

A STORY OF BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS

Why we need Jesus, *Genesis 3:1-7*

This year we will be dedicating ourselves to becoming more like Jesus. But that focus assumes something important that we need to make explicit – *we need to become like Jesus because we are broken people*. This lesson will therefore consider the opening chapters of Genesis and their narration of God’s relationship-oriented intentions for humanity and the way that humanity’s rebellion broke those relationships. Additionally, we will explore how humanity’s rebellion fractured three areas of relationships (God, self, and others), areas that will help shape our focus throughout the coming year.

God created us to both need and enjoy meaningful, embodied relationships

- The creation account in Genesis 1-2 reveals two important features about the world and about humanity:
 - God made the world to revolve around humanity (*Genesis 1:14; 29-30; cf. Genesis 9:2-4*).
 - God made humanity in a way that distinguished them from the rest of the creation; He made humanity in His image and gave them dominion over the creation (*Genesis 1:26-28*).
- But Genesis’ creation account reveals more than merely details about the relationship between humanity and the creation; it offers a picture of ideal human life flourishing as God intended. That life focuses on physical beings whose creative, productive, and relational lives mirrored His identity and will in the creation. Consider:
 - The Tree of Life reveals that God intended humans to live physical lives (*Genesis 2:9; 3:22*); death, suffering, and pain are anomalies rather than part of the ‘natural cycle of life’ (*cf. 1 Corinthians 15:12-26*).
 - God intentionally created humanity as a co-dependent pair who only become whole through relationships (*Genesis 2:18-25*).
 - God charged humanity with the responsibility of caring for and developing the goodness of the world He made in ways that mirrored His own creative activity (*Genesis 1:26-28; 2:5, 15*).

Sin expresses our selfish desire that rejects the life God created us to enjoy

- Eve’s decision to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil illustrates sin’s nature – in rejecting God’s pronouncement about the tree in favor of her own assessment, Eve revealed her selfish belief that she knew better than God (*Genesis 3:1-6*).
- Sin’s selfishness rejects God’s sovereign right and divine perspective to both know and declare what is good; it is a coup that replaces attempts to put one’s self in God’s position.
- Humanity’s limited perspective, when untethered from God’s will, always results in “disorder and every vile practice”¹ (*James 3:16*).

Sin breaks our relationships with God, with others, and with our own selves

- Sin fractured humanity’s relationship with God, resulting in God exiling humanity from His presence (*cf. Genesis 3:8, 24*).
- Sin changed the relationship between Adam and Eve from one of co-dependent equals to a hierarchical relationship (*Genesis 3:16*).
- Sin broke humanity’s relationship with the creation; just as they had been rebellious to God, so too would the creation now be in rebellion to them (*Genesis 3:17-19*).
- Sin also broke humanity’s relationship to itself; internal pressures from things like fear, suspicion, and shame now overshadow the relationships God created them to enjoy (*cf. Genesis 2:25; 3:7*).

What does this mean for me?

- We live in a broken world filled with evidences of its good potential that prove frustratingly out of reach (*cf. Genesis 1:31; 3:17-19; Romans 8:18-25*).
- We ourselves are broken people who both contribute to, and suffer from, our world’s brokenness (*Romans 3:9-18, 23; James 3:16*).
- We need Jesus because we are unable to heal our broken relationships by ourselves (*Job 39:1-40:14*); Jesus saves us from our “wretched” state (*Romans 7:7-25*).
- Our brokenness and our need for Jesus reveals a world-changing truth – God loves us despite our rebellion and offers us a loving, gracious, and merciful way out of our rebellion (*John 3:16-17; Romans 5:6-11*).

The Bible begins as a story about broken relationships that illustrates our need for rescue. God did not, however, compose that story of brokenness to condemn us; He wrote it to reveal another more important message – He has a love-motivated and grace-filled plan to heal our brokenness. We can only embrace the rescue God offers when we acknowledge our sinfulness and properly submit ourselves to His sovereign rule. We should therefore ask ourselves what our lives reveal about our relationship to the Bible’s opening message.

¹ All quotes from the Bible come from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version* (ESV Permanent Text Edition, Crossway, 2016) unless otherwise noted.