

Women
Who
Made a
Difference

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Women Who Made a Difference

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Dedication

- To the memory of my husband, Don, who was the most loving and encouraging man I know. He was a constant source of inspiration and information.
- To my two daughters, Debra McMillan and Joanna Kubiak, two women who have truly made a difference.
- To my good friend Callie Butler and my son-in-law Gene McMillan, who helped me in my many computer struggles.
- To my dear friend Doris Tabler, who helped me so much by reading many of these lessons and giving me her input.

Preface

CAN ONE WOMAN make a difference? I believe so! The ten lessons in this study present twelve Bible women who did just that. They were women of various ages, from different backgrounds and social levels. Some were career women who were used of God in national leadership; some were stay-at-home moms who focused on their homes and families. Most were Jewish women, but two were Gentiles. From the woman who brought sin into the world to the one who brought our Savior into the world, all were women who made a difference.

Even though you may be familiar with these Bible characters, I trust you will benefit in the following ways: (1) gain new knowledge and insights about these women; (2) be encouraged to become all that God intends for you to be; (3) determine to serve God better than you ever have before.

Each lesson starts with an overview of the character's life. Then the lesson moves into "Study the Scriptures." The subheads in this section will make it easy to spread your Bible study over several days, if you so desire. The final section of each lesson is "Make a Difference in Your World." As you reflect on the things you have learned about each Bible woman, you will want to make some definite decisions and take some deliberate actions to put the truth into practice.

So pick up your Bible and a pencil, ask God to open your heart to His truth, and study each lesson with the determination to apply the truth to your life.

And remember . . .

Never underestimate the power of a woman!

LESSON 1

Eve: First Lady of Creation

Genesis 1—3

EVE WAS THE FIRST lady of creation and the mother of us all. She was the *first* woman, the *first* wife, and the *first* mother. She had no role models or examples. She had no one to tell her how to do things. She had neither mother nor mother-in-law. Except for one notorious deed, very little is known about this first lady of creation. But this one deed gave Eve the distinction of making the *greatest difference of any woman who ever lived*. Her action still affects us today—and, sad to say, not for good.

Eve lived in Paradise with a husband who adored her. She was beautiful and intelligent and had the perfect marriage. She was the one woman who could honestly say that she had nothing to wear!

At the time of her creation, Eve was innocent. She had never sinned. She and her husband had perfect fellowship with God.

Adam and Eve were blessed by God. He put them in charge of His wonderful creation. They were to rule over it. But things changed in Paradise.

Satan used a serpent as his instrument to get to Eve. He tempted her and cast doubt on what God had said. He changed the meaning of what God had said by *ever so slightly* changing the wording. Satan tried to create an image of God as someone who was withholding something wonderful from her. Satan

succeeded. Eve took of the fruit and gave some to her husband, thus ending the only perfect marriage in history.

Creation was marred, and sickness, disease, death, and all evil were introduced into the world. Every person since Adam and Eve has been born a sinner.

Yet God still loved Adam and Eve. He sought them and made a way to restore fellowship. Eve's life shows us how God deals with us when we sin and how our fellowship with Him can be restored.



Study the Scriptures

Life in a Perfect Environment

Let's look at life in the Garden of Eden. God created the heavens and the earth plus all the plants and animals; then He created mankind. The creation of people was special and different than the rest of creation. The animals were created in pairs, male and female. But God made only Adam at first; later He made Eve. Someone has jokingly said that God must have taken a good look at Adam and said, "I can do better than that!" so He made Eve.

1. Each time God finished a day of creation, He looked at it and said it was good. But after creating Adam, what did God say? Read Genesis 2:18.

2. God put a need in Adam's heart. Then God met Adam's need. How did He do this? Read Genesis 2:18 again.

God gave Adam time to name the animals before He made Eve. (Wouldn't you like to know what language Adam spoke as

he named the animals?) The animals must have passed by two by two because Adam realized a big difference between himself and the animals.

3. How did naming the animals show Adam his need for a mate? Read Genesis 2:19 and 20.

Adam noticed that Mr. Lion had Mrs. Lion and Mr. Elephant had Mrs. Elephant, but Mr. Adam had no Mrs. Adam.

4. God allowed time for Adam to realize he was incomplete. Why do you think God did this?

5. Read Genesis 2:21 and 22. Describe how God made Eve.

Someone has said that God did not take the bone from Adam's head so that he could boss Eve, nor from his feet so he could walk on her. God took the bone from under Adam's arm so he could protect Eve and from close to his heart so he would love her.

Wouldn't you like to have seen the look on Adam's face when he saw Eve?

6. Did Adam recognize Eve as the mate God had created for him (Genesis 2:23)?

Eve had just come from God's hand, and Adam recognized

immediately that she was what he needed to fill the vacuum in his life. He was grateful. This is a good lesson for a married woman: Be thankful for your mate and recognize him as God's gift.

God designed Eve to help Adam. She was a helper who was "meet," or suitable, for him (Genesis 2:18). Some women think being a helper is degrading. Other women seem to think their role is to be just like a man. Neither is true. As hard as some women try, they still cannot be exactly like men. Why? The Creator designed them to be different—"male and female created he them" (Genesis 1:27). Notice that "different" does not mean "inferior."

Women find fulfillment when they function as God designed them. Adam could not make it through the first twenty-four hours without a helper. The role of helper is a good role. The Bible says that God is our helper (Hebrews 13:6). By nature, women seem to be good helpers to their husbands, children, aged parents, and even their bosses. God made Adam to take care of the ground and Eve to take care of Adam.

A Look at the Perfect Couple

7. Adam and Eve were no doubt beautiful beyond description, with healthy bodies and great personalities. What pattern (image, or likeness) did God use to make mankind? Read Genesis 1:26.

This does not mean that we look like God physically, but that we possess the characteristics of God, such as an intellect, emotion, and will.

8. What does the first phrase of Genesis 1:28 say that God did?

What a wonderful privilege Adam and Eve had to be made by God and then to be blessed by Him!

Genesis 2:7 summarizes God's creation of mankind. God made us with self-consciousness, self-determination, and the

ability to choose between right and wrong. We can feel complex emotions such as joy or sadness. We can speak intelligently—not just parrot what someone taught us to say. We have the ability for complex thoughts such as math and science. But most of all, we can worship and fellowship with God.

At first things went well for Eve. She enjoyed intimacy with her husband and with God. But calamity lay ahead as the *serpent* entered this story. As we look at Eve's temptation, may God help us to learn principles that will help us in our times of temptation.

Temptation and How It Works

Did snakes talk in the Garden of Eden? I do not know. But I know that Satan spoke through *this* snake. It was the instrument he used to get to Eve. Eve did not seem at all surprised that a snake talked. It seems that before sin entered the world, snakes were beautiful and intelligent creatures. Adam and Eve may have spent a good deal of time around snakes. At any rate, Eve easily entered into a discussion with this creature.

Satan knew of the fellowship between God and Adam and Eve. And Satan saw the tender love between Adam and Eve. Satan was bent on destroying these relationships. Satan still hates the children of God and wants to destroy these wonderful things (e.g., relationships, love, fellowship) in their lives.

9. How does 1 Peter 5:8 describe the Devil and his activities?

If you knew that someone was prowling around and trying to kill you, wouldn't you be on the lookout for him? Since the Bible tells us that Satan is out to devour us, shouldn't we be on the lookout for him?

Satan came to Eve as a friend, appearing to be something he was not. He offered Eve a way to have happiness and wisdom. He was deceitful and didn't tell the whole truth. He is still doing these same things today.

10. How did Satan undermine God's Word? Read Genesis 3:1.

Unbelief starts with questioning what God says. Shading God's truth, even if it is only a little, can be disastrous.

At first glance, Eve appeared to repeat what God had said. But as we look more closely, we see she was actually tampering with God's Word.

11. What did Eve add to God's Word? Compare Genesis 3:3 with Genesis 2:16 and 17.

This addition may have seemed logical to Eve, but it was not what God had said. We need to be careful that we do not add to (or subtract from) God's Word—even if we think it is logical.

12. What *did* God say about eating fruit from the trees in the Garden (Genesis 2:16, 17)?

Let's look at the sequence of Eve's sin.

- She listened to Satan. She let him express his ideas to her. She started thinking that maybe God was wrong, that maybe she was capable of deciding good from bad herself.

- She and the serpent looked at the fruit together. The Bible says to flee temptation. (See, for instance, 2 Timothy 2:22.) We are to distance ourselves from sin, not see how close we can get without sinning.

- She lusted and desired the fruit that would make her wise. She thought this fruit would make her happy. It looked good. What a giant step in the wrong direction! From that time to the present, all evils are the result of this act of lustful disobedience. Still today we are guilty of demanding immediate gratification, of not considering the effect of our actions on our future.

- Eve took the fruit and ate it. The previous three steps led to the actual sin.

- She shared it with her husband. When we sin, we often involve others. Women have a tremendous power to influence their families for right or wrong.

13. Dealing with temptation is an age-old problem. Read James 4:7. What two commands are given in this verse and what is the result of obeying these commands?

14. How will obeying these commands help us deal with temptation?

The High Cost of Sin

15. What do these New Testament verses say about Eve's temptation: 2 Corinthians 11:3 and 1 Timothy 2:14?

Satan tricked Eve into doubting God's Word. Strangely enough, he uses the same tactics today. We know how he operates, yet we just keep buying his line!

16. Temptation comes into our lives in what three ways, according to 1 John 2:16?

Eve opened herself to sin by gazing upon the forbidden fruit. She saw that it was good for food ("the lust of the flesh") and

pleasant to the eye (“the lust of the eyes”) and that it would make her wise (“the pride of life”), so she took it and ate it.

17. Notice the setting in Genesis 3:12–17 as God met with the serpent, Eve, and Adam. Where does it appear that Adam was when Eve was tempted?

Adam did not try to stop Eve from eating; he ate also. He was as guilty as she was.

18. What happened as soon as Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3:7, 8)?

When they committed the fatal deed, the promised results came (though not as they had hoped). Adam and Eve tried to hide from their sin and cover it. They lost the bliss of their innocence. They gained, instead, a sense of guilt and shame. Before they sinned, they knew good and did it. After they sinned, they still knew good, but they could not do it. Before they sinned, they were ignorant of evil and did not do it. After they sinned, they knew evil but could not stop doing it. (This condition is described in Romans 7:19.) Adam and Eve were defiled; they had become sinners.

Adam and Eve realized they were naked, so they sewed fig leaves together for clothes. This was an attempt to cover their sin by the works of their hands. Yet in their hearts they knew that their works were not good enough, so they tried to hide from God. As their children, we tend to do the same thing.

19. What does Isaiah 64:6 say our righteousnesses are like?

20. How can we be saved from our sin? Read Ephesians 2:8 and 9.

As soon as Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, they died spiritually; that is, they were separated from God. In addition, they had started the process of physical death. God could have left Adam and Eve in their sin and never spoken to them again, but He didn't.

21. According to Genesis 3:9, what did God do?

God, in His mercy and grace, reached out to Adam and Eve. He is the same today; He reaches out to you and me (Psalm 103:10–14).

22. When God confronted Adam and Eve, the blame game began. Read Genesis 3:10–13. (a) Whom did Adam blame?

(b) Whom did Eve blame?

By blaming Eve, Adam indirectly blamed God for giving him this woman. (Originally he was thrilled with her.) Eve blamed the serpent for deceiving her. We still tend to blame others for our sins instead of taking responsibility for our actions, don't we?

God killed an animal and used its skin to clothe Adam and Eve. This animal sacrifice pointed to the time Christ would die on the cross for your sins and mine. Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior? Do you have a personal relationship with God? If you have never asked Jesus to be your Savior or are unsure whether you have, I invite you to read the following verses that clearly explain the plan of salvation.

- Romans 3:23—All have sinned.
- Romans 5:8—Christ died for our sins.
- Romans 6:23—God offers salvation as a free gift.
- John 1:12—Receive, by faith, God's free gift.

You may want to express your decision to God in prayer. You could pray something like this: "Dear God, I know I am a sinner. I believe Jesus died for my sin. I personally and willingly ask You to save me. Help me live for You. In Jesus name, amen."

The story of Eve was not given as a matter of history, but to instruct us and to help us in our own lives. We learn from Eve how NOT to deal with temptation. As we gain victory in these areas, we can make a difference in our world.



Make a Difference in Your World

1. We all face temptation; even Jesus was tempted. It is not a sin to be tempted, but it is a sin to yield to temptation. If you feel you are being tempted in a certain area, follow the example of Christ in Matthew 4:1-11. Resist temptation by claiming the promises of God.

2. We learn from Eve that it is best to stay away from temptation. Pause and take a look at your life. What specific temptations do you face? Do you try to stay away from these temptations, or do you see how close you can get to them without yielding? Memorize James 4:7 and obey the commands of that verse.

3. When Adam and Eve sinned, God sought them and made a way to restore fellowship with them again. Regardless of what type of sin is in your life, God loves you and longs to have fellowship with you. Read 1 John 1:9. Confess your sin and accept His forgiveness today.

4. What lessons have you learned from Eve that will help you make a difference in your world?