

The Curse on the Woman, Part 1

Scripture: Genesis 3:16

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Well, I cannot tell you how critically important our study in the book of Genesis is. It seems as though the whole literate world of elite scholars is pre-occupied in modern times with this matter of origins, trying to sort out how we got to where we are and why people behave the way they behave. And without an understanding of the early chapter of the book of Genesis, their quest is really hopeless and ill-fated.

We have the privilege of opening the Word of God and digging in and having a true and accurate understanding of origins...the origin of the physical world as well as the origin of the spiritual world and the moral world. All of those elements are unfolded to us in the book of Genesis, the early chapters.

We're in chapter 3 of Genesis and looking at the origin and impact of sin. Why there is evil in the world, why there is trouble in the world is all explained right here. And in our on-going study of this third chapter, we come now to verse 16. And in Genesis 3:16 we find the divine curse on the woman. And I want to read it to you.

It says, "To the woman, He...being God...said, 'I will greatly multiply your pain,' and the Hebrew text says, "and childbirth, in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you."

I've lived long enough and I've been in enough places in the world to know that the plight of women in the world is very difficult. We have it the best here in America and still the plight of women is very difficult. I have seen the struggles that women go through in all corners of the world. It's very hard being a woman, and throughout human history it has been very hard and in many places in the world today, it's very little different than it has been since ancient times.

In general, women are the slaves of men. Men who, in general, have little interest in their personal needs, very little interest in their feelings, their emotions, their sufferings. In general, men have throughout human history used women for sexual fulfillment, for domestic duties, to tend to the children. All over the world women have been subjugated and humiliated. And until modern times, men actually held the power of life and death over women...and still do in some tribal regions.

This harsh treatment of women which is pretty much the general pattern of human history, was not the original design of God. Sin brought it in and it therefore corrupted the original relationship between man and woman, between woman and her children and made life very difficult. And while there is general suffering in the world that everybody goes through because of death, because of disease, because of disasters, we all have a measure of suffering because of sin. Sin has brought about death and decay and decline and disintegration and we all understand that. We all live with accidents and illnesses and disasters of one kind or another. There are just those general matters in a fallen world that expose us all to harm and ultimately to death.

But in a very specific way, women have a general category of suffering and primarily their suffering is related to two things. It's related to their children and their husbands. Apart from the general sufferings that all of us go through, which I just mentioned, there's a particular area of suffering that belongs only to women, and that is the perennial bearing and caring of children and the perennial dealing with husbands. It is a hard and has been a hard and relentless and awful...often sorrowful duty through most of history and even today.

It isn't that women can't find some measure of joy in their children. They can. It isn't that they don't find some measure of joy in their husbands if they are reasonably kind and thoughtful to them. They can. But the fact of the matter is it is the unique burden for women to bear, to have to deal with children with pregnancy, to have to deal with husbands who do not understand them, nor care for them compassionately and with understanding. In most societies throughout human history they have been treated, women have, as second class, if that, maybe fifth class would be better.

They have in most cultures belonged to men for their own usage. For whatever the men commanded and whatever the men desired, the men have dominated them. And they can do that because by sheer force of human strength, they have power to exercise over women. They have obviously, of course, impregnated women and therefore they have exposed women constantly to death.

Throughout most of human history, childbearing took a woman to the brink of death. Even so today in Third World countries, women go into pregnancy realizing they could die, to say nothing of losing the child they've carried in their womb for nine months. Mortality rates are still high in many places and through human history, more babies have perished in birth than have lived.

There are then great difficulties and dangers that are associated with being a woman. To say nothing of carrying around a child for nine months in your womb and then having to release that child into the world with all of its hostilities and all of its threats and all of its dangers, whether they be physical dangers or whether they be moral dangers...the child now finding its independence and because the child by nature is a sinner, wicked, that child is going to find everything destructive to entertain itself and therefore a mother has a heart that never rests. She worries about not only about what may harm the child physically but what may destroy the child's soul. There are not only accidents and plagues and injuries that can worry the mother. There is that rebellion that will break her heart. There is that

child that moves away into a kind of life that grieves a mother. And the more children she has, the worse it is. And throughout most of human history, she had as many children as she conceived and were actually born, there were no contraceptions as in modern time. And so women were sentenced to submit to their husbands at their sexual whims and then to bear the children that were born. And then to spend their whole lives carrying, bearing, nursing and nurturing and then carrying the load of love that watched those children fall into danger after danger and even break their own mothers hearts.

What we see in Third World countries today in some areas of the world, is what most of the world has endured through all of its history. I have been in the mountains of the Andes in the little village of Kolta(?) where they're still killing animals with their bare hands and trying to raise children. I have been in the most poverty-stricken slums of the city of Calcutta and I've seen mothers sitting with malnourished babies in their arms, scooping water out of a sewer, literally a sewer running down the street just off the edge of the curb and there is the water they drink and there is the sewer in the same place. I have seen in places in Africa malnourished babies...you've seen them in pictures if not in person. I mean, we know about that. We understand that. Seen the tribal people, some of them of South Africa, living in their shanty towns, seen in Capetown a town of at least a million people built out of rubbish at the end of the runway of the Capetown Airport as people try to eke out an existence. And it seems the worst of it is borne by the mothers who are either fearing pregnancy, pregnant, giving birth, nursing babies or trying to control their children running wild in the streets and being threatened by every kind of danger.

It's hard for women throughout history. They have had the children they wanted and probably the children they knew they couldn't care for, they've been unable to care for them. They've been broken-hearted by them and if they're still young enough they know there are more children to come as they submit to the desires of their own husbands. So women year after year after year are faced with this kind of life.

Steve Lanetti(?) was telling me in the years that they worked with the Taleabo(?) people over in Indonesia, tribal people, that women literally had children by the dozens. They were completely worn out physically, emotionally and mentally at a relatively young age just trying to sustain all these pregnancies and to care for and nurture and nurse and tend to all these children in all the issues of their lives. We all have seen whether on television or in a magazine or somewhere photographs of the terrible, terrible draughts and consequence famines that occur so often in the land of Africa. And we see these mothers and they're holding little babies, the bones are exposed, you know that well and the flies are landing on their face and going up their nose and in their ear. And while they're holding the one that's dying, there are two or three sitting around there that are on the brink of death and those mothers themselves malnourished know that it could well be the reality that they'll be pregnant again very soon. And childbirth throughout human history is dangerous. Many...most children died and mothers then lived with suffering and sorrow, their own fear of death and the fear of

the death of their children.

Admittedly, modern science in more recent years has developed through the Christian-influenced west, which is where modern science has come from and modern medicine, it's really a product of the Reformation. Modern science has developed medicines and medical care and contraception and education and in some ways, at least in the western world, mitigated the physical trauma of childbirth and the relentlessness of it and given the woman a measure of comfort, but hasn't all together removed the problem because women still die and babies are still born deformed or born ill or born dead. And then there's still that worry. There's still that fear. You don't have to fear that your baby might be eaten by a lion but you do have to fear that your baby might be run over by a car. You don't have to fear that your baby's life might be taken by a member of another tribe, but you do have to fear that your baby might become a child influenced by wicked influences in the lives of other young people who would then turn your child into some kind of criminal and shatter a mother's heart.

So in general, women have had a hard life. I was talking to the rabbi this week and I said to him, "You know, I'm going to be preaching on Genesis 3 and I would just want to know what is your view of the curse on women? Do you believe that when God cursed women it was only the pain that she would experience at the moment of birth, just the pain of childbirth?"

And he said, "Oh no, the rabbis don't believe that. The rabbis believe this..." and he went on to tell me a very interesting perspective. He said, "The rabbis have always taught that a mother's highest joy is to carry her baby because the baby is totally protected, it is sheer joy. She worries about no evil influences on her baby because her baby has no evil influences. She worries about no disease and no illnesses. She worries about no accidents. That baby is in her womb in the safest place in the universe. And while she's carrying that baby and feeling that life in her womb, there is a kind of joy and a kind of fulfillment and a kind of exhilaration so that the rabbis...he said...have always believed that the woman is at her pinnacle of joy when she is pregnant. And then comes the birth."

"And then," he said, "comes the sorrow after birth, the post-partum blues, they call it, I guess. And the rabbis say that the woman is sad because her baby is not there anymore and there's a level of intimacy that is gone, but more than that, there's a level of protection that is gone. And now there's a new reason to fear illness and viruses and germs and all kinds of things. And as the child gets older, the disconnect is more profound because the child is exposed to greater and greater dangers physically and mentally and emotionally and spiritually. And the mother's heart grows in fears."

The rabbis have something, I think. As I said, the suffering in our society is softened somewhat in the advanced world but still women have pain and sorrow in that category that is unique to them. They bond with their children in a way that men don't know. And life frankly is not paradise for women. It has its joys, admittedly. But there is in the life of a woman a level of personal sorrow that is unique to her.

Now the question is...why is it so? Was this God's original intention? Was God originally designing that women would just have babies and babies and babies and babies every year of their life? And those babies would bring upon the women sorrow in the physical pain, sorrow in the brink of death at the time of birth and then sorrow in watching that little life struggle and try to find life. And then once received that life on its own, struggle against all the threats against that life and all the issues that can grieve and break a mother's heart. Was that God's original design?

No...no, it wasn't. That's all part of the curse. That's what verse 16 is saying. That's..that's part of the curse, that's not part of the original design. To the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply your pain and childbirth, in pain you shall bring forth children." Originally it wasn't that way. Originally having children was a paradise...it was a paradise. This is a...this is a curse, this is part of the curse. And on top of that, "Your desire shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you."

So here the curse is in two categories...her relationship to her children and her relationship to her husband. Let me tell you, folks, that defines a woman's fear, doesn't it? It's right there where she lives, where she feels the sentence of God.

Well, it's true of the man, too. We'll see that later on. The ground was cursed, that's where he lives. He's out there working the ground to make bread to feed his family and it's not easy. That's where his pain comes from. He wishes he could stay in the comfort of his home, it would all be well, but he can't. He has to go out and by the sweat and toil against a cursed earth make bread for his family.

And women, too, is cursed in the sphere of her work, in the sphere of her life, relationship with children and her husband. And to you women I say this, if you are somewhat surprised that you have trouble with your children and that you suffer pain in that area, both physical pain and emotional and sometimes deep, deep spiritual pain, and if you struggle with your husband, just know this, God didn't intend it that way in the beginning, that's a result of sin and you're bearing something of the effect of the curse that God put on Eve. And you say, "Well, you know, if I had been in the garden I wouldn't have done what Eve did so why should I have to pay?" The answer is, because God wants to remind you all the time how terrible sin is and what it's done.

So, this judgment falls into two areas that essentially are a woman's life...her children and her husband. And as I said, even in the advanced world where physical sorrow itself has been mitigated to some degree, even the pain of childbearing is mitigated by drugs and something that can alleviate the pain. Still dealing with children is difficult and that's where a woman finds her greatest difficulty because that's where her heart rests. And secondly, it's difficult dealing with husbands. You know, it may be difficult dealing with your husband when you're living in a Third World country or when in ancient times you were in some tribal environment, but from the looks of things today it probably isn't any easier to deal with a husband living in the fast pace of the twentieth century high-tech world who

may be equally or maybe even more insensitive to your needs if he's at home at all to find out what they are.

So, here is a mother continuing giving birth to little sinners and married to a big one. Now this is the sphere. And Genesis 3:16 explains succinctly about this. Though death will come to Adam and Eve, death will come because of sin, way back in chapter 2 verse 16 God commanded the man saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat for in that day you shall eat from it you shall surely die." Death did come. Death was the sentence of God on man and woman. Death was the result of their disobedience. The sentence of God, judicial sentence of God is given us here. For the woman it was serious pain in relationships with children and her husband. For man it was serious pain carving out his work in the world which was his defined category of life.

So, death was going to come. But even though death was going to come, they would still fulfill the original mandate. And what was the original mandate? Back to chapter 1 verse 27, "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created male and female He created them, and God blessed them and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and...what?...multiply,'" have babies, fill the earth. That was the original intent. God created them in the garden originally in perfection and in sinlessness and they had eternal life, they would never grow old, they would never age, they would never be ill, they would never be harmed, they would never die. This was an eternal existence at that point in the garden and God said to them, "You will be fruitful and multiply, you'll have babies in this environment." They would have had babies and the babies would have grown, but they never would have declined. We have babies and they grow and then they decline and they all go through the same cycle. But in the perfect world they would have babies that grew just like Jesus grew, right? In wisdom and stature and favor of God and man, in wonderful perfection that never declined, just grew to full maturity, become like a mature Adam or a mature Eve. They were going to populate the earth then too.

And even though they would die, they would still do that. That's clear from verse 16. You're still going to have conception, that's the word "childbirth" actually, you're still going to have conception, pregnancies which produce childbirth. You're still going to procreate. You're still going to populate the planet. That hasn't changed. So marriage hasn't changed...one man, one woman, cleaving together for life. Remember that was defined in chapter 2, a man would leave his father and a woman leave her father and mother as well, they come together, create this one flesh and produce children. So that's going to continue. You're still going to have babies.

But physical death will exist. And that's going to make the whole thing different because along with physical death comes disease and accident, injury and harm and sorrow and it's going to hit the woman naturally in the category where she has the most invested...in the most intimate of categories, which is her relation to her children and her relation to her husband. The race will survive and it will

procreate. But they will all die and be replaced. So sorrow will mark it for the woman and the man.

Now the two categories that define the life of women then are those two categories. That is why Paul writing to Titus in Titus 2:4 says, "You older women, teach the younger women to love their husbands and to love their children." That's what God wants out of the woman. Forget the briefcase, forget the road show, forget the career, love your husband, love your children. Stay in that category where the curse has fallen and by the power of God and the work of the Spirit you can transform it into something of paradise regained. And I'm going to say more about that, I think, if I had time, either tonight or next time.

Frankly, the history of the world knows absolutely nothing about the modern romanticized approach to marriage. The world doesn't know anything about the movie "Love Song" notion that is so short-lived and elusive today. The world knows that when a woman marries a man, there are times of great fulfillment and joy but it's also very, very difficult. And a woman's greatest troubles are going to come because she married a man, she now has a sinner for a husband and she's producing sinners and that surrounds her already sinful life with more sinful things to be concerned about and cope with.

Let's look at the text. "To the woman, He said," special word of divine judgment, not natural consequences, but judicial sentencing, "To the woman, He said..." this is specific and divine justice is very apparent in the sentence because the punishment, listen, stands in direct relation to the sin of the woman. It's a penalty consistent with her iniquity. In this way, divine wisdom displays itself. The punishment is calculated, listen, to keep awake in woman a direct remembrance of her sin in the garden. Every woman experiencing these areas of difficulty has a constant reminder of the sin of Eve.

God spoke to the woman with His sentence on her to serve as a constant reminder of her sin and it's a reminder to all women of the horror of sin in the beginning. Women through all history have very personal, very measurable reminders of the iniquity of Eden. And by the sentence, a woman's original condition is transformed.

You say, "What are you saying?" I'm saying this. She sinned in the pursuit of personal enjoyment. It looked good, good to the eyes. It was good for food and it would be something she would delight in because what it would do would be to satisfy a longing that had arisen in her. She wanted personal enjoyment. She wanted a joy that she thought was being withheld from her, so she sinned in the pursuit of personal enjoyment. She sinned in the pursuit of personal fulfillment. She sinned in the pursuit of personal satisfaction. And now in seeking personal fulfillment, personal satisfaction, personal joy with a man, she will find the categories of her greatest misery.

Let me say it another way just to sum it up. The curse on the woman falls into two areas. The two areas that define a woman's life and role in the world, two areas from which a woman...women in general can't escape. The curse is not housework, it's not laundry, it's not balancing the checkbook,

it's not cooking which is largely passing away in our culture anyway. The curse is the sorrows related to the very place where a woman seeks her highest joy in her husband and her children. It is in those areas that God speaks His judgment.

First, in relation to her children. "To the woman He said, 'I will greatly multiply your pain and childbirth.'" If you have an NAS look in the margin "and" it says your pregnancies or conceptions. I will greatly multiply your pain and your pregnancies, in pain you shall bring forth children.

When He says, "I will greatly multiply your pain," it's an interesting Hebraic phrase. The construction literally says this, "Causing to be great, I shall cause to be great your sorrow." It's redundant. He says it twice. "I will cause to be great, I will cause to be great your sorrow." The idea is intensification. "I'm going to bring upon you a great sorrow and that sorrow is going to come in the area of your children." Now listen very carefully to what I say because some people find an ethical problem in this. They say, "Well, wait a minute. God certainly couldn't curse the woman by exposing her to greater sinfulness or the greater effects of sin." That's what He did. Listen carefully to how I say this. It is consistent with God to make trouble a consequence for sin. It's consistent all through Scripture. God isn't making someone sin. God is not the author of sin. God is not the source of sin. But it is consistent with God to allow trouble as a consequence for sin. You see that all over the Scripture.

I mean, just go back to Deuteronomy where God says originally to Israel, "Obey Me and I'll bless you, disobey Me and I'll...what?...I'll curse you." You obey Me you will be blessed, you disobey Me and you're going to have big trouble. It isn't that God authors the disasters, it's that God doesn't prevent them.

It's classic. Romans 1, "When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God." So what happened? "God gave them over." What did He give them over to? The lusts burning toward one another, and then He gave them over to homosexuality in Romans 1...men with men doing that which is unnatural, women doing the same. And then He gave them over to a reprobate mind in the twenty-eighth verse of Romans 1 and out of that reprobate mind there's a list of wickedness that goes all the way down to verse 32. Literally, God turns them over to sin...trouble. It is not inconsistent with God to make trouble a consequence for sin. And trouble is inherently linked to sin.

So don't be surprised that the result of the curse is trouble generated by the impact of sin. That is consistent with what God has always done. In fact, if you're a believer and you disobey the Lord, God says He will chasten you. And all the negatives that would be defined as chastening, loss of blessing, maybe an illness, some trauma in your life, all the negatives that come to you under divine chastening are really the withholding of blessing that exposes you to the effect of sin. God just doesn't protect you. And even beyond that, you can read 1 Corinthians 5, and God Himself, the Lord Himself said, "Turn that sinning so-called brother over to...whom?...Satan and he'll learn not to blaspheme."

God uses the effects of sin to chasten believers. God used calamity which is an effect of sin to chasten Israel. All the categories of negatives that God promises those that are disobedient are connected to sin. Any temporal judgment which inflicts punishment is inherently linked to the effects of sin. So God is not at all out of line or inconsistent when He says to the woman, "You are going to be exposed to the impact of sin in a greater way because of what you've done, so are all women." The woman is exposed to sin's calamitous impact most intimately where she lives her life with her children and her husband.

Now He says, and I want to be careful with the words here because this is so succinct and has so much in it, "I will greatly multiply..." listen carefully to what I say, and remember that I just told you the literal translation of that is causing to be great, I shall cause to be great your sorrow. When it's translated "greatly multiply," it sounds like she already had pain, she already had sorrow. But you know better than that, right? Because before she fell, was there any pain? No. Was there any sorrow? No. It doesn't imply that there was already pain, it doesn't imply that there was already sorrow. Before the Fall there wasn't any pain and there wasn't any sorrow. That's why that Hebrew explanation "causing to be great I will cause to be great your pain." He is simply saying I will give you a great multiplied experience of pain, the likes of which you have never had. God is going to give to the woman multiplied pain, multiplied pain connected with multiplied conceptions...multiplied pregnancies.

By the way, the word "pain", your pain, it's *itsabon*, literally the same word is in verse 17, it's translated "toil" there in the NAS. It is a word that means pain and sorrow. It is a word that encompasses the experience and the emotion. In fact, one lexicon translated it this way, "*itsabon* means everything that is hard to bear...everything that is hard to bear." I'm going to bring on you everything that is hard to bear. I like that...in conceptions. Everything that is hard about having children...can include the pain of the actual birth, but it's beyond that, it's all the suffering that goes with having children. And "I'll greatly multiply, or causing to be great I'll cause to be great your pain AND your conception," the Hebrew says, "AND your conception." Listen to this, I am not only going to give you great pain, multiplied pain, but I'm going to give you multiplied conception.

That's a very important statement. I would venture to say, you have probably never thought about that statement. But here's what He's saying. I'm going to give you multiplied pain connected with multiplied conception. Her fertility was increased. That's part of the curse. Her fertility was increased. So the woman can conceive a child every month and when she conceives a child based upon her nursing pattern, she could essentially have a baby every year. She could be pregnant, pregnant, pregnant, have a baby, nurse the baby, as soon as the baby is weaned after a few months, she's capable of getting pregnant again, and pregnant again and pregnant again and pregnant again. And I believe before the Fall it wasn't like that.

You say, "What was it like before the Fall?" I don't know, it doesn't say that. Maybe she could only have one baby every 30 years. Well, what would be the difference, she's eternal? Right? And think of this, if they were eternal and never died and they were supposed to fill the earth, the earth is only...the earth is the same size now it was, isn't it? It's the same size. And if everybody lived forever, they'd have to go very slow at having babies or the planet would overflow because nobody died. Just take Adam and Eve, they lived over 900 years. They could have filled the earth just with their children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren. It's exponential. Live 900 years and have babies for 900 years and multiply all the other people that are born out of your family that are having babies and they're also living that long, and you've got the population of the world. In fact, by the time you get to Genesis 6 the whole world is densely populated with people and God drowns them in the Flood. They wouldn't have taken long, but if they were eternal, they couldn't go at that rate...plus nobody died so you never replaced anybody.

So what happened when God cursed the woman was multiplied fertility so that she would conceive more children than before the Fall which meant that God originally designed childbirth to be an experience much less frequent. There were other wonders to enjoy in His world. Since the Fall, however, women can conceive essentially every month and they can produce a child or multiple birth children every year. And in most parts of the world in human history, they just kept having babies and having babies, mostly at the whim of the husband and just kept having them. And that was life and whether they could feed them or not, or whether they will ill or not, the woman's life was totally consumed with the children and all of the rigors of childbirth and all of the fears and all of the illnesses. And guess who is home feeding the children all the time, and guess who is home nursing the sick ones and guess whose heart is being torn out when they rebel and when they wander away and when they're injured and they're ill and this is her life and this is not easy?

You see, remember in the original creation they were told to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. And there would have been a different pace, part of paradise. But after the Fall, everything sped up and a woman's life becomes totally dominated by children and everything is much more rapid and the earth gets filled fast and then there's a drowning and then it starts over. And here we are and we're filling the earth in just a few thousand years. That's okay, because it's a disposable planet, it's going to be destroyed in a few thousand years any way after its creation, isn't it? And all the people who were born will die anyway, leaving vacancies for the replacements and so women just keep filling up the earth, speed up the population.

Why? Just to constantly show the effect of sin by filling the life of women with the sorrows that go along with conception and childbirth. That is not to say...listen...that is not to say there aren't any joys. They are just all mitigated to some extent for the women of the world. Just to be sure we don't miss anything, again He repeats it, "In pain you shall bring forth children."

This is a different word from the word "pain" earlier in the verse. But it's from the same root. It's just a way of emphasizing it by using a synonym...conception, pregnancy, childbirth, no longer the way God originally designed them in the perfect paradise. Conception will be multiplied much more frequent. Birth will be painful. Children will consume a woman's life. And whatever joy she gains from them will be mingled with fears and pain and suffering and sorrow. Even Simeon said to Mary, "Some day because of how you loved this baby Jesus, a sword will pierce your heart."

So woman is punished in the most intimate way. Nothing is more purely the distinctive of a woman than to give birth to a baby. Nothing provides for her greater fulfillment, greater joy, greater satisfaction than that. But even that is not unmixed, it is with pain. Pain which will come to her will threaten her life. She will go down to the very gate of death before her children come into the world. And throughout the remainder of her life she will be reminded by disappointments, failures, and sorrows that she will find her deepest pain in the lives of her children.

Now a footnote. Some have suggested rather foolishly that it is therefore a sin for women to have any kind of pain alleviation in childbirth. I just need to say this so none of you men say...Just bear the curse, baby, just bear the curse.

Look, that's not the point. There is a measure of pain in childbirth. But it is not so frightening at all, it is not so threatening at all that it causes a woman not to wish to have a child. It is but for a moment. That's not the point. It's not just the physical pain of childbirth, I think you understand that now, that is in view here. And certainly there are some women who even escape that, right? There are some women who are barren and can't have children and there are women who are single and would never have children. And it doesn't mean that they escape the curse because in general we all feel the effects of sin. We all age. We all were exposed to harm and danger and disease and death and all of that. So it isn't necessary to take all of the elements of the curse all the time and impose them on all the women just so everybody knows full maxed-out personal experience of this curse. There are, as I said, some single women, there are childless women and certainly there are women who can reasonably have their pain alleviated. But still, the pain is there physically, we know that. That's why the drugs are necessary and that is testimony to the fact of Eve's sin...along with all the other attendant pains that we've talked about in the matter of children.

And by the way, the Scripture is very supportive of the work of physicians. Jesus identified Himself as the Great...what?...Physician. Must be an honorable profession. You can think of a few professions that He never said, "I am the great...fill in the blank"...and I know which one you're thinking of immediately. He honored the physician. Luke was a physician and traveled with the Apostle Paul.

Nothing wrong with alleviating pain in childbirth anymore than you say, "All right, you...according to the curse on men, cursed is the ground, in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life...don't you

dare buy that tractor. You are mitigating the curse. What are you doing with that lawn mower, get that lawn mower out of there. Get down on all fours and chew that grass down." I mean, come on.

But even with some alleviation of the pain of childbirth, when and where possible in modern times, it is still not possible to end the woman's sorrow associated with her children. So I'm back to where I started. Being a woman is hard, it's very hard for many, most in human history. It's by far the hardest of all things.

Now that takes me to where I want to be to close. Listen very carefully. What can a woman do to alleviate the sorrows of this curse? Not take an anesthetic at the time of childbirth, that's not it. What can a woman really do to alleviate the sorrows of the curse? Turn to 1 Timothy chapter 2...1 Timothy chapter 2. In 1 Timothy chapter 2 I want you to drop down to verse 13. Now Paul is writing to Timothy and he's giving him instruction for the church and he talks about how women are to dress in the church in verse 9, and how they are to be engaged in good works and godliness in verse 10. And how they are to be receiving instruction and not teaching the men in verses 11 and 12.

Then he says in verse 13, "For it was Adam who was first created and then Eve." So in the original creation women were the helpers of men. They are equal spiritually. They are equal before God and certainly they are equal in Christ. In Christ there is neither male nor female, Galatians 3:28. But in the order of creation in the family, Adam was first, Eve came created to be his helper. And so as a helper she is not the head, she comes to help him. And she must adorn herself in a way that brings honor to him and attention to him and not honor and attention to herself. She is to be quiet and receiving instruction and not to usurp authority over a man. That's the divine order.

So the first part of the chapter associates itself with creation...her place under her head, her husband. Then starting in verse 14 it turns and he says, "It was not Adam who was deceived but the woman being quite deceived fell into transgression." Now he turns away from the original paradise, the original creation in which woman was created to find her place under man, to be his helper and to support him and to be the half that he needed to fully compliment his life. Now he turns in verse 14 to the Fall and he says it was the woman who was deceived, it was the woman who stepped out of her God-ordained role, it was the woman who rather than coming under the protection of her husband and seeking her husband's counsel came out and acted independently and allowed herself to be exposed to the temptation and was deceived. And because she was deceived she fell into the transgression and then she led her husband into the same transgression and plunged the whole race into sin and brought upon her own head the curse.

And what again was the curse, the first part of the curse? The first part of the curse was she would know her deepest and profoundest and relentless pain through relationships with her children, through the physical, emotional and spiritual relationships with children. That's where she would feel the deepest pain. And it has been true throughout all of history. But, verse 15, but "Women shall be

preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint." Boy, this is a great statement. What a great hope. Women have been given a hard load, but it can be softened, it can be changed, it can be changed, it can be altered. Women are not necessarily under God's permanent shadow of displeasure. And this passage shows that God has opened a way of light. God has given a blessed promise to children. In contrast, she fell into transgression, but immediately it says she shall be preserved from the impact of that transgression through the bearing of children. Instead of the bearing of children being the point of the curse, it becomes the point of her deliverance.

In Eve women fell in the act of stepping over the boundary that God had set. And women now find their deliverance at the very point at which they have the curse. What does this mean? It isn't soul salvation here, you don't get saved by having babies. It's not what it's saying. But a woman is delivered from the impact of that curse, the impact of that pain and suffering and sorrow of having these sinners all around you all the time and not only to have to deal with your own sin and the big sinner, your husband, and all these little sinners tearing at your heart, bringing you all the grief and sadness and sorrow, I see it on the television every time I see some mother in the inner city standing on the sidewalk crying her eyes out because her children were killed in some kind of a drug thing, or some kind of a drive-by gang shooting and you just know the mother's heart is cut out of her and these women who have more and more and more children just have more and more and more of that pain.

How can a woman ever be relieved of that? She can be saved through childbearing. She can actually be saved, delivered from this curse, delivered from this pain, delivered from this sorrow at the very point of childbearing, the very point of the curse. The pain of childbearing is the punishment of sin, but in that very childbearing she can find deliverance from that pain. How does she do that? Here it is. "If they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint." "They" means the women. If a woman will live a godly life and continue in faith and love and holiness and self-control, if she will be what verse 10 says, a godly woman, then you know what? She'll raise a godly generation and her children will continue in the same thing.

Some of you women have been sitting out there saying, "You know, I'm not sure I identify with what you're saying. I don't have a lot of pain with my children, they're sheer joy to me." You know why? Because you have been delivered through childbearing because you have continued to live your life in faith and love and sanctity and self-control. You are in the church which is the context here. You are living a godly life and therefore your children are being raised to love the Savior and the curse is mitigated and you are delivered from its impact. That's the point. That's the point. It's the only way.

I look at my children, they are an incessant joy to me. They are an incessant joy to their mother. I look at my grandchildren. I watch them being raised in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and we find in them the greatest delight. And yet there are fears there. There are worries there about the things

that can take the life of our children and the influences that can corrupt their minds. But there is joy there. Certainly Patricia and any Christian mother is delivered from that tremendous weight of the curse when she lives a godly life and sees the fruit of that godly life in the faith and love and the sanctity and the self-control of her children...all is joy. And then we realize that even if their life is lost, even if they become ill, we have nothing to fear because where are they going? They're going to heaven. So that in Christ through salvation, the curse is reversed and the children become a heritage from the Lord, a blessing, a gift from God given back to Him and the source of our greatest joy.

Well, so much for the children. Next week we're getting on you husbands. Show how a woman can survive her man. That will be good because it's Father's Day. Let's pray.

Scripture says the entrance of Your Word give light and indeed it does, our Father. We are illuminated. We know now things we didn't know, we understand things we didn't understand and our world view continues to be clarified. We see things the way they are. Thank You, Lord, for saving women in this church and all over the earth. Thank You for sweet mothers for whom all the pain of children is softened and wiped away because their children love Jesus Christ. Therefore in the end all is joy because all is settled forever. And women are delivered from the stigma of sin and from the curse of it by living godly lives and raising godly children. O Father, how we pray that women who name the name of Jesus Christ, even as those precious mothers tonight to dedicate their little babies, may they do all they need to do in their lives to live in such a way as to be delivered, rescued, and saved from this curse and to have a kind of relationship with their children which is a little bit like paradise before it was lost. Thank You again for Your Word to us in Christ's name. Amen.

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