

Weekly Message Study Guide

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Date _____ Speaker _____

The Edenic Covenant—Respect Boundaries | Week 2 | February 28

Genesis 1:26-31; Genesis 2: 5-17; Genesis 3

These study guides are designed for individual or group study but highly encouraged to be experienced in community with a small group or other friends on the journey with Jesus.

CONTEXT | Covenants are those circles of commitment from which come the best things in life. Through our Lenten series this year, we'll be looking at seven such circles that God invites people into in order to bless us and make our lives a blessing to others. Today we look at the first covenant of the new creation—the Edenic Covenant.

- What do you remember about the Garden of Eden? Talk about how you heard of it the first time. What was the point being made in that first "learning" of it?

Not a "Toddler Candy Challenge" | God did not set up Adam and Eve with a temptation to test their will-power. God is not testing their self-control.

- Read Genesis 1:26-31. Describe the setting--list all that God has provided.
- Let them have dominion....fill the earth and subdue it.....have dominion....every plant.....every tree...and It was very good.
- Talk about your response to this description. Is there any restraint in this blessing given to Adam and Eve?

Back to the Nature of COVENANT | Last week we learned there were three parts to a covenant.

- Basis of relationship between parties: Why being entered, shared mutual goals.
- Defining conditions: Each party give and receive, attitudes
- Consequences of failure: Defined for clarity and motivation.
- Read Genesis 2:15-17. Determine the three parts of this covenant.
- Is it a "fair deal"? What is the point of the covenant?

A Boundary within Paradise | Remembering that all the Garden was available for Adam and Eve to work in and to enjoy. And the provision to eat surely (ESV), freely (NIV, KJV), from any tree indicates a broad freedom, with one exception and a consequence.

- Talk about the consequences of the covenant. What does "die" mean here?
- What dies between God and man if this covenant is broken?
- What is the design if the covenant is kept?

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The Purpose of Boundary | If you have raised or have young children you quickly learn two things. They need protection from things they don't understand and two, they don't want to give up experiences that look interesting or fun. The challenge is to provide boundaries that permit appropriate fun yet keeping them safe so they can live to flourish.

- What was the choice before Adam and Eve? What did they think they were choosing?
- What was the true significance of that choice? How did God look at that choice?
- How does choice affect us today? What do we think we are choosing?

God's Offer of Love | Read Genesis 3. There are things better left alone - for toddlers, for teenagers and for adults. With God in the garden there was a choice to walk in the Garden freely and unburdened or to believe God is holding something back that is "interesting and fun."

- Have you ever faced a choice like that? Talk about what happened and how you see it now.
- Where in your life now does the Enemy whisper similar half-truths and lies that God is holding back from you?
- How has this past year effected what voice you listen to?

Flourishing Defined | Humankind is always pursuing. We are still pursuing God's original commission of Adam to "subdue the earth." A frequently used measure of what we are pursuing is to examine our checkbook and our calendar--how we use our money and our time.

- By those measures, what are you pursuing? What does that say about your definition of flourishing?
- Is that definition your intent? How might you change some of the ways you choose? Can you take steps to re-write that definition?

Practice of the Week | *"Human history is the long terrible story of man trying to find something other than God which will make him happy."* C.S.Lewis

How might you pursue God this week? Focus on the choices you make. Small choices--whether I encourage the check-out person at Jewel; how I listen to my family at dinner; how I talk to my coworkers at lunch...God extends the invitation to live in and flourish in the care of His love and care. The same choice Adam and Eve had is ours today in Jesus. We can choose to "walk in the Garden with God" here and now...and flourish.