

Women of the Church Study

Month 1 - Eve

Women participating in this month's study on Eve learned and explored some interesting information!

Following are some highlights from our research and discussion.

We know Eve from the book of Genesis and its story of Creation. Eve was the first woman, the first wife and the first mother. Her actions deeply impacted us as women and the rest of Salvation History. Eve is referred to in both accounts of creation found in Genesis 1 and 2 respectively. Adam and Eve were both made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). Eve was formed from the rib of Adam (Genesis 2:22).

Scripture also tells us that Eve was named by Adam, following the Fall; Adam called the name of his wife Eve because she was the mother of all the living (Genesis 3:20). Adam and Eve had equal dignity and a relationship of interdependence. God spoke of the woman He was to provide for Adam as his helper (Genesis 1:18).

Eve is often remembered for her role in the story of Genesis 3 where she is tempted by the serpent. Eve was told that the fruit would make her wise. Even though she reiterates God's command, Eve eats the forbidden fruit and then shares it with Adam who willingly accepts it. There were consequences for this disobedient behavior, but God did not desert Adam or Eve. He demonstrated his love and mercy rather than inflicting eternal damnation upon them.

As the first woman in creation, Eve had no earthly mother or siblings; she was never a child, or a daughter or a maiden. She was the product of a divine creation, appearing as a complete, perfect woman. Her children were identified in Scripture as Cain, Abel and Seth. Eve experienced the loss of her son Abel at the hands of her other son Cain (Genesis 4). Adam and Eve lived very long lives and had other children (Genesis 5:4).

From the Bible stories of Eve, we learn about who we are as women, our place in Creation, and why we suffer. Many questions can be asked about Eve and her choices. Why did Eve disobey God's clear direction? Did Eve want more than God had provided? Was she unable to trust God to be in charge of her life? Did Eve feel alone as a woman, uncertain how to respond to temptation?

These and other questions can lead us to reflection about ourselves and our life...

--What does the life of Eve represent to you?

--What weaknesses in yourself do you find that are similar to Eve's?

--Are there times when you choose to disobey or listen to voices other than that of God?

--Are there times you want more than God has provided for us?

--Are there times you lack humility and trust, wanting to be in charge ourselves?

--Are there times you are tempted by wrong things because you think they will make us better or more perfect?

--How can you stand up to temptation in your own life, particularly when you feel alone or uncertain?

--How might you be more content, satisfy your longings or seek wholeness in a more spiritual Christ centered way, rather than in an earthly or unhealthy way?

As we study Eve, we see how she struggled to obey God and sought more than He had provided.

We can reflect upon the need for obedience and humility in ourselves and in our own lives. Let us pray for strength to listen to God, to resist temptation and to let go of pride and our need to control so that we can trust God and be humble before Him and others.

Please see this page and the next two pages for prayers/devotionals to guide you on this journey!

A Prayer for the Virtue of Obedience

Therese of Lisieux (Catholic Doors Ministry)

Jesus, Almighty King of kings

You who obeyed your Father to the end.

Teach me the meaning of obedience.

My soul burns to comply to your will,
striving to charm your divinity.
While my worldly nature seeks one way,
my spiritual nature seeks another.
Bless me with the strength to obey,
that my soul may subdue both natures,
blending them as a fair aromatic bloom.
I always seek favor in your eyes
to always obey you until my last breath

Deuteronomy 30:19-20 (NRSVCE)

*I call heaven and earth to witness against you today
that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses.
Choose life so that you and your descendants may live,
loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him;
for that means life to you and length of days,
so that you may live in the land that the Lord swore to give to your ancestors,
to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.*

Litany of Humility

Rafael Cardinal del Val

Secretary of State for Pope Pius X

O Jesus! Meek and humble of heart, hear me.

From the desire of being esteemed,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being loved...

From the desire of being extolled...

From the desire of being honored...

From the desire of being praised...

From the desire of being preferred to others...

From the desire of being consulted...

From the desire of being approved...

From the fear of being humiliated...

From the fear of being despised...

From the fear of suffering rebukes...

From the fear of being calumniated...

From the fear of being forgotten...

From the fear of being ridiculed...

From the fear of being wronged...

From the fear of being suspected...

(over)

That others may be loved more than I,

Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be esteemed more than I...

That, in the opinion of the world

Others may increase and I may decrease...

That others may be chosen and I set aside...

That others may be praised and I unnoticed...

That others may be preferred to me in everything...

That others may become holier than I,
Provided that I may become as holy as I should.

Practical Applications

Now that we have learned about Eve, reflected on various aspects of her life and our lives, and prayed for virtues of humility and obedience, we direct our focus to how we might apply some of these things in our everyday lives. Following are a few suggested exercises/activities obtained from various sources. Review/consider these. Choose one which holds meaning for you. Try it out! Be blessed!

- Think of a personal weakness (It's ok!) Develop at least one strategy for developing virtues (such as humility and obedience) that could help you overcome the weakness. Try these strategies out at least once. Jot down any changes you experience.
- Think back on a time when you might have resisted God's plan for you in order to pursue your own needs or goals. Make a list of what you could have done differently. Then list what you can do now to follow God's will.
- Write a prayer asking God for strength and perseverance in resisting an identified temptation in your life. Pray this daily for a week. Note any changes you experience.

Resources:

Courageous Women By Stacy Mitch

Living as a Confident Daughter of God by Patricia Mitchell

2019 Lenten Daily Devotional Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception

Dear brothers and sisters,

Let us renew the promises of our Baptism:

Let us renounce Satan and all his works and seductions

--for he is a seducer—

In order to follow the path of God

and arrive at Easter in the joy of the Spirit.

(Pope Francis in *The Hope of Lent* by Diane M. Houdek)