

Russell Kelfer

**Adam:
Was He
Responsible?**

702-B

Series: God's Living Legends (Part 1)

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Adam: Was He Responsible?

We have been taking a trip back in time. We boarded Eternal Airlines Flight Genesis 1 and we have determined to take a look at our ancestry. That is a popular thing to do in this generation. We all want to study our roots, our family trees, if you will, to see what signs of greatness lurk in the history book by our family name. What we often find are just plain people like ourselves who had both the potential for greatness and the seeds of destruction all wrapped up in the same life. And we often find that the difference between those who climbed the mountains of accomplishment and those who wallowed in valleys of defeat were only separated by one word: choice. Those who ran the race well chose to respond to certain absolutes, and thus the traumas they endured produced blessing, and the defeats they experienced produced in them character.

And it is character that we are looking at as we pry open the treasure chest of Scripture for a look at the first man, Adam. We began with a look at Adam's environment, and we determined that modern day thinking would never hold water where Adam was concerned. Why did poor old Adam give up all he had and rebel against the known will of God?

Was he the victim of a bad home? No! Adam had a perfect Father. His Father was God. He had a perfect relationship with his Father. Was he deprived of a spiritual heritage? No! He had a direct line to heaven. He talked with God, he walked with God, he experienced unbroken fellowship with God. Was he deprived of responsibility? No! He was given much to do and so much responsibility rested on his shoulders that all the animals of the world answered to Adam's names. The garden was his to tend and to keep. Adam worked and was accountable. Try again. Was it his environment? Was he a product of trauma? No! Adam grew up in paradise. He was never sick, never suffered and was never sinned against. Was it his marriage? No! His marriage was made in heaven. Eve was made *of him, for him and given to him* by a perfect God. Then, was he deprived? No! Adam had it all. Only

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one restriction was placed on his life. That restriction was more than he could bear.

Adam *chose* to sin. He willfully disobeyed God. He disregarded the consequences and affected the lives of billions of people yet to be born. Adam wasn't the victim of circumstances. Adam was the victim of choice. So are you and so am I.

So, we began to look at Adam's attitudes, the inner character qualities that led up to his fatal choice. Our first question was: "Was he content?" We asked ourselves, what is contentment? Contentment is "grateful acceptance that what you have is all you need and all you have is undeserved". Adam wanted the one thing he didn't have, even if it meant losing everything he had in order to get it. Sound familiar? His spirit of discontentment contributed to his decision to disobey God.

In our last study, we asked the second question about Adam's attitude: Was Adam faithful? Faithfulness defined was "to demonstrate the fullness of one's faith by remaining in place". You will recall there is an *attitude* of faithfulness, there are *attributes* and there is *activity*. The attitude is one of *loyalty*. The primary attribute is *dependability*. The activity is *steadfastness*. God is looking for faithful people. God simply wanted Adam to tend the garden, to be faithful in the details of life. God wanted Adam to "keep" the garden. His job was to faithfully guard against intrusion, against an enemy. God wanted Adam to protect Eve. She was his number one priority. He could have driven the snake from the garden and explained the choice to Eve. They could have talked to God about it. That would have been it. Was he faithful? No, he wasn't. The question is: Are you faithful? Am I faithful?

In this study, we ask the third and final question about Adam. Was Adam responsible? What is responsibility? A responsible spirit is "the attitude that seeks no scapegoats in life". It is the quiet acceptance of full accountability for one's actions and attitudes. It is assuming the penalties that accompany the risks. What is responsibility? Responsibility says, "I did it, Sir." when you were only one of five who did. What is responsibility? Responsibility keeps its eyes straight ahead because it is never looking around for someone else to blame. What is responsibility? Responsibility finds its scapegoat in a mirror. What is responsibility? Responsibility has shoulders broad enough to carry its own load,

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eyes sharp enough to see its own faults, fingers unable to point in accusation of another. Responsibility is the absence of playing games with God.

“Hide and Go Seek” was Adam’s first game with God. Adam had sinned and his first response was guilt. His magnanimous response to his guilt was, “Catch me if you can, Lord”. Suddenly, the thought of one whose voice had always brought comfort and love, now brought stark terror. Adam ran for his life. We read about it in Genesis 3:

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her and he did eat.

(Genesis 3:6)

(Now you underline those three words in your Bible because those three words define Adam’s responsibility: HE DID EAT.)

And the eyes of them both were opened and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.

And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?

(Genesis 3:7-9)

What a sad picture. We see Adam and Eve who have been cohorts in rebellion, now hand in hand, racing through the garden looking for a place to hide from God. They stopped off at the general store for fig leaf aprons they had never needed before. “We’re naked!” they exclaimed. They had always been naked. Now they were guilty and their nakedness became a problem. You can just hear Adam huffing and puffing, “Here Eve, behind this big oak tree, He will never find us here.” How sad. Adam thought he could hide from God. Adam thought he could hide from an omniscient God who knows every thought we think. Adam thought he could hide from an omnipresent God who never leaves our side. The Scripture leaves no doubt about where Adam was and where we are when we try to hide from God.

Am I a God at hand? saith the LORD, and not a God far off?

Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see

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him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD. (Jeremiah 23:23-24)

It doesn't take much to make a man run when he is guilty.

The wicked flees when no man pursueth, but the righteous are as bold as lions. (Proverbs 28:1)

How deceived we are to think we know just the place where God can't find us.

His eyes are upon the ways of man and He seeth all his goings. There is no darkness nor shadow of death where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves. (Job 34:21)

But still we try.

And I said, Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest. (Psalm 55:6)

God answered the whole situation in these verses,

Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?

If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.

Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee. (Psalm 139:7-12)

How precious is the truth. We can't hide from the presence of God, the scripture says, not in heaven, not in hell, not in New York, not in Texas, not even in church. The precious part is that the Psalmist says *no one in his right mind would want to*. Everywhere we go, he says, His hand stretches out to lead us, His arms reach out to hold us. The blackness of night surrounds us and then we see His presence and darkness becomes noonday. Flee from His presence? We can't. Praise God, we can't. Adam was guilty, but he compounded his guilt by running from God. He looked at God as some stationary figure who was glued in His tracks and by changing his geographical location, Adam thought he could alter the distance between himself and God. Adam, in

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fellowship, was close to God; then Adam broke that fellowship and he thought he could run.

Isn't it great that you can't hide from God? When we are in trouble, groping in the dark for answers, we reach out our hand and expect His arm to reach out and surround us, and it always does. When we need God's help, He is supposed to be omnipresent. When we disobey God, we run as though we can outrun deity. Don't be too hard on Adam. Some of us have been running so long we could make the Olympics. We change jobs, move to other houses, other cities, change churches, change friendships, always with good reasons, never just stopping long enough to look God in the eye and say, "Here I am, Lord, let's talk." There are a lot of ways to run from God.

We run from God through activity. We break the heart of God and then cover it up by getting involved. We throw ourselves into our jobs with such a frenzy that the world is impressed with our commitment to a task, but our motive is to stay so occupied that there isn't time to stop and look God in the eye. Like Adam, we often drag our Eves along.

We also run from God through religious involvement. You know the syndrome; take every job in sight in the church and run from activity to activity. We set up a legalistic system of measuring spirituality by activity or performance. Then, measuring everybody by that distorted scale, we try subconsciously to pay God back rather than face God squarely. A songwriter said, "But it wouldn't be enough, it wouldn't be enough to buy one splinter of the tree that Jesus died on." There is nothing wrong with being busy, provided that being busy isn't a smoke screen to keep us from standing still in the presence of God. When you are out of fellowship, it is no time to get involved *for* God; it is time to be alone *with* God.

We hide from God by confessing to lesser sins. Be careful when you find yourself magnanimously running around dealing with Mickey Mouse offenses. They *do* need to be dealt with; but oh, so often we do that to stir up a cloud of righteousness and overlook the deep, deep problems that separate us from *real* fellowship with God.

We hide from God through a bitter spirit. If we can manufacture an offense against God or the church, we can busy ourselves justifying it and we never have to look in the mirror of reality.

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We hide from God by trying to change our environment or circumstances. We change jobs, get married, get divorced, run away, come back, buy things, sell things, creating smoke screens, thinking that maybe if we get lost in this new place or activity we will forget or God will forget. Not so.

Don't laugh at Adam. We hide from God just like Adam did. Adam acted as though God was out to lunch. You can just hear him whisper to Eve, "He's got a lot of fruit, He'll never know this one piece is gone." The trouble is, God had every piece wired to an alarm system in heaven. He knew it and the angels knew it and they all cried tears of grief.

Then, there came the first political compromise. "I won't tell on you, Eve, if you won't tell on me. Here, He comes, act natural," Adam whispered. "Oh, hi, God, good to see you."

We are reminded of Jonah. Jonah, you were no different than Adam. You thought you could take the wrong ship, go to the wrong city and God would never miss you. Jonah, if God had left you alone as you wanted, you would have ended up in a tuna sandwich. God had a whale of a job for you, Jonah. You just slowed down the process and missed much of the blessing of obedience.

Enough of Adam's and Jonah's flings. How about you? Have you been running from God? Have you been busy playing hide and seek rather than facing the music? My friend, the miracle of miracles is that God in the cool of the day is out walking in the garden, looking for you. He is looking for me. He's calling. How tenderly God calls. He could have thundered Adam into oblivion. Instead, He just whispered, "Adam, where are you, my child?" No matter how hard we run, God pursues. He comes not to punish, though punishment comes. He pursues us to confront us. He confronts us to cleanse us. Time is so short, He needs to use our lives if we'll just stop running. Adam thought he could run from God. So do we.

What God had wanted first from Adam was that He not have to pursue him. He wanted Adam to run to Him, bury his face in God's hands and say, "I have sinned, God, please forgive me." But Adam ran. Next comes the confrontation. You understand what confrontation is. Jonah did. When, through circumstances of one kind or another, God finally gets your attention, that is confrontation. Now all He wants from you is for you to look Him

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straight in the eye and say, "I did it, Lord, please forgive me." That is simple enough. Those seem to be the hardest words in any language. Adam just couldn't bring himself to 'fess up. Instead, he decided to play "Who Dun It?" with God.

That's the second game we Christians play: "Who Dun It?" The object of this game is to create an atmosphere of confusion about who IS the guilty culprit. Some blame their environment. They say, "If you were raised the way I was raised, etc." Some blame their parents by saying, "I wasn't raised in a Christian home." Some blame their mates by saying, "Well, my husband or my wife drove me to it." You can just see them in a big Cadillac driving them to it. Some blame Satan by saying, "The devil made me do it." Some blame God by saying, "If only God had not done such and such." Adam and Eve tried all of the above.

We pick up the story where Adam is answering God once he had been apprehended:

And he said, I heard Thy voice in the garden and I was afraid, because I was naked; so I hid myself.

And He (God) said, Who told thee thou wast naked? (Adam was trapped by his own lie) Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I have commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?

And the man said, The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

(We have been blaming our wives ever since.)

And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that you have done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

(Genesis 3:10-13)

First, Adam starts dropping clues. He says, "I was afraid because I was naked." What a lie! He wasn't afraid because he was naked. Number one, he had always been naked and he was never afraid before. Number two, he had stopped at Sears and outfitted both of them with the latest in aprons. He wasn't naked. God hadn't told him not to be naked. God had told him not to eat from the tree. Sounds like Elijah, doesn't it? Do you remember Elijah, the hero of the hour? Then, one woman came after him and he ran to the desert and went into a deep state of depression. Here comes God, "What are you running from, Elijah?" "I'm running, LORD, to protect YOUR interest. I'm all You've got and they are after me. If they get *me*, You are through," Elijah explained. I love

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God's answer to Elijah, translated in loose terms, He said, "Go to sleep Elijah, I will talk to you in the morning."

Since Adam isn't talking about the tree, God brings up the subject. "What opened your eyes, Adam? You didn't eat from that tree, did you?" God asked. Here is chance number three for Adam to be responsible. All he had to do was say, "Yes, Lord, I did it and I'm sorry." But not Adam. "The woman gave it to me, Lord. You wouldn't want me to offend her, would you, Lord? She forced me to, Lord. Big, bad Eve," Adam replied. Shifted responsibility: this is the core of modern man's philosophy. It is insidious, and it is dangerous. Until a man looks into the face of God and takes full responsibility for his actions, God can't help him. One of the most gifted and noted Christian counselors in America has made this observation: in the counseling room, most of the serious counseling problems that he has seen miraculously solved have been solved because at some point the counselee reached a place where he or she honestly stopped transferring blame and said, "I AM RESPONSIBLE, please, God, help me." God always does. So many problems are solved by that simple confession. At the root of all transferred guilt is one subtle lie and Adam just slipped it in sideways. It is the ultimate insult to God. Adam said, "The woman YOU gave me, caused it all. Do you get it? YOU gave her to me. SHE tempted me. Woe is me, God. It is all Your fault," Adam replied. Don't laugh too hard. This script could have been written in our present day in any counseling room in the world, or in any living room in the world. "God, why blame me? You could have stopped it. God, why blame me, you let me marry her or him? God, why blame me, anyone would have done what I did. God, You are sovereign, You take the blame." This is how we answer when confronted with sin.

An illustration of the *right* response is found in the life of David when he had committed a grievous sin. He had lusted for another man's wife, took her, then in the supreme cover-up murdered her husband and many innocent men. David did this so deceitfully, he had convinced himself he was innocent. In II Samuel 12, you remember, God sent a young man named Nathan. Nathan went up to David and gave him a parable. He told about someone who had been wronged in exactly the same type of situation as David. David's furor raged and he said, "That man must suffer. That man must pay." Nathan pointed his finger at David and said, "Thou art the man." The difference between Adam and David was

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simple. David's sin was grievous, but once he saw it for what it was, David fell down before God and repented. The penalty went on, but God forgave David because when he was confronted, he didn't start passing the blame. "Thou art the man," said Nathan. "I am the man," said David. God was able to deal with it.

We do not see this with Adam. Adam shifted the blame, and you will notice that God didn't answer Adam when Adam shifted the blame. God turned to Eve, hoping for a better response. Instead, He got a bitter response. Verse 2 of the same song. "I was tricked, Lord. The devil made me do it," Eve replied. There was *some* truth to what Adam said. Eve *did* give him the fruit and God *did* give Eve to him. The problem was responsibility. Adam was responsible for his choice. There was *some* truth in Eve's reply. The serpent *did* trick her, but she was responsible to flee when he questioned God. It was *her* choice; it was *his* choice. THEY ate the fruit. God said you are accountable for the choices you make. Do our children know that? Are we so busying covering for them that they think it is our fault or God's fault when they sin?

Jesus, of course was the best illustration of the better way. He was 100% innocent and took all the blame. He who knew no sin became sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. In 1 Peter 2, he said, in effect, "Christians go out and do the same thing. When necessary, take the blame even when you are 99% innocent. God will defend you." Adam was 100% guilty and he blamed God. Lord, forgive us. So often we walk in Adam's shoes with Adam's attitudes.

We don't know for sure what went through Adam's mind next. History tells us He must have expected God to play "Truth or Consequences". So long as he told the truth, he wouldn't have to pay the consequences. God had to pursue him, crying "Adam, where are you?" God had to ask him, "Adam, what have you done?" God had to work through a smoke screen as Adam passed the buck back to Eve and then back to God Himself. The last episode of the story is still being written. Adam had to pay for Adam's sin. His children paid. Nature paid. We've paid. It affected his family. It affected society. It affected the plan of God. God had to shift into Plan B. You do understand Plan B, don't you?

All things work together for good to them that love God.

(Romans 8:28)

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It works when we sin, but it doesn't mean it is God's choice. It may be Plan B, or C or D or E. We lose some power and we lose some victory every time God has to shift to some other plan. God forgave Adam, but God's forgiveness did not nullify the consequences of his sin. Nature turned sour. Work became hard. Inner physical death and inner spiritual death resulted in the exit from paradise. Though Adam finally told the truth, he still had to face the consequences. Teach that to your children. It may be the most vital lesson they will ever learn.

Here are two ways to teach responsibility. When children flee from responsibility and then come back, see that they take up where they left off. Do you remember the story of the child who rebelled when his mother told him to go mow the yard? Here was the scenario: "I won't do it!" he cries, then he stomps out of the room. A little while later, he eases his way into the kitchen and looks over at his mother. "Mom, can I dust the furniture?" he whines. "No," she answers. He leaves the room to try again. About five minutes later he comes back and asks, "Mom, can I wash the car?" "No," she answers. A minute or two later, he comes in and says, "Mom, I love you." "I love you, too dear," she replies. Finally, after a half of a day of frustration, he comes in, tears running down his face, and he grabs hold of his mother's apron, looks up into her eyes and says, "Mother, I'm sorry, will you forgive me?" She looks down into his little face and says, "Of course, I forgive you dear. Now, go mow the yard." Take up where you left off. That is what God expects.

The second aspect our children need to learn is that consequences remain even when you have been forgiven. A teenager wrecks the car. He comes in, broken, saying, "Oh, Dad, I'm sorry, I just wrecked your new Rolls Royce." Dad puffs up and says, "I love you son, you are forgiven. (With no hostility, no anger.) Tomorrow, we find you a job and you will pay to fix the car." You can start teaching it when your child is 4 years old and he breaks the lamp. Forgive him and set a token price for the lamp and give him chores to do. Let your child know that forgiveness does not nullify the responsibility of consequences.

Moses was the best illustration of all. He was God's best friend, the meekest man in all the earth. One day, God commanded him to speak to a rock, as a portrait of asking God and trusting God because God *was* the rock. The story is found in Numbers 20:8-11. God told Moses to do three things, but Moses did only two of

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them. Instead of speaking to the rock and giving the glory to God, Moses said, “You rebels, am I going to have to give you water?” Moses took all the glory for himself and then he struck the rock twice. This action had serious spiritual implications. God was broken-hearted. God said, “No, No, No!” Moses blew it. He struck the rock and took the glory. God said, “Moses, your punishment is that you will never get to enter the promised land.” Moses repented. God forgave him. God blessed him and used him perhaps more than any other figure in the Old Testament; but at the end of his life, Moses still had to suffer the consequences of his disobedience. There you see Moses up on a mountain, pleading with God to let him enter the promised land. You can just hear him, can’t you? “God, I’ve been a good guy. You’ve really used me and it’s really been neat. Can I go into the land?” God looks in His notes and says, “Well, I don’t believe that’s what I wrote, Moses. I had better keep My word, Moses. I will take you up here and you can *see* the land, but you can’t go in. Yes, you have told the truth, but you must pay the consequences.” Forgiven? Yes. Blessed? Yes. Used? Yes. But the consequences had to be paid. Moses thought surely he had earned enough brownie points to nullify God’s Word. God’s answer was, “Of course, I love you, but I have spoken and that is it.”

As parents we need to be more careful with the consequences with which we threaten our children. Whatever we say, we must do. It is not a sign of strength to change the consequences, it is a sign of weakness. Even though God forgives, the scars remain along with the consequences. If you spend time on drugs, then repent and Christ fills you, Christ changes you, but the scars remain. There are some things in your life that will *never* be the same. If you become an alcoholic and you repent and God releases you from that bondage, there still will be scars that will always remain. If you commit adultery, God will forgive, your mate may forgive, but there is certain mental anguish, there is a certain loss of trust, a certain loss of holiness that does not go away. Consequences. If you lie, you have to live with the loss of confidence that the lie produces. If you gossip and you hurt others, you can’t undo the words that came out of your mouth.

It is very important that we understand the balance between the two laws: the law of forgiveness and the law of consequences. 1 John 1:9 says if we confess our sins God will forgive us. It is called restoration of fellowship. Galatians 6:7-8 says whatever a

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mans sows he shall also reap. This is called the consequences of disobedience. These two laws are not in conflict, the one with the other. You can be restored into fellowship but the consequences of your actions still remain. Oh, that as Christians, we and our children could come to grips with that. It is possibly the most important truth that we need to learn as believers. We need to accept these laws as a natural part of God's righteousness. They aren't in conflict. Yes, God forgives. Yes, God changes. Yes, God renews. But what we've done has set in motion natural consequences.

The responsible man doesn't run from God or his problems. He stops in his tracks, calls out to God and says, "Lord, here I am." The responsible man doesn't transfer the blame. He says, "Lord, I did it. Will You please forgive me?" The responsible man doesn't pretend that once he has told the truth, he no longer pays the consequences. He faces them without bitterness. He earned the consequences by his disobedience. But for the grace of God, these consequences would be a hundred-fold more than they are.

Lastly, the responsible man, having broken the heart of God and having set in motion the law of sowing and reaping, hears God's voice say, "You are forgiven, now go thy way and sin no more." You don't crouch in the corner and wait for it to happen again. You take the sword of the spirit which is the Word of God and you nail it on every window. You engrave it on every door. You give Satan no further access to your life. This is one of the greatest problems we face as Christians. Once we have been freed, once we've been forgiven, we wait for Satan to come in on our blind side once again. We *expect* it to happen again. The purpose of repentance is to stop doing what displeases God. Sometimes it takes fasting for a day or maybe days, maybe often. Isn't it worth it to keep the power? Sometimes it takes a series of vows before God, daily or weekly. Sometimes it takes counseling. Sometimes it takes a discipleship relationship where you sit down with another person and say, "If I have a problem, I am going to call you. Will you help me?" Whatever it takes, God holds you and God holds me accountable to do whatever it takes to guard the gate to the garden. Maybe this poem will sum it up.

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LET'S ALL STOP PLAYING GAMES WITH GOD

Let's all stop playing games with God
Let's drive in a stake today
For once and for all let's say, "Here I am.
Lord, I'll stop running away."

Let's all stop playing games with God
Let's look Him straight in the eye
Let's stop blaming others (or God Himself)
And admit we've been living a lie.

Let's look in His face and say, "Dear Lord,
I am responsible for me
And I accept the guilt, and now
I give it all to Thee."

"I know I've sowed and, yes, I know
The reaping will go on
But Lord, the guilt you've taken,
And all my sins are gone."

No need to play those games with God
With Adam's fool intent
We can become responsible
And live the life God meant.

And when we fall (and, yes, we will)
We'll quickly face our sin
And cry out, "Lord, forgive me!"
And we'll have power again!

Let's stop playing games with God
Let's live life His way
Let's just be *responsible*
Day after day after day!

Now I know this lesson seemed a little sin-oriented. Unfortunately, so was Adam's life. He gave it all up for one act of rebellion. Then he ran from God, then he lied to God, then he passed the buck to his wife, then he blamed God for the whole thing.

As Adam's descendants, we play the same kind of games Adam played. Maybe through this lesson, God has convicted you that you have been playing games with Him, games God doesn't care to play. Perhaps for the first time in a long time God has

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said to you, “Stop running. Stop playing ‘Hide and Seek’. Look at Me. Stand still. Child, stop playing ‘Who Dun It?’ with Me. Stop playing ‘Truth or Consequences’ with Me. For once in your life, stop blaming your parents, stop blaming your environment, stop blaming your circumstances, stop blaming your heavenly Father. You are the result of your own choices.” Admit that to God, and He will set you free, maybe for the first time in your entire life. There will be consequences. It is a divine law. But even the consequences will work together for good once we face up and ‘fess up and become responsible. We can learn that from Adam. That alone makes it worthwhile to look at the life of this living legend.

But it only will be really worthwhile if we look into the mirror of God’s word and see, not Adam, but ourselves, and respond accordingly. Dear God, may we not be hearers of the word only, but doers as well.

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10602 Mossbank, San Antonio, TX 78230

210-226-0000 or 1-800-375-7778

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