrier becomes less dramatic. Nonetheless, Abraham "*fell on his face*" to worship God approximately 2,000 years after Adam and Eve left Eden. As with Job, children figure prominently in this response; the Lord had appeared to Abraham to establish a covenant involving his children.¹⁰ One year before Sarah gave birth to Isaac, the Lord appeared again to announce her due date and to reveal His judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah. At 99-years of age, Abraham "*bowed himself to the earth*".¹¹ The Hebrew word translated as bowed comes from the most common Hebrew word for worship—*shachah*.

A Bias in Pride

Pursuing a status upgrade generates a conflict of interest for worshipers. By thinking too highly of self, we become less partial when appraising God's worth. When angels or humans try to act more like God than He made them to be, they introduce a bias in pride. James cites an example of how we act like God by judging one another illegitimately. He warns:

*Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. **There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?*** (James 4:11-12 ESV)

Respect for our Heavenly Father diminishes when we extend our self-esteem toward godhood. By adopting an egocentric persona, we become less likely to recognize God for who He is. The contrast between God and us fades because an arrogant predisposition dupes our perspective. We are blinded when our humanity eclipses God's light.

Claiming even a hint of divine eminence generates an unreasonable expectation for special privilege. Supposing we are entitled to the same treatment as God guarantees disappointment. This bogus identity cripples our response as worshipers responding in reverence to the knowledge of the truth.

¹⁰ Genesis 17:1-3 NAS

¹¹ Genesis 18:1-3 NAS

What is in it for me?

When men and women adopt a god-complex, their worship turns inward. They say and do religion to get something in return. Performing rituals and participating in ceremonies becomes self-serving. Work and service assume an inflated value performed for compensation. As deeds replace reverence, expectations for benefit increase. Emphasizing performance and reward sabotages a worshiper's motive. Worshiping God to accomplish something, prove something, or get something, however meaningful, undermines the reverent response that our Heavenly Father deserves—with no strings attached.

Forfeiting open fellowship with God, Adam and Eve lost sight of reality. No longer anchored by a divine connection, they drifted without spiritual discernment. Left to their own blinkered senses, Adam and Eve exchanged the truth about God for a lie. Blinkered means narrow-minded, limited in scope, and restricted in understanding.¹² Paul details how exchanging the truth for a lie influences the focus of a worshiper. He wrote:

For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, ...For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. (Rom 1:21-22, 25 NAS)

Worshippers depend on accurate knowledge when discerning the truth about God and self. Even though demonic wisdom distorts knowledge of good and evil, God's creation speaks louder than words, *"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made..."*¹³

Creation points to the glorious Creator worthy of universal praise and unanimous worship. While substitute deities present a lop-sided view of reality, they cannot change facts. Everything God made offers tangible evidence of His eternal power and divine nature. It compels us to venerate our Heavenly Father with gestures of radical reverence.

¹² <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/> (accessed 1-22-2011)

¹³ Romans 1:20 NAS

Perspective Lost

Attempting to behave like God wreaks havoc with reality. It distorts our vision and warps our understanding. When Adam and Eve left the Garden, their understanding of spiritual reality began fading. Men and women focused on faults and failures instead of God's ability to redeem and restore. By emphasizing one another's flaws, they fed the voracious appetite of critical spirits seeking to assign blame. As a result, humans lost their appreciation for the immense value that God placed on each one of them.

Unable to remember the truth about God, we strain to comprehend the truth about ourselves. Adopting an exalted self-image, we lose perspective of God's greatness. Sanctimonious upgrades lead to derogatory downgrades. At the other extreme, we fail to live up to our eternal purpose by adopting an inferior self-image. Guilt-ridden demotions also miss the mark. Either way, flawed self-assessments give rise to dubious standards by which we misjudge God.

The more we think that we are like God, or that He is like us, the less inclined we are to worship Him as God. Instead of rendering facedown veneration, we dignify disingenuous impostors and worship alternate deities. When we reduce God's image, we become remiss in expressing reverence where reverence is due. When we fail to acknowledge the infinite contrast that exists between God and us, we neglect true worship in spirit and truth.

Blinded by pride we fail to see God for all that He's worth. Rather than falling facedown in worship, we fall headlong in sin—missing the mark of our high calling as worshipers.

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