

Genesis 2:7-9, 15-17; 3:1-7

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S#1007

CW 382

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† Lessons in life. (2:7-9)

† Lessons in work. (2:15-17)

† Lessons in love. (3:1-7)

In the name of Jesus, dearly redeemed:

It was one of those movies that did not last long at the box office. Maybe that's because it was so depressing. Three brothers, the middle one named Tristan and played by Brad Pitt, were raised by their father in remote Montana in the early 1900's. That ought to have been a recipe for beautiful scenery and brotherly love. Unfortunately, they all loved the same woman. In typical Hollywood fashion no one can control his emotions so the youngest brother dies in the war, leaving behind his fiancé to sort things out with the two older brothers while they nearly destroy themselves and each other by jealousy.

I'm not sure why, but they called it "Legends of the Fall." But that title helps explain why human hearts just don't get it. Something inside us wants to believe that the first Fall in Genesis 3, was nothing more than myth and legend. Fallen human logic would rather believe some scientist or Bible scholar who won't last a hundred years, than the one true authority who was actually there, i.e., the eternal God. Thankfully, you and I do not have to struggle under the weight of self-destroying emotion. We can look back by faith past all the centuries of manmade legends to the God-inspired truth. We are blessed today to learn not "legends," but **Lessons of the Fall – Lessons in life, ...in work, ...in love.** First...

† Lessons in life. (2:7-9)

Contrary to popular belief human beings did not evolve from slime. That right away ought to make us all feel better about who we are and why we're here. Our Lord Jesus confirms that the ancient record of Genesis was written by Moses. (Luke 24:27) The Bible is the only book that claims to have been inspired by God Himself through holy writers. This is not the claimed work of some angel in the desert like the *Koran* for Mohammed or the *Book of Mormon* for Joseph Smith. By the miracle of verbal inspiration the Holy Spirit told Moses the exact words He wanted him to write in ancient Hebrew. Moses, living in 1500 B.C., wrote with absolute accuracy about events "*in the beginning*," about 2500 years earlier. This is not to say that Moses could not have used written and oral histories from previous generations. The Bible does talk at times about other books which were lost in antiquity. But the Bible's claim is that every word which was written in the original Hebrew of the Old Testament and Greek of the New, had the Holy Spirit's stamp of approval making it absolutely trustworthy as solid historical fact.

Sometimes we have a very sad view of **life** because we forget how carefully and miraculously God gave **life** to us and all the plants and animals of this marvelous planet which God also created from nothing. During the six-day creation week God kept using the awesome power of His holy Word to say, "*Let there be...*," and it was – light on the first day; water and firmament (outer space) on the second; land, seas and plants on the third; sun, moon and stars on the fourth; birds of the air and fish of the sea on the fifth – and then on the sixth something very special. From the land God made all the land animals, including the dinosaurs. But for the last of His living creatures He took special care. Still on day six, "*God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness...' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*" (Genesis 1:26f NIV) The Holy Spirit tells us that "*the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.*" God gave man a soul, a sense of self capable of an intimate relationship with God and with the "*helper suitable for him*" (2:18), the woman

God created from man. Both were created in God's image, i.e., holy like God in their emotions, intellect and will. With dominion over all God's creation Adam could enjoy the special home God made for him and Eve, a Garden Paradise (Eden) bursting with fruit trees of all kinds, pleasing to the eye, delightful for food and growing right out of the ground. Our first **Lessons in life** show how God created **life** for our enjoyment with Him. And right in the middle of the Garden, God gave Adam and Eve some wonderful...

‡ **Lessons in work. (2:15-17)**

Some people don't like what God did in this part. They ask, "Why did God have to put the tree of the knowledge of good and evil right in the middle of the Garden? And why did God have to say, '**You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die**'?" That's like asking why a world class figure skater has to go out on the ice when it's so cold. Or why does a football player have to wear those heavy pads? And why does a man with a monster 4x4 have to get it all muddy every once in a while? Why does a piano player need to risk breaking a nail on a keyboard? Why do bright kids need college? Why does a good man look so hard to find a good woman?

Can anyone say, "Potential"? The fact that we even ask such questions of God shows how much potential we've lost. Adam at his worst lived nearly a thousand years. But God created Adam and with the potential to live forever. Notice: God did not forbid them to eat of the other tree in the middle of the garden, the tree of life. Obviously, God desired them and their descendants to reach full potential worshiping and working with God, happily ever after. Adam's **work** was what every farmer dreams about: total harvest. Think about it. No weeds, no insects, no hot or cold. No sweat in your eyes. "Adam, take care of my Garden," says God. "Pick all the fruit that needs picking, but don't sweat it. No weeds, no rot, no worries." Adam did not know death and rot anyway. In God's perfect world there was no sin. So Adam's **work** was pure pleasure, the creampuff job everyone wants, but with all the fulfillment of the most important job only a few ever get. And every time he walked past that **tree of the knowledge of good and evil**, Adam was exercising his awesome potential in the image of God. His holy intellect knew "good" from everything God gave, and "evil" from the one thing to which God said, "No." Adam's holy emotions along with those of lovely Eve felt "good" every time they said, "Yes!" to God and each other, and "No!" to the other tree. Free will was wrapped up in the pure pleasure of living in complete harmony with God, with nature and with one another. **Lessons in work** were lessons in joy.

‡ **Lessons in love. (3:1-7)**

God wanted paradise to last forever. There was no flaw in Adam or Eve, nothing wrong with God's perfect creation. God was giving them daily **Lessons in love** by holy communion with God, reflected in their unbridled passion for each other. But then they did what we always do because we are the children of Adam and Eve. They tried to take their **Lessons in love** from the old liar himself, the one created as a good angel who rebelled against God, was thrown out of heaven, and has spent the last 6,000+ years trying to destroy every relationship, especially any **love** between God and man or man and woman. Eve's sin came down to love of self. Adam's was love for Eve more than love for God. To this day whenever a man follows his wife instead of following God's Word by serving as a leader for his wife and family, he shows why each of us deserves no more **love** from God. And every time the woman loves herself more than her God, her man, her children, or her neighbor, she shows why together with the man not one of us deserves anything less than total destruction, tormented eternally in hell with Satan.

That day God gave Adam and Eve some **Lessons in love** that show why our hope in Him is for now and forever. They doubted, but God kept His Word, promising and sending a Savior through the womb of the woman to save her and the man. That Savior is none other than Jesus Christ. His blood washes away every sin since **the Fall** – sins against **life**, against **work**, against **love** – cleansing away all sins against our loving Creator God. Most everyone in Hollywood seems intent on making sure they never get it until it's too late. Pray for them. Meanwhile, enjoy **Lessons of the Fall** starting now, just by believing God's Word. No "legends" here because God never lies. Just look at the cross. Amen.