

## **INTRODUCTION / REVIEW:**

We've spent quite a bit of time talking about how God has designed us. I have said that:

- God has designed us for relationship: primarily with Himself, and also for relationship with each other. The design is called "the image of God in man."
- I've said that this is reflected in two very broad ways.
  - o First: God has delegated His authority to us,
  - o Second: that God has given us moral sensibility and responsibility (morality).<sup>1</sup>
- I have described this arrangement using the metaphor of art.
  - o Art cannot appreciate itself. The paintbrush does not stand back from a work and say: "What an excellent combination of colors! What a brilliant use of proportion and perspective!" Art requires an artist: that's God. And God has made an audience for His artistry of creation: humanity.
  - o When God created us with morality and authority, what He was doing was making us participants in creation. We can manipulate and order creation and thus extend the story, or add to the painting, or create another movement in the symphony – whatever image you like the best.
- I've summarized all this with the phrase: "God designed us for something better!" There is always a voice crying out: "there's something better out there!"

So here's my question: if we are designed for something better, why aren't we better? Why can't I just say: there you are, you now know we were designed for something better. Just go for it! But we can't just "go for it," can we?

## **NAKED AND NOT ASHAMED:**

Every one of us struggles with the reality that we want our lives to mean something, but we're not sure that they do. We all want to be loved and to love, but can't ever seem to make it work as well as we hoped. We all have fears, but are afraid to admit them. And here, in Genesis, is where it all started.

Today I just want to look at one theme: "From Shamelessness To Shamefulness," regarding this matter of being naked and not ashamed. Look at Gen 2.25: *the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.*

That's a pretty curious thing to pick out, don't you think? Of all the things that could have been said to summarize the situation, why did God use this language? Notice that in vs 25, there are two things missing. However, only one of them is really important. One thing that's missing is clothing, but the more important thing that is missing is shame.

Now look at 3.7:

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<sup>1</sup> Gen 1.28, 2.16-17

*The eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" He said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself." And He said, "Who told you that you were naked?"<sup>2</sup>*

The word "shame" is the same word used in Ezra's prayer:

*O my God, I am ashamed and embarrassed to lift up my face to You, my God, for our iniquities have risen above our heads and our guilt has grown even to the heavens. Since the days of our fathers to this day we have been in great guilt, and on account of our iniquities we, our kings and our priests have been given into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity and to plunder and to open shame, as it is this day.<sup>3</sup>*

We were designed to be confident participants with God in His creation. We were designed for a kind of intimacy with him and with each other that is completely unmarred by any jealousy of comparison, arrogance of superiority, or humiliation of weakness. There was a kind of innocence, even ignorance of sin, that was endearing and holy.

This was a kind of innocence that we can only imagine in little children. They believe whatever they're told. They'll run around naked without any sense that there is something inappropriate. They'll repeat everything they hear. They're ignorant of the rules and regulations of society. They are "blessedly ignorant" of all the things that make life complicated.

Can we even imagine a relationship with God or with each other like that? No posturing? No maneuvering? Nothing of the sort, just unconcerned, unhurried, holy confidence and openness?

Consider the imagery of nakedness for a moment. Think about how we respond to physical appearance. Men suck in their guts, stand up straighter, maybe flex their muscles a bit. Women check themselves out in a mirror; suck in their guts too, straighten their dresses. That kind of preening is saying: "I want you to see what I would like to be, rather than what I really am."

It's not about clothing or body image. You know that it's more fundamental than that. Notice that the relationship between Adam and Eve is suddenly changed. They are ashamed before each other and had to clothe themselves. Had their appearance changed? Had they only then seen each other? Not at all. But it was the first time they had seen each other through the eyes of the Fall.

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<sup>2</sup> Gen 3.7-11

<sup>3</sup> Ezr 9.6-7

In 3.8, we have a tantalizing image of our former relationship with God, who used to walk with us in the midst of the garden. But that's broken too. They hide themselves from God, because even the leaves they had fashioned weren't enough to hide their shame.

Where there was delight – there is despair. Where there was innocence – there is shame. Where there was confidence – there is fear. The most fundamental thing for which we were designed – relationship – is marred and twisted, a barely recognizable reflection of its former image.

### **THE RESULT OF OUR BROKENNESS:**

You might be saying: “This is all blown a bit out of proportion, don't you think? Munch an apricot or a pomegranate, sew some fig leaves – and that's supposed to explain war, murder, perversions of all sorts, environmental destruction, economic collapse, divorce, child abuse, and everything else?”

Remember, God designed us, so that the character and attributes of the Father should be seen in his children. But in the fall, that pattern was broken in everyone. God said: *from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.*<sup>4</sup> Physical death began on that day, but oh that shortness of life had been the only result! Instead, the pattern itself died.

*In Adam all die*, says Paul.<sup>5</sup>

Think of the image and likeness of God as a sort of telescope through which we can look to see God's perfections. It's the tool he has given us to look upon him and love him and fear him and worship him. Now think of that telescope as being broken. Lenses have been cracked, perhaps pieces are moving around, and the tube is bent. You can still look through that telescope at God and see something. But there's fuzziness where the pieces are shifting around, and there are areas of blackness where the cracks are, and it can't be focused properly because the tube is bent.

This image and likeness of God in us is still a telescope and, in some way, it's still magnifying God and pointing a finger to God and telling us something about God. But what part is the true image? What part is a false image because of the brokenness? In fact, are there parts missing? How can we know? It's the only telescope we have and it's broken! Are we guessing and adding parts that don't belong? And again, who can say? It's the only telescope we have!

Do you realize that we are the only entity on earth that can feel shame? Animals will do whatever it is they're going to do and you never hear one say: “Wow, OK, this is an awkward moment!”

We don't know what went through their minds exactly at that moment. But I do know this, that at that moment, the innocent relationships of everyone involved were gone. Eve and Adam looked at each other differently from then on. Gone is the perfect help

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<sup>4</sup> Gen 2.17

<sup>5</sup> 1Co 15.22

corresponding to Adam? Gone is Adam's: "this is now bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh!" Gone is her delight in walking alongside him in all that he undertook?

Now it's: "Oh, sorry, excuse me, but I'd like to find a few leaves." It's "stop looking at me that way! What way?" It's "God should be showing up pretty soon, shouldn't he? What are we going to do? We can't just stand around like this!" Shame is fear or a realization of a breached relationship of some sort. Shame is intimacy reversed.

Do you remember that I asked if it's possible whether this is all kind of blown out of proportion? "Munch an apricot or a pomegranate, sew some fig leaves – and that's supposed to explain war, murder, perversions of all sorts, environmental destruction, economic collapse, divorce, child abuse, and a whole host of things one scarcely would mention in polite company?"

Here's my response. If you think that this all seems tame and rather trivial, remember that within the next 13 verses after this event, three things happen: 1) the first animals are sacrificed to cover the shame of Adam and Eve, 2) they are thrown out of that perfect context of relationship with God and each other called the Garden, 3) and the first murder happens. If you have any doubts; all one needs to do is ask if Abel thinks that these events are trivial.

### **CONCLUSION / APPLICATIONS:**

What we're attempting to do in this series on the family is recover something of the original design. This is what has happened to the family, right here in Genesis. In the weeks to come, we'll look again at this even in Gen 3. We'll see some of the same infectious diseases there that we see in our own families: blame shifting, deceit, doubting God's word and will.

Instead of mutuality, it's individuality. Instead of joyful openness, it's shameful secrets. Instead of humble service, it's arrogant self-serving. The original design for the family is so broken, we don't even know that it's broken any more. The brokenness is normal and customary. It's the only thing we know. Shame isn't abnormal, is the way things "ought to be," it seems.

So broken and skewed is our telescope, that anything else one might suggest seems strange or dangerous. As we go through many practical aspects regarding the nuclear family and the family of the church, some of you may decide: I don't know if I like those rules. I'm not sure I want to do it that way.

We have been trying to do it our own way for many thousands of years. Somebody recently reminded me of the saying that insanity is doing the same thing over and over, hoping for a different outcome. The way of the Fall hasn't worked all that well for humanity.

Maybe, just maybe, it's time to try a different way, the Father's way, through Jesus' redemption, and the Holy Spirit's power. *For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.*<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> 1Co 15.22

## Genesis 2-3 – God’s Design Plan IV

### From Shamelessness to Shamefulness

1. Summary: “God designed us for something better!”
  - 1.1. “The image of God in man.” All of our desires, needs, aspirations, passions, skills, talents, interests – all reflect aspects of God’s character and attributes. He has made us this way → so that we can understand Him → so that we can relate to Him
  - 1.2. Image is reflected in two very broad ways:
    - 1.2.1. God delegated His authority over creation to us,
    - 1.2.2. God has given us moral sensibility and responsibility (morality).
  - 1.3. Metaphor of art.
    - 1.3.1. Art cannot appreciate itself.
    - 1.3.2. With morality and authority, we become both audience and participant in creation.
2. Naked And Not Ashamed?
  - 2.1. The relationship between Adam and Eve changed (Gen 3.7).
  - 2.2. The relationship with God changed (3.8).
3. Brokenness Results
  - 3.1. The frame of reference has changed: The image of God in us is marred, broken, twisted and begins to die (1 Cor 15.22).
  - 3.2. Therefore our frame of reference with respect to relationships has changed.
  - 3.3. Note the three significant changes just in the next few vss:
    - 3.3.1. the first animals are sacrificed to cover the shame of Adam and Eve,
    - 3.3.2. thrown out of that perfect context of relationship with God and each other called the Garden,
    - 3.3.3. first murder happens.
4. Applications