

This One Scripture May Completely Alter Your View of Forgiveness

The Holy Spirit reminded me that Adam didn't pursue God, but God pursued Adam and drew close to him—despite Adam's disobedience (see Gen. 3:8–10.) Adam had no way to rectify his relationship with God, yet the Father drew near to him with a plan to repair what Adam had ruined. While this is amazing, it is not the most astonishing part.

The most astonishing part is that throughout Genesis 3, neither Adam nor Eve ever apologized—yet God forgave them! Adam never said, "I'm sorry." He never took ownership of his disobedience. He never said, "Please forgive me, God."

This point is what altered my perspective on forgiveness altogether. It changed the way I view the act and process of forgiveness.

In the case of Adam and Eve, as in our lives, the Scriptures ring loud and clear (see Rom. 5:6–8.) We were still sinners. We were ungodly. We weren't apologetic, contrite or repentant. We weren't looking for God or forgiveness. Yet prior to our admission of guilt, Christ had already provided the forgiveness and thus covered our sin.

When Adam sinned, it seems that he only knew guilt. His guilt was so overwhelming that in his view, there was no remedy (see Gen. 3:10.) But then he is introduced to the concept of forgiveness. The discovery of forgiveness provided by YHWH revolutionized Adam's relationship with God the Father. Presumably, when God chose to let Adam live, it caused Adam to worship, adore and appreciate God for the rest of his life. It endeared him to God like never before. God's forgiveness was not only a remedy for Adam and God, it was a remedy for him

and Eve as well.

In order to fully digest this divine act and introduction of forgiveness, we have to understand Adam's position at the point of his disobedience. The enemy deceived Eve, not Adam (see 1 Tim. 2:14). In this regard, Adam can be considered the one to whom the full act of disobedience was ascribed. He committed the act of sinning in full knowledge, without deception being necessary. I am emphasizing this possibility because I want to change the way you categorize and understand "sin." For Adam to sin, he must first be completely disobedient (see Gen. 3:17). Sin is the byproduct of disobedience.

Sin can be understood as a distortion of one's personality, perception and comprehension. And this certainly aligns with the post-sin descriptions of Adam and Eve.

The Bible says they immediately saw each other through a distorted perspective of nakedness, despite the fact that they were unclothed previously and had no shame (see Gen. 3:7–11, 21). Once Adam and Eve moved into a distorted perception of everything God had made and called "good," they now saw it as bad and covered themselves.

But how is it that eating of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" changed Adam and Eve's personality, perception and comprehension? It doesn't seem that this was a tree of categories—of understanding the difference between good and evil—despite the interpretations of many. Instead, it seems that when someone ate from the tree, they began to think of themselves as like God, with the ability to rely on their own discernment to distinguish between good and evil (see Gen. 3:22.) But they did so without the understanding of God. When you decide what is good and what is evil, based on your own personal beliefs, distortion will surely be present.

After eating of the tree, Adam and Eve looked at each other

through the distortion of sin, seeing one another as naked. What five minutes ago was good was now evil because they were now affected by sin. As a result of this distortion of personality, perception and comprehension, they covered themselves and hid from God. Adam even seemed to deny Eve the dignity of being his spouse when he was confronted with the holiness of God. He told the Lord, "The woman whom you gave to be with me—she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate" (Gen. 3:12).

Yesterday, his relationship with Eve was good, but today, after disobedience, that same relationship was bad in Adam's eyes. Sin is a byproduct of disobedience that causes us to function in a strange and distorted manner, impacting our comprehension of everything around us.

Adam's choice caused all of us to suffer from "sin distortion." It affects our personality, perception and comprehension so drastically that unless God speaks to us on a daily and continual basis, we cannot distinguish what is good and what is evil.

If you can incorporate this definition of what sin really is into your understanding of the divine act of forgiveness, then you can better understand why Adam did not apologize, ask for forgiveness or exhibit contrition. He was functioning under the distortion that sin brings. He was not himself anymore, and his perception was off. He couldn't even fully comprehend what he had done. Instead, he used the defense mechanisms of hiding and denial. Sin has affected people so much that they can't even comprehend the impact of their actions.

Yet, we expect people to be able to comprehend the hurt they have inflicted upon us and apologize effectively. This is impossible! Remember, they are not themselves. Their personality is skewed, their perception is twisted and their comprehension is perverted—and so it is with ours. Therefore, we are all in need of divine forgiveness first, and then

forgiveness from our brother or sister. {eoa}

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