

As Yourself

Week 2 • The Wounded Self: How Fear Makes Us Small

Aug 26, 2026 • Genesis 3:1–13 • Dr. Geoffrey D. Lentz

Print reading: Chapter Two, *The Wounded Human Condition*, pp. 23–36

Tonight's rhythm: Opening prayer & Scripture 5 min • Teaching 30 min • Table time 20 min • Practice & closing 5 min

Teaching Block 1 • When the Storm Does Not End (10 min)

Hurricane Michael forced an entire community into emergency mode. In an emergency, life must narrow: find shelter, protect the people you love, make the next decision, survive. The trouble begins when the storm leaves but emergency mode remains. Clear skies arrive while the shutters inside us are already closing. A problem feels like a crisis; uncertainty feels dangerous; rest feels irresponsible. (pp. 23–25)

Trauma is not a moral failure. Defenses often begin as wise attempts to protect what is vulnerable. Yet what helps us survive one season can become the shape of every season. Protection becomes control, vigilance becomes suspicion, and fear begins governing how we see God, neighbor, and self. This is one way to understand sin: survival made ultimate. (pp. 25–26)

“The boards were not foolish. They protected the windows. The problem was that they were never meant to become the view.”

Table Time 1 • 5 min

Choose one question. Make room for each voice; anyone may pass.

What defenses have helped you survive difficult seasons? Are any still operating after the danger has passed?

Where does fear make your life smaller—through control, vigilance, suspicion, or difficulty resting?

Teaching Block 2 • Eyes Opened, Vision Contracted (10 min)

Genesis 3 begins with a promise that the humans' eyes will be opened. Their eyes do open, but their first discovery is nakedness. Fear comes before hiding; hiding is followed by blame. The tragedy is not consciousness itself. The crisis is consciousness awakened inside mistrust: the self feels exposed, the other becomes a possible accuser, and God becomes a threatening gaze. Humanity knows more but sees less truthfully. (pp. 26–29)

- **Sin wounds the whole person.** We bear responsibility because we do harm, yet we are also wounded by harm done to us. Sin becomes captivity when patterns overpower isolated choices and blindness when fear distorts our vision. We need forgiveness, healing, freedom, and light. (pp. 26–29)
- **Love bent out of shape.** Augustine writes, *“My weight is my love.”* Love is the gravity of the soul; it carries us somewhere. Sin usually begins with a genuine good—security, dignity, belonging, or freedom—but fear bends the way we pursue it. The serpent offers a false route to a true vocation: humanity was made to grow into God's likeness, but sin grasps as possession what can only be received through communion and grace. Love curves inward (*incurvatus in se*), and we ask a partial good to do what only God can do. (pp. 30–34)

Table Time 2 • 5 min

Choose one question. Listen for experience as well as ideas.

What genuine good—security, dignity, belonging, freedom, approval, or control—are you sometimes tempted to ask to save you?

Where have you called something faithfulness when it may also have been fear?

Teaching Block 3 • Metanoia: Earthrise for the Soul (10 min)

In 1968, Apollo 8's Earthrise photograph gave humanity a new view of its home: one luminous, fragile world without the borders that seem absolute from the ground. Astronauts call this shift the overview effect. The facts have not changed, but their meaning is reorganized by a larger horizon. (pp. 34–35)

Jesus announces, "The kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news" (Mark 1:15). Metanoia is more than feeling worse about ourselves. It is a grace-given reorientation toward a reality larger than the one fear has described. From the cross Jesus prays, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). Jesus does not excuse the harm; he names the blindness beneath it. Sin is rarely—perhaps never—a clear-eyed choice of evil. Often, we do harm because we cannot see beyond the world fear has made. Grace opens our eyes, and changed sight leads to changed life—to confession, repair, release, courage, and new patterns of love. In Christ, death is no longer the only future available to us. (pp. 35–36)

"The kingdom does not deny the storm. It reveals that the storm is not the whole sky."

Table Time 3 • 10 min

Begin with the first question, then move to the second if time allows.

How is repentance different when it begins with grace and a larger vision rather than accusation and self-condemnation?

What might become possible if the storm is no longer the whole sky?

Practice & Closing • Earthrise for the Soul

1. **Name the narrow view.** What fear, wound, or need for control has begun to look like the whole world?
2. **Receive the larger horizon.** Imagine Earth rising above the lunar horizon, then hear Jesus: "The kingdom of God has come near."
3. **Ask for truthful sight.** What becomes visible when grace, resurrection, and communion—not fear—define reality?
4. **Take one concrete turn.** Confess, repair, release control, ask for help, rest, or act with courage.

Closing prayer God of light, you know the storms we have survived and the walls we have built. Show us where protection has become confinement. Forgive the harm we have done, heal what has been wounded, free us from what holds us, and open our eyes to your kingdom; through Jesus Christ. Amen.