

FACING THE FEARS THAT ARE RUINING MY RELATIONSHIPS

The Cure for Loneliness: Part 3

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Genesis 3:6-19

⁶ 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. ⁷ At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.

⁸ When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the LORD God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the LORD God among the trees. ⁹ Then the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

¹⁰ He replied, "I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked."

¹¹ "Who told you that you were naked?" the LORD God asked. "Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?"

¹² The man replied, "It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it."

¹³ Then the LORD God asked the woman, "What have you done?"

"The serpent deceived me," she replied. "That's why I ate it."

¹⁴ Then the LORD God said to the serpent,

"Because you have done this, you are cursed
more than all animals, domestic and wild.

You will crawl on your belly,
groveling in the dust as long as you live.

¹⁵ And I will cause hostility between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring.

He will strike your head,
and you will strike his heel."

¹⁶ Then he said to the woman,

"I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy,
and in pain you will give birth.

And you will desire to control your husband,
but he will rule over you."

¹⁷ And to the man he said,

"Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree
whose fruit I commanded you not to eat,
the ground is cursed because of you.

All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it.

¹⁸ It will grow thorns and thistles for you,
though you will eat of its grains.

¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow
will you have food to eat
until you return to the ground
from which you were made.

For you were made from dust,
and to dust you will return." (Genesis 3:6–19, NLT)

HOW OUR FEARS RUIN OUR RELATIONSHIPS

1. FEAR OF EXPOSURE MAKES ME DISTANT.

"The Lord God called to Adam, "Why are you hiding?" And Adam replied..."I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." (Genesis 3:9–10, The Living Bible/NIV)

Three Phases of Distancing:

- HUMILIATION
"... they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness" (7a)
- REPARATION
"So they sewed fig leaves to cover up themselves." (7b)
- SEPARATION
"Then they hid from God among the trees." (8b)

2. FEAR OF DISAPPROVAL MAKES ME DEFENSIVE.

"...God asked. "Did you eat any fruit [I commanded you not to eat]?" "IT WAS THE WOMAN YOU PUT HERE with me," the man said. "SHE gave me some of the fruit, and I ate it." (Genesis 3:11–12, CEV)

"The LORD God asked the woman, "Why did you do this?" She replied, "THE SNAKE tricked me into eating it.'" (Genesis 3:13, GNB)

3. FEAR OF LOSING CONTROL MAKES ME DEMANDING.

"Then he said to the woman, "...you will desire to control your husband, but he will rule over you." (Genesis 3:16, NLT)

"...he will dominate you." (Genesis 3:16, NJB)

THE ANTIDOTE TO FEAR

LOVE!

"Where God's love is, there is no fear, because GOD'S PERFECT LOVE DRIVES OUT FEAR." (1 John 4:18a, NCV)

"It is punishment that makes a person fear..." (1 John 4:18b, NCV)

HOW-TO LIVE-IN LOVE

1. EVERY DAY, SURRENDER MY HEART.

“Surrender your heart to God, turn to him in prayer, and give up your sins— even those you do in secret. Then you won’t be ashamed; you will be confident and fearless. Your troubles will go away like water beneath a bridge, and your darkest night will be brighter than noon. You will rest safe and secure, filled with hope and emptied of worry.” (Job 11:13–18, CEV)

2. EVERY DAY, RECEIVE GOD’S LOVE.

- I’M COMPLETELY ACCEPTED.

“Jesus...made us acceptable to God and gave us the hope of eternal life.” (Titus 3:7, CEV)

- I’M UNCONDITIONALLY LOVED.

“For even if the mountains walk away and the hills fall to pieces, My love won’t walk away from you...” (Isaiah 54:10, The Message)

- I’M TOTALLY FORGIVEN.

“So NOW there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.” (Romans 8:1, NLT)

- I’M IMMEASURABLY VALUABLE.

“You have been bought and paid for by Christ, so you belong to him—be free now from all these earthly prides and fears.” (1 Corinthians 7:23, The Living Bible, Paraphrased)

“...you must travel with a deep consciousness of God. It cost God plenty to get you out of that dead-end, empty-headed life you grew up in. He paid with Christ’s sacred blood, you know. He died like an unblemished, sacrificial lamb.” (1 Peter 1:18–19, The Message)

3. EVERY DAY, OFFER GOD’S LOVE TO OTHERS.

“So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other.” (John 13:34, NLT)

*“Love never stops being patient,
never stops believing,
never stops hoping,
never gives up.”
(1 Corinthians 13:7, GW)*

ACTION:

2nd Base – Daily Time with God

Get Connected: Small Group Connection 10/01