



Week 3
**NO MORE WEAK
LEADERSHIP**

Once the NFL regular season ends, teams decide which coaches they'll keep and which ones have to clean out their offices. Every year Black Monday, as it's called, sends coaches packing. Not because any coach dropped a pass or missed a field goal. Not because a coach couldn't connect with his receivers or make a block. No, the coaches are fired because the players under their leadership didn't perform in a way that met the owners' expectations. Leadership stretches far beyond you.

Why did God look for Adam even though it was Eve who first ate the fruit?

In what ways are leaders accountable for the people under their care and supervision?

In this week's study we'll explore God's design for a man's leadership. We'll also examine the consequences poor leadership can have on a man's legacy. God has a definite design in mind for strong leaders, and He has created men to live out that design as their destinies.

Ask someone to pray before watching the video teaching.

WATCH

Use these statements to follow along as you watch video session 3.

Since God is the manufacturer, He should be the One who defines what a man is and who a man truly is to be.

At the core of a definition of a man and his leadership responsibility is that he is responsible, even if he's not to blame.

God created man before he created woman because man was to be the foundation not only for the family but for the culture.

It's possible to be a male by gender but not a man by responsibility, leadership, and function.

God wants to rule over every male so that they become a man, and He wants to be in intimate relationship with every male so that we understand that God is a God not just of overseeing but of intimacy.

Every man is to be under divine authority, and when we rebel against that, our world will collapse.

I get to take what God brings, assign to it a meaning, an identity, and a destiny. I get to exercise kingdom authority by the King's permission.

If you're going to be a real man, you have to accept accountability to be under God.

In your personal relationship to Jesus Christ, God wants to grab you and pull you back into the garden of spiritual responsibility, of spiritual identity, of spiritual authority. He wants to give you back what Satan has robbed you of.

MAN UP

Use the following questions to discuss the video teaching.

Read the following verse together.

I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.

1 CORINTHIANS 11:3

This verse describes a chain of command. It reveals a hierarchy that, when followed, ushers in authority, peace, and spiritual power. Unfortunately, far too many men focus on the latter part of the verse instead of the former. When men complain to me, as their pastor, that their wives aren't submitting to their headship, one of the first questions I ask is whether they're submitting to Christ. It starts there.

What does submitting to Christ look like in practical, everyday actions?

When you build a house, you start by laying the foundation. Everything that's placed on the structure of that foundation depends on the stability of the structure itself. If the foundation shifts, cracks will appear on the walls. If the foundation crumbles, the result might be broken pipes or a sewage leak. The foundation determines the strength of all that rests on it.

God created men to serve as the foundation of their homes, churches, and communities. Strong leadership by men provides stability for the people underneath them. Weak, fractured leadership leads to broken lives all around them. Strong leaders model the leadership of Christ, who laid down His life to serve the church (see Mark 10:45; Eph. 5:25). Strong leaders seek the benefit of all under their care. That's a foundation you can trust.

Describe some ways men can live as strong leaders in their homes, churches, and communities.

On the video Dr. Evans said, "It's possible to be a male by gender but not a man by responsibility, leadership, and function." One way Satan seeks to disarm God's advancement of His kingdom agenda on earth is to downplay the need for male leadership. But strong male leadership is essential to carrying out God's rule.

What does it look like to be a male by gender but not a man by responsibility, leadership, and function?

When Adam hid from God in the garden and sought to cover himself with leaves, he was using gifts from God to hide behind. After all, God had provided the vegetation for Adam's use. We do the same thing today. Although the gifts we hide behind might not be clothes sewn with leaves, they might include our ability to talk ourselves out of a corner, our innate business mind, our athletic skills, or our God-given blessings. Using our

gifts and blessings to advance God's kingdom fulfills the calling of a kingdom man. But hiding behind them to say, "Hey, I'm not so bad after all," as Adam did, is an effort to avoid taking responsibility. Rather than hide, I want to encourage you to rise to the calling of strong leadership that God has given to you. The past no longer controls you. You can lead well, starting today.

In what ways might men attempt to hide behind their blessings to give the outward appearance that they're strong spiritual leaders?

What specific, practical steps can you take this week to live according to God's standard of leadership?

PRAYER

Close the session with prayer.

Father, You've charged us with the calling of leadership. As men under Your kingdom rule and authority, we accept that call in every area of our lives, starting with our hearts and wills. Give us wisdom and insight to regularly and consistently live as the leaders You've created us to be. In Christ's name, amen.

HIT THE STREETS

Overcoming Negative Outcomes

Negative outcomes always occur when a man sins. The Bible affirms this truth in harsh terms in Adam's story. Scripture calls the outcome death. Sin and death are always linked. You can't sin and not die. Every time sin is committed, a death also occurs—a separation somewhere in some form. This separation may be spiritual, emotional, or relational. James wrote:

*When lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and
when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.*

JAMES 1:15

You can overcome the negative outcomes of sin by applying the truth of God's Word to each form of death.

1. Spiritual Separation

A spiritual rift forms in your relationship with God when you sin. However, good news comes through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through Christ your relationship with God can be restored to a deep level of intimacy. But first you must confess your sins and repent:

*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous
to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all
unrighteousness.*

1 JOHN 1:9

2. Emotional Separation

One common negative outcome of sin is emotional death in your hopes, dreams, love, and self-worth. Over time the cumulative effect of emotional loss can lead to devastating results, whether through addictions, distancing yourself from other people, or simply shutting down. However, when you repent of our sins, God restores your emotional well-being:

After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

1 PETER 5:10

3. Relational Separation

Difficulties in your relationships—in your family, your work, or your social circle—are a direct result of sin. Whether this separation occurs because of your own sins or those of others, forgiving yourself or the person who wronged you will usher in relational healing. Paul reminds us where to begin and, more important, why:

Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

EPHESIANS 4:32

Sin brings about negative outcomes, but you can overcome them by applying these scriptural principles to the spiritual, emotional, and relational spheres of life.

BIBLE STUDY 1

Shame on You

Adam and Eve hid from God in the garden primarily because of their shame. When their eyes had been opened to their fallibility and sin, they sought to cover themselves with whatever they could find and then hid in the garden.

“Shame on you” is a common phrase parents may tell their children in an effort to correct behavior. Maybe a teacher said it to you when you were in elementary school. The phrase seeks to let someone know that his behavior doesn’t align with the expectations of the authority figure. You may have also heard a statement that frequently follows: “You should have known better.” That’s often true. We probably did know better.

Read Genesis 2:25–3:12 and answer the following questions.

What happened between Genesis 2:25 and Genesis 3:10 that caused Adam to feel shame about his nakedness?

In what way does personal sin contribute to our feelings of shame and fear?

Shame causes many people to hide, not only from God but also from themselves and the people they love. Shame leaves its indelible imprint on your psyche at such a deep level that you may feel other people know what you did just by looking at you. It dampens your confidence, destroys your dignity, and silences your speech. Shame is a tool Satan employs to sideline the children of God. All true leadership is rooted in God’s leadership, and shame keeps you from embracing His leadership and from drawing near “with confidence to the throne of grace” (Heb. 4:16).

Whom did God question first? How did Adam’s sin cause him to exercise weak leadership?

How can personal shame disrupt intimacy in our relationships? Why does Satan seek to divide our relationships?

Eve ate the fruit when Adam wasn't watching. He wasn't exercising care over creation as God had commanded him. Notice that God asked Adam where he was, not Eve. This doesn't mean God didn't hold Eve accountable for her actions, but it seems to indicate that God held Adam to a standard of leadership that Adam hadn't met. Next Adam blamed both God and Eve because it was He who gave Eve to Adam and the fruit to Eve. Weak leadership is always born in sin and often breaks down our relationships.

Has shame ever created distance in your relationship with God? If so, in what ways?

In today's economy and virtual-connectivity workplace, many businesses are shifting to an off-site work arrangement. Fewer and fewer employees are required to put in a forty-hour workweek at the office. Texts, virtual meetings, and email allow us to communicate, but they don't allow the opportunity for a greater level of nonverbal feedback and intuitive understanding. Studies indicate that 93 percent of all our communication is nonverbal. Remove that element of proximity, and you remove much of the communication process altogether.

That's exactly why Satan sought to remove Adam and Eve from regular proximity with God. He knew if he could reduce the face-to-face time they shared with their Creator, he could significantly interfere with God's purposes and plans in and through their lives. Shame makes meaningful dialogue and intimate sharing a struggle rather than a flow.

What should Adam have done instead of running away from God?

Adam went in the opposite direction of God's presence when he experienced shame. And so do we. If Satan can keep us from walking with God in the cool of the day, he can keep much of what God wants to accomplish through us from being done as well.

Sin negatively affects our relationship with God at such a deep level that we can literally start to avoid Him and go into spiritual hiding. Somehow we convince ourselves that if we do, God won't know the things we've done, said, seen, or thought. Strong leadership means we take ownership over our sins and failings and don't allow sin to hinder our relationship with God.

Weak leadership shirks responsibility. Strong leadership humbly admits a mistake and receives forgiveness. How should we approach God when we've sinned?

Be honest with God. Be authentic. Come clean. Throw away the fig leaves. They'll wear out anyhow, and they don't look all that good on you. Shame is a tool of Satan to keep you from living out your full purpose and destiny. It's a clever tool that holds many men back. But if there were no such thing as sin, there would have been no need for a Savior. Jesus died so that your sin wouldn't enslave you. You're forgiven. You're clean. He paid the price. You don't have to hide and fail to accept responsibility.

Read the following verse.

*There is now no condemnation for those who are
in Christ Jesus.*

.....
ROMANS 8:1

Are you willing to let your shame go and accept Christ's complete forgiveness?

God knew where to find Adam, and He knows where to find you too. And when He does, He will have three questions for you similar to those He asked Adam:

1. "Where are you?" (Gen. 3:9).
2. "Who told you that you were naked?" (Gen. 3:11).
3. "What is this you have done?" (Gen. 3:13).

God is asking you these questions so that you can answer them, not because He doesn't know. He wants to see whether you're going to tell Him and yourself the truth. He doesn't want to hear you say you made a mistake or had a temporary lapse in judgment. It's deeper than that. Sinful rebellion against a holy God brings consequences. Repentance must come with an honest acknowledgment of what you've done.

All of the issues and crises we face today because of sin in the world have nothing to do with fruit. They have to do with what the fruit stood for, what it meant. Eating the fruit declared that Adam and Eve wanted to be like God. They wanted to be their own gods. The defining issue was whether they wanted to surrender to God or make their own decisions. Because they chose to exalt themselves above God's rule and reign in their lives, they broke fellowship with God. The natural outgrowth of their sin caused them to hide and separate themselves from the intimacy they once knew.

List some ways men seek to make their own decisions in our culture apart from God's leadership.

PRAY

Pray about your willingness to come clean with God. Ask Him to remove any residue of shame that may still linger in your life. Praise Him that in Christ you're fully forgiven and can access His authority and rule with all the boldness and courage that come from a relationship with Him.