

God's Design Distorted

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[0:00] Would you take your Bibles and open them to Genesis chapter 3?! We'll eventually get to that passage. The bulk of our time will be spent in another passage, and the kids went out to play, as well as the little girl of this family.

And the rest of us adults stayed inside, as adults will do, and just visited and talked for quite a while. Well, we talked for quite a while, and we could hear the children playing outside, and it sounded like everything was going just fine, unless there's, you know, horrendous screaming or crying or total silence for a period of time.

You don't usually go checking on them. And so we didn't, and just assumed they were having a good time. Well, after a bit, Gage, who's the littlest one of the group, he came to the back door, which was a glass back door, and his face and arms and legs were covered in black.

And upon further investigation, not only Gage, but the rest of the children as well, including the visiting little girl. And they were all smiles.

And so as adults, intelligent adults, we realized something had gone wrong. The children didn't start the evening out looking that way.

[1:46] But understanding, too, that children at times do creative things, and in this instance, they were camouflaging themselves with the soot from the fire pit.

And so we as adults, thankfully, the visiting adults as well, you know, weren't upset by this event. We understood, hey, kids will be kids at times.

But the obvious question was asked, not necessarily then, but after everyone had left, we needed to get the fuller story of what happened.

Something had gone wrong there. And because the very good condition in which they began the evening had changed, and now they were covered in soot from the fire pit.

Well, not long after that, of course, the evening came to a close and the process of cleaning up and restoring the children to their original condition, or as close to it as possible, took place.

[2:54] And, of course, the parents did that. That's the time we as grandparents can just kind of step aside and we don't address those issues. That's the parents' responsibility at that point.

But it was a nice evening. But the children cleaned up just fine. And so we relate that to our topic of marriage and family. In past weeks, we studied that marriage and family had its origin in God.

And so we answered that question, where did marriage and family come from? Where did it originate? And next time I presented some information, we examined some of the God-designed purposes for marriage and family, understanding things that are created, designed, have a purpose. And so the same way, our God is a great God, intelligent, full of wisdom. He had a purpose for that which he created. And beyond his glory and majesty, his exaltation in it, there were other purposes. Well, revealed in the scriptures that we could learn from and pursue in our marriages and in our families. And so we answered that question, well, what is its purpose?

[4:09] Well, and then as we looked at God's design, we're able to come to that same conclusion that God came to and is recorded in Genesis 131.

God saw all that he had made and it was, what? Yeah, it was good, even better than that. It was very good. And so this morning, we ask and answer the question, well, what happened?

What is happening? We ask that question when, say, we get a vehicle or an appliance and it's new and we're so pleased with it. We say, well, this is great.

This is very good. And then something happens and it doesn't perform the way it was advertised or the way it was designed. It's not fulfilling its purpose.

And so sometimes we throw up our hands and think, what's going on? What happened? How come this isn't working the way it's supposed to be? I'm not experiencing the fullness of pleasure that I'm

supposed to be experiencing from this appliance or this car or whatever.

[5:15] And so we pursue trying to determine what's wrong with it. And that's, of course, where we need to start. And in order to get to the place, again, of enjoying that which we have purchased or in this case, enjoying and glorifying God, marriage and family, it's very important that we understand the source or the origin of the trouble that we're experiencing or the distortions of this design that we're experiencing as married families or as families.

And so we are answering that next question and considering that. And there are obvious signs that the very good of God's design for marriage and family is not being experienced.

But also there are some what I'll call not so obvious signs. And I want us to, as you're sitting there, think through what are some of those obvious signs and what I call not so obvious signs or distortions because sometimes we just tend to think of the big things that are the distortions of the design and not think of the little things.

Maybe we're just kind of comfortable with those little distortions. And that's what we're going to look at a little bit later on. But let's spend just a few minutes.

What would be some of those obvious distortions? Let's start right there. What are some of the obvious distortions in God's design for marriage and family that we might see in our world today?

[7:05] Teenage pregnancy, certainly. Breakup of marriages. Divorce rate, even among Christian families, very high today. Yep. Living together without being married.

Homosexuality, another one. Okay. Children running the house. Sometimes that one might be not so obvious. Or we could say teenage rebellion or not even teenage anymore.

Rebellion of children in the home toward their parents, dishonoring parents, rebelling against their God-designed authority, so on and so forth. Sexual immorality, sex outside of marriage.

You've hit on a lot of the ones that I've listed here. Certainly polygamy when we were in South Africa. That was very common there among the people. The president of South Africa has five wives himself.

And so throughout the society there, in particular among the black population, South Africa. But we see that in our country as well. Abortion would be another obvious distortion.

[8:13] Child abuse would be an obvious distortion. Spousal abuse that takes home. But then we start getting some that maybe would not be quite so obvious.

Maybe where we tend to live a little bit more day by day. And some that I've written down here, sinful communication between husband and wife or children with parents.

Maybe there's no communication or disrespectful communication. Children don't show honor to parents in their words and actions. Children disregard the counsel of parents.

Husbands don't love their wives as Christ loves the church. They don't provide loving leadership, guidance, nurturing, encouragement. They don't make it their goal to know their wives, to dwell with them in an understanding way.

Wives don't willingly submit to their husbands, show reverence toward them as the head of the family, as Christ is the head of the church. They don't pursue a role as one called alongside to help, but rather as a co-head or independent contractor.

[9:22] Parents aren't nurturing their children in the Lord, not admonishing, disciplining their children in the Lord. Husbands, wives, parents, children showing sinful anger toward one another, not resolving conflict biblically.

Husbands and wives don't live as companions on their journey of glorifying God. husbands, wives don't follow God's design for sex, and on and on we go. Now probably in that list, I would tend to think we all fall in there someplace, somewhere along the line of our marriage relationship and our family.

The distortions are very real, and we all have contributed to them either as parents, children, husbands, or wives. So we need again to go back to the scriptures, certainly to live the gospel in God's design for marriage and family in order to glorify God and enjoy what he has designed to be beacons of hope for others.

But if we don't start here and understand the distortions biblically, well then, the avenue we take to correct those distortions won't be accurate either and really won't lead us to the place where we are accomplishing that priority purpose in marriage, which is to glorify God.

You might get people to live together peacefully and doing some good things, right things, but again, that's not the priority purpose of marriage, to help people to learn to have a, say, happy

home independent from God.

[11:00] So it's not just those whose families are obviously broken and then we look at other families and say, you know, unsaved family, what else could I offer them?

You know, they're enjoying family life. Well, there's a lot we have to offer to them in Christ Jesus because they are still living independent of God and people in rebellion against God.

It just looks a little differently. We've got both ends of the spectrum here. Really, they're at the same end. It just looks a little different. But we want to be sure that we're understanding what's the origin and the source of these distortions that we're seeing but also experiencing day by day even as Christians.

So what happened? And for this, we go back to Genesis chapter 3 and some of this information. I know all of you are familiar with and understand this doctrinally.

So some of this we might move through a little quickly. But then we'll get to the other passage in James chapter 3. So what happened and what is happening?

[12:20] What is the cause or what was the cause or origin of the distortion we're seeing and experiencing? Adam and Eve sinned and all mankind acquired a sinful nature.

And we won't read down through there Genesis 3, 1 through 13 but I'll make reference to some of these other verses in chapter 2 and 3. Adam and Eve, they all knew God's will.

They both knew God's will concerning eating of the tree. Genesis 2, 16 and 17. The Lord God commanded the man, you are free to eat from any tree in the garden but you must not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil for when you eat of it you will surely die.

But obviously we understand and know they did disobey. Genesis 3, 6. The woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye and also desirable for gaining wisdom. She took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband who was with her and he ate it. And there were consequences for their sin. Verse 7 of chapter 3.

[13:29] The first word depending on what translation you have whether it's then or and and some translations would have at that moment. But that word shows the relationship between what did and what follows.

So we're already seeing the origin or the source because we're seeing some things that followed their decision and actions that were not part of their life prior to that.

Verse 7. And then or and or at that moment the eyes of both of them were opened and they realized they were naked so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

We'll make reference to some of these other verses as we continue on through here. So the effects the consequences of their sin certainly there were some upon them personally as individuals from their guilt of sin they experienced the sense of shame verse 7 I've read that already and they'd never had that before and to me as you think about that that they had to be quite a quite an experience for them as never having experienced that sense of shame from the guilt of sin we know what that is it happens more often than we than we want it to happen or would like it to happen or should happen but for them the first time can you imagine what that must have been like what is this that we're experiencing here for them as an individual for both of them personally each one realized that they were naked and of course prior to sin they were naked and not ashamed they had none of those those those thoughts those evil thoughts that that the feelings that come from guilt of having committed sin of course physical death would be down the road as well in verse 19 of chapter 3 by the sweat of your brow you'll eat your food until you return to the ground since from it you were taken for dust you are and dust you will return and to dust you will return but also the relationship with God after sin what were they doing in verse 8 they were hiding from God imagine that too prior to this probably some of those walks those time of fellowship were taking place

God had to be giving them some sort of counsel they weren't born with all the the knowledge they needed to understand themselves or relationships with each other even relationships with God and relationships with creation so God was their counselor and so there were probably times sweet times of fellowship and learning about all that they were supposed to do as creatures of God and I would expect they were just looking forward to those times but now here comes one of those times again and what do we find them doing they're hiding from God even that can you imagine here comes God now they're thinking oh no instead of let's go fellowship and learn man we've got to run and hide never had experienced those kind of thoughts before but here they were experiencing those things and in verse 10 of chapter 3 they're afraid of God and when God asked them what had happened where he answered

[17:02] I heard you in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked so I hid and so that that guilt of sin that they had certainly doesn't drive them to God and cause them to run to God but away from God and hiding from him and fearful of God now and then in verse 12 of chapter 3 Adam became a God accuser the man said the woman you put here with me she gave me some fruit from the tree and I ate it blaming God and the woman for his sin and they were eventually separated from God he banished them from the garden of Eden and he drove them out of the garden so their relationship with God greatly affected their relationship with created things affected in verses 17 through 19 by the sweat of their brow now that they'll have to work the ground but then the area that I want us to focus on this morning is how their relationship with each other was affected and even their relationship between their children in verse 6 of chapter 3 instead of being

Adam's helper Eve gave him the fruit and he ate it too now I had to understand again as I said earlier that as she came into the world and was created and designed to be Adam's helper God probably provided counsel as to what that means and what that looks like and she went contrary to that at that time when she offered it to her husband she was not helping him in this situation anymore but then bringing him in to the distorted living condition that she was in not only that instead of being Eve's loving leader Adam followed her disobedience and with full knowledge ate of the fruit as well and when confronted by God he put blame on God and Eve he could have been I don't know what that would have looked like that's just speculation on my part as he understood what he was doing understood his role as well as husband as leader as head in that family he was not doing that which was good for his wife again I don't know what was going through his mind at that time but he wasn't being the godly loving leader that would honor and glorify God even though his wife had sinned over here he still could have been the one that would please

God in these circumstances but he chose not to and we'll explore a little bit later why does that happen in our lives because we know that just because one person sins over here doesn't determine or doesn't conclude that well I have to sin now I have no choice now I have to disobey God I can't be the person God wants me to be now in my role that's just not true but that's the path that Adam chose to take he acted against his God designed role and then Adam as Adam and Eve had their first children those children were born with sinful nature and out of that sinful nature Cain became angry toward God the overflow of that angry rebellious nature fell and his brother Abel and Cain killed Abel in chapter 4 1-8 all of this verse 7 then at that moment the origin of that great distortion that we see so quickly in the lives of this first family came as a result of sin and so we understand something of what happened through Adam's willing sinful choice all became sinners and the effects of sin came upon all people the institution of marriage and family was greatly affected as we've just seen from these verses and ever since husbands wives children live out of their sinful natures and the result is the distortion of God's design for marriage and family but what about the families that are made up of

Christians those who've been saved by grace new creatures in Christ no longer slaves to sin yeah what's happening there in those families that God's designed for marriage and family is distorted as well what's the source of that distortion we revel in these truths that we know about salvation and God's grace the work of his Holy Spirit in our lives the power of the word of God and the fellowship of the believers that leads us down this path of new living for the glory of God and yet we still experience and still see some of these distortions in our families and so it's important for us to again understand and recognize where is this coming from because we still as human beings struggle with this matter of accepting responsibility ourselves for what for what is happening in my life or through my life it's again the importance if we're going to be a people distinct of peculiar people either as individuals or as families in this world in which we live if we miss it here we're not going to get over here to where we can be really honoring and glorifying God and enjoying the very good of family life and again providing that beacon of hope for those in our world that we work with every day that we see every day who are not experiencing the very good of

God's design and family but we need to be the people that are distinct and we can be those people that are distinct but we're going again have to understand what's the source and then take biblical steps of dealing with that source that distortion which we won't do this morning so let's take a look at where this distortion comes in our lives as Christians in our family certainly we understand that the Satan is still active against the Christian you don't have to turn to these passages I'll be moving through these kind of quickly 1 Peter 5 8 Peter wrote to the believers there he said be self controlled and your enemy the devil prowls prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour so

he's very real influence and enemy that we have as Christians Ephesians 6 10-11 the apostle [24 : 26] Paul writing to believers there warn them about Satan and his devices and encourage them finally be strong in the Lord and his mighty power put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes so again our enemy Satan is very active and we need to be alert that he is active in an specific way but we also live in a world that is at enmity with God when Paul wrote to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3 he wanted Timothy to understand some things and so he said listen mark this there will be terrible times in the last days people will be lovers of themselves lovers of money boastful proud and the list goes on so this is the world in which they were living back then and as we go through that list we could say well that's very descriptive of the world in which we live today we live in a world that is not friends with God and it shows up in the things that they do the things that they believe the things in Romans 12 2

Paul warned the believers there not to be conformed to the life pattern that the world was presenting to them at that time because anytime people do not follow God it's not like they're in a vacuum they will live out something it's not like they don't have ideas they're made to be people reasoning thinking people that draw conclusions and make plans for their daily life and so out of this void of knowing God they make their plans their ideas their conclusions all apart from God and the knowledge of God and the wisdom of God and that is contrary to God and therefore they establish a pattern of life that's based on all these principles ideas philosophies world views that are contrary to God and so Paul encourages them don't be conformed any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed you know the rest of the verse but then we as full flesh and desires existing within us again

Paul writing to Timothy 2nd Timothy 2nd 22nd flee youthful lust and pursue righteousness so within Timothy himself so now we're understanding more that outside of us we have these enemies Satan and the world in which we live but not only there we also have still within us sinful desires that we've brought over with us into this new Christian life I'd like to say it'd be nice had they just disappeared and vanished but that's not what happened they all came we're new creatures in Christ but we still brought over this old way of thinking this old way of living that we had established prior to knowing Christ as our Savior and knowing his word and learning and walking in his truth in 1st Peter 2 11 Peter warned the believers there dear friends I urge you as aliens and strangers in the world abstain from sinful desires which war against your soul so it's not like these little desires in us that are no threat whatsoever these desires that still exist within us actually are campaigning a war against us they're trying to gain greater ground in our lives so that we don't accomplish these purposes that God has designed for us in this particular case in our families enemies so we've got these enemies and there's other passages we could share there looking at these enemies we understand the influence

Satan and the world can have on us as we live out our family roles but the sinful ways in which we live in our families which brings about the distortion of God's design comes about not primarily from those two enemies but from our own hearts that are yielded over to things we love more than God and others in the family that's where we've got to land again that's going to take some humility on our part and recognizing the sinful desires don't like that that practice of humility but again if we don't start there then the change won't take place and so God understanding this even about us as believers as Christians struggling against sin even way back in James' day God had James write to the people and help them understand some of these principles that they needed to understand because they were struggling with living out say the

Christian life and their culture and they were missing this point that they desperately needed to understand and that we desperately need to understand as well so turn with me to James chapter 1 I'm understanding that these are not unfamiliar passages to most of you it's always good to be reminded of them as we go day by day by week in this warfare this conflict that we're experiencing we can tend to stray from these truths that we need to understand and be reminded of regularly so the source of sinful living is within each person James 1 13 through 15 when tempted no one should say God's tempting me for God cannot be tempted by evil nor does he tempt anyone but each one is tempted when by his own evil desire he's dragged away and enticed then after desire has conceived to give birth to sin and sin when it's full grown gives birth to death

[30 : 27] James is writing to some believers here who are undergoing trials think of trials as circumstances events of life that tried the genuineness of our faith faith and our love for God and our obedience to him as these people were experiencing trials they were blaming God for their

sinful responses just as Adam did and we might tend to think God how could these people do that let's think about it a little bit more too don't we go down that same path at times well the first point James drives home is the temptation is not from God verse 13 when tempted no one should say God is tempting me for God cannot be tempted nor does he tempt anyone the sinful inclination!

of the heart is to accuse God or others for our sin and again as we're relating this in the family and to others in the family the statement that we would usually make if that's happening in us would start probably with the word if and I tried to come up with a couple you could come up with some others if God had given me a loving husband I would be a submissive respectful helper and companion if God had given me a wife that respects me I wouldn't have been attracted to someone else or I would show love to her or if God had given me reasonable parents I wouldn't have to argue to get what I need you could come up with even other phrases maybe that you have found yourself using in the past maybe it would start with I wish I wish I had blank then I could be blank I could be this person

I could be that kind of wife I could be that kind of husband if only another couple words that we would use that would indicate that my obedience to God living out my role in the family is really dependent on something outside of myself!

either the person being different than what they are or the circumstances being different and so we're really putting that blame upon God who is the one who ultimately gives us this person or places us in those circumstances or then secondary to the people or the circumstances as well so James points out to them that now we shouldn't put the blame on God so he points them then to the true source of their sinful behavior in verse 14 but each one is tempted when by his own evil desire each person must take personal responsibility and ownership of the temptation and the sin each it's each person's own particular lust that's the idea of that own lust that word own and lust is that strong desire longing it's it's not the same as desire it's an over desire it's gone beyond desire to lust become an over desire it's something that we think we must have and really turn it into a need I need to have this in order to be or in order to do when in reality we don't an over desire is concerned about self and fulfilling the desire at all costs even if it means sinning and we never say that but that's how we're functioning and so we have to see how I'm functioning if I was to come up to you and say hey if these were the circumstances would you sin no I would never do that but we know we've all experienced it we've all been there probably this week at some time in some small way we have shifted away from the design that God has for us in a role as husband wife or children in the home and as a result there's a distortion yeah it's a small distortion but still it's a distortion of the design and it's not glorifying God and not leading us down this path of enjoying what [34:53] God has purchased through Jesus Christ for us to enjoy as redeemed lives and redeemed families but it starts here we have to accept and take personal responsibility for what's coming from our lives so the question is what is it you want to receive or to get or to protect or keep that you're willing to sin to get or keep it here we've got another list of things respect from your wife kindness gentleness!

Consideration from your husband godly leadership and love from your husband appreciation respect from your children someone that I can talk to and who will listen to me that's one I've had to grow in someone that will accept me the way I am parents that will give me some independence and space and on and on and on and we could go but these are some of the things that I would expect tend to come up in our families as Christians living together in marriage and family well when we have an over desire for something James says then that we are carried away and enticed the idea here is that something is appealing or enticing to us because of our lust or over desire for it as that lust is allowed to remain and rule the individual is carried away to sinful thoughts words and actions and away from those that are glorifying to God and good for him and the family a couple quotes that really show this well here's one from

Elise Fitzpatrick's book Love to Eat and Hate to Eat it's when the allurements of the world or Satan find a connection with the desires of our own hearts that we're enticed to sin ungodly influences would not be effective if our hearts were pure from sinful desires and Barnes in his commentary is a good quote as well the fountain or source of all temptation is in man himself it's true that external inducements the sin may be placed before him but they would have no force if there was not something in himself to which they correspond and over which they might have power there must be some lust some desire some inclination something something which is unsatisfied now which has made the foundation of the temptation and which gives it all its power and so that's why we go

to our own hearts and as we if we're not careful we allow that sinful desire that love that lust that over desire to reside in our hearts to find a comfortable place it just takes the right circumstances now before we are drawn to an expression of that sinful desire it's been in our hearts but the circumstances haven't quite been right for it to raise its head so then all it takes is maybe a disrespectful child an unkind word from your husband an unkind disrespectful word from your wife out of the heart it comes through your mouth and you say something or your hands you do something and it's distortion you look nothing like what

God has designed you to be in your role as a husband wife or child and that wasn't because mom or dad husband or wife it's because of what was laying in our hearts that we allowed to stay there and be comfortable and that we didn't turn it aside of course then after desire is conceived it gives birth to sin now you speak and act in ways that will give you what you think you must have or you think and act in sinful ways because you're not getting what you think you must or should have the person might withdraw in various ways no communication might retreat to themselves in personal activities other people not eat with the family not participate family activities give themselves to longer work hours or to something else it might find different expressions or the person might attack in various ways yelling slamming doors nagging criticizing physical abuse gossip etc and on and on it goes the distortions will look different probably for each one of us in the expression of our love for this idol the result when it's full blown it gives birth to death this verse alerts us to the progression of sin and its ultimate consequence death all along this sinful pathway to death is the distortion the misery that leads up to the death you know it's just like the devastation is way out here but it started back here in just little ways and it's probably grown a little bit over the years and over the years and maybe we've been able to hide it from our brothers and sisters in

Christ and then all of a sudden somebody leaves somebody here and we think what in the world happened I never would have thought that about so and so they would have been the last people I ever would have thought that that would have happened to but it didn't start way up here it started way down here and that's where it is for every one of us and for us to deceive ourselves and think well this would never happen it could happen it could happen if we don't start here from God's word and understand where the distortion could lead to so this morning my desire well not to have you leave happy and giddy over a lesson like this but really sobered in what could happen through what is probably happening through each one of us at some time during the week but not to leave you without hope as our memory verse is we can live in a new way we are no longer slaves to sin alive to

[41 : 26] God in Christ Jesus our Lord if we briefly the summation of the restoration confess our sin be renewed in our minds and put on the new man that's created in true righteousness and holiness we can be individuals and families that glorify God and enjoy his design and provide hope for those still in bondage to sin we can be those people God has given us everything we need for life of godliness and part of that certainly is our time together here this morning encouragement comfort challenge to each other from God's word accountability with each other counseling each other encouraging each other with the truth praying for each other that's how we will be the people that are distinct in the world today so let's pray and ask God to help us be those people and be that church where we are developing those kind of lives father we give thanks that we can come in prayer with hope and that we don't come as people defeated for Christ has defeated the enemy that we have no longer under the domain or in the domain of darkness no longer slaves to sin but father alive in Christ

Jesus and we admit that we need continued help by your Holy Spirit that we would be conformed more and more to the person of Jesus Christ and in all the roles that we fill whether it's as church members in our families or in our workplaces and we give thanks that you are all about that in making your children more and more like Jesus Christ and so we give thanks for that in Jesus name amen