

# Week Two

## “Indeed, has God said?”

*Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast  
of the field which the LORD God had made.  
And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said . . ."*  
—Genesis 3:1a

We sit in the middle of a clearly damaged world. Just a passing glance at the evening news confirms the reach of the damage—from earthquakes and natural disasters to inhabitants who maim and kill. Our world teems with sorrow and tears, death and injustice. If you haven't experienced it yet, unfortunately you will. It's only a matter of time.

This week we're going to examine how we landed here in the first place and how this affects

everything after it. It all started with a question that caused Eve to reject what God had revealed to her. This was an attack on the revelation and nature of God. Satan's question ("Indeed, has God said?") and lie ("You will not die!") permeate our society today.

Remember, what God created was good but in a moment in a garden everything changed. Sin and death entered when mankind lusted after the knowledge of good and evil. As Paul says in Romans, man "exchanged the truth of God for a lie" (Romans 1:25).

Looking at how sin entered the world and changed the condition of man may sound like a snore. I know. But how we think about this based on a knowledge of the truth or the seduction of a lie will *profoundly* impact how we live. If you're looking for practical truth that matters, it starts here.

### FYI:

#### What You Think Determines How You Live

If you think what you think doesn't matter, think again! Jesus tells us that what is on the inside comes out in our behavior: "the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart" (Matthew 12:34).

We're not talking "the power of positive thinking" stuff here. We're talking the transformation of minds, the alignment of our minds with God's.

### FYI:

#### Genesis 1:27 and Mankind

Genesis 1:27 tells us:

*God created man in His own image,  
in the image of God He created him;  
male and female He created them.*

The reference to "man" in line one is a generic reference to people in general, to mankind. "Male and female" in line three further defines the general word "man." Since God's Word, both in the Old Testament Hebrew and New Testament Greek unapologetically uses the general "man" to refer to all people, we're going to go with that, too. It's biblical and keeps the writing tighter. Really, you can't beat that combination!

### Mindset

#### Learning and Living the Will of God

*An Inductive Study of Romans 8*

## A LITTLE MORE BACKGROUND INFORMATION on ROMANS

The book of Romans provides a well-reasoned approach to the core beliefs of Christianity. In the first three chapters Paul argues that everyone is a sinner—the flat-out heathen, the "religious," and even the Jew. With no exceptions, all sin and fall short of God's glory.

**SINNERS** summarizes Romans 1–Romans 3:20.

God saves sinners by faith, not by works. Paul points out that God credited righteousness to both Abraham and David apart from works. It is significant that Abraham lived prior to the Law and David lived under it, yet neither was justified by the Law. People don't save themselves; we are saved by God through faith alone.

**SAVED** summarizes Romans 3:21–Romans 5.

In this next section Paul talks about the Christian life—how we are to live as followers of Christ. In

Romans 6 we see we are no longer slaves to sin but rather slaves to righteousness. Romans 7, for all the theological questions it raises, makes it clear that the Law can never make a person good. Romans 8, our passage, shows us how to live the normal Christian life of walking by the Spirit.

**SANCTIFIED** summarizes Romans 6–Romans 8.

Romans 9 through Romans 11 discuss the sovereignty of God in salvation and the place of Israel in His salvific work.

**SOVEREIGNTY** summarizes Romans 9–Romans 11.

Leading off with a big "Therefore," Romans 12 through the end of the letter focuses on God's call to service in light of everything He has done on our behalf. We are not working to earn God's favor, but serving through the power of His indwelling Spirit.

**SERVICE** summarizes Romans 12–Romans 16.

### OBSERVE the TEXT of SCRIPTURE

**READ** Romans 8:1-4. **CIRCLE** references to *sin* and **UNDERLINE** references to *condemnation*.

#### Romans 8:1-4

- 1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
- 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.
- 3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,
- 4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

### FYI:

#### For a Full Look at Romans

For a complete look at the book of Romans, check out Precept Upon Precept® *Romans* by Kay Arthur. Kay's four part series on Romans will lead you step by step through this book on the foundations of our faith. The breakdown I've provided at the right (SINNERS, SAVED, SANCTIFIED, SOVEREIGNTY, SERVICE) is hers. So if you take Precept Upon Precept *Romans*, you'll already have a jump on the rest of the class!

**DISCUSS with your GROUP or PONDER on your own . . .**

What are your initial observations on the text?

What questions do you think we need to ask? Are there words you'd like to explore? Why?

If there is *now no condemnation*, is there anything we can learn from this text about *why* condemnation came about in the first place or do we need to look elsewhere?

**ONE STEP FURTHER:**

**Requirement**

A man-made requirement is not necessarily just simply by being enacted into law. God's law, however, is different. The requirement we see in Romans 8:4 is not only a requirement but a *righteous* requirement. If you have some extra time this week, find the Greek work for *requirement* in this verse and explain the additional shade of meaning the Greek brings to this particular word. Record your findings below.

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Where in Romans and elsewhere in the Bible can we look for more information about how we ended up under condemnation?

ONE STEP FURTHER:

Romans 1

If you have some extra time this week, hang out in Romans 1:18-32. Consider what people can clearly see in creation and how they respond to what they clearly see. Also watch for how they view themselves. What do they think they are? What does the text say they are and why? How does natural man respond to truth? Record your findings below.

If you found some cross-references on your own, how did you identify them?

Paul has clearly explained sin's origin and judgment in the earlier chapters of Romans, but to see the original scene for ourselves we need to go to Genesis 3 where the account of the fall is recorded.

**OBSERVE the TEXT of SCRIPTURE**

**READ** all of Genesis 3 in your Bible. Pay close attention to the tactics of the serpent and **UNDERLINE** everything he says in Genesis 3:1-6 which is included below.

**Genesis 3:1-6**

- 1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?"
- 2 The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat;
- 3 but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.' "
- 4 The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die!
- 5 "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."
- 6 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 desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

**DISCUSS with your GROUP or PONDER on your own . . .**

What did the serpent say to the woman?

What was his tactic? What was he trying to get her to think about God? What was he trying to get her to doubt and then reject?

What did he offer?

**ONE STEP FURTHER:**

**Where can we find wisdom?**

The serpent offered a shortcut to wisdom that backfired in epic proportions. What does the Word of God say about how we can go about acquiring wisdom? If you have some time this week, start off with your concordance and see what you can find. Record what you learn below.

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What did Eve observe about the fruit?

### ONE STEP FURTHER:

#### James . . .

If you have some extra time, compare Eve's temptation with the description of temptation in James 1:13-15. How are they similar? Record your findings below. Be sure to include how this knowledge can benefit you as you seek to obey God's ways.

What step-by-step path did Eve travel on her way to sinning? What happens from the time she first listens to the serpent to the point at which she gives the fruit to Adam?

Can understanding Eve's path into sin change the way we normally react when faced with temptation to sin?

How did God punish the serpent?

The woman?

The man?

The earth?

Why does it matter? How do these truths change the way you think and act?

**Good, bad, or morally neutral?**

So people do wrong things. That's hardly news. But how often do we stop to consider why that is and how the presence of sin affects life and the way we view life? I'll never forget the time my friend Karen and I were writing and teaching a high school Sunday School class on the book of Romans. Each week we'd start off with an ice-breaker question just to get the conversation started. The particular week forever etched on my brain started off innocently enough. We opened the class with what should have been a pretty simple quiz for a group of teenagers raised in the church:

Man is born:

- a. Morally good
- b. Morally bad
- c. Morally neutral

I expected a few responses of "morally neutral," but was shocked when all but one responded "morally good." We had one "morally neutral" but all the rest were "morally good." I'm not sure if I was more shocked or dismayed. I expected to trip up a couple of kids and get a good conversation going, but I had no clue concerning the extent to which these kids had no clue. So when we regathered ourselves, Karen and I spent the next hour unpacking the concept of sin and the condition of man. It may seem like theological trivia, a fact inconsequential to everyday life, but nothing could be farther from the truth.

**FYI:**

**Expectations**

If our expectations are not grounded in truth, we will find ourselves living lives of continual disappointment. If I expect all drivers to be courteous, I will, more often than not, find myself frustrated on the roadways. If I expect all telemarketers to respect the "Do Not Call" lists, I will growl at the phone several times a day. If I expect the Cubs to win the World Series . . . nevermind. That one is too painful for me to even address.

I trust you see my point. We live in a fallen world. If we accept the truth of this, if we let it inform our thinking, if we expect fallen people to behave like fallen people, our attitudes will be more bent toward compassion than frustration with the minor infractions of life.

Understanding the consequences of the fall should radically affect our expectations of people and our responses to them.

**FYI:**

**The Right Place to Find Wisdom**

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."

—Proverbs 9:10

*Mindset*

**Learning and Living the Will of God**

An Inductive Study of Romans 8

Week Two: "Indeed, has God said?"

If we think people are basically good or even morally neutral our interactions will be influenced by these false premises. One possible outcome, for example, is that we will expect more than they're capable of thinking or doing and our expectations will consistently be dashed. When we don't have truth as our basis of operations, life becomes quickly tangled.

Let's think through some of the basic ramifications of this thinking on how we view the world and operate in it by looking at some examples from the life of Jesus.

THINKING IT THROUGH:

If . . . then . . .

If you have some extra time this week, think through some of the specific ramifications of these theological truths on different areas of your life and how you might need to alter your expectations. Bottom line is that we can't expect fallen people who don't know Jesus to act as though they do. One way I zero in on these off-base expectations is by paying attention to what irritates me and then asking whether this is a situation I can change or one where I simply need to alter my expectations and/or pray for increased compassion. Think and pray through this and record your thoughts below.

OBSERVE the TEXT of SCRIPTURE

READ John 2:23-25. CIRCLE every reference to Jesus including pronouns and UNDERLINE every occurrence of know.

John 2:23-25

- 23 Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing.
- 24 But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men,
- 25 and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man.

DISCUSS with your GROUP or PONDER on your own . . .

What did you learn about Jesus?

How were the people responding to Him?