

Genesis 3:16

The promise of the Saviour first given in Genesis 3:15 was intended to restore the relationship between our fallen, spiritually dead parents and God. It was intended to bring them back from spiritual death to spiritual life. That restoration could only be accomplished by this life-giving Word of the gospel. Eve's words in Genesis 4:1 at the birth of Cain indicate that she once again, and Adam as well, came to trust in the love and mercy of God. It was a trust born of the promise given in Genesis 3:15, "*I shall make you and the woman hostile to each other, and I shall make your descendants and her Descendant hostile to each other. He will crush your head, and you will crush His heel.*" It was a trust in God's forgiveness and His grace, His undeserved love.

Still, to the woman the LORD God said, "*I shall greatly increase your painful labour and your pregnancy. In pain you will give birth to children. You will yearn for your husband and he will rule over you*" (Genesis 3:16).

Even though God had promised the Saviour, even though that promise restored a relationship between God and our first parents, nevertheless sin has its consequences for the sinner. In Eve's case the consequences are twofold. First, she will suffer pain in childbirth. Her pain and that of her daughters will serve as a reminder that God takes sin seriously, whether we do or not. But even more so, that pain should serve as a reminder of the one Seed to come through the birth from a woman, the one Seed who would bear the ultimate pain of sin as He crushed the head of the serpent. As is always the case with the consequences for sin, the unbeliever only cries out in pain; however, the restored believing daughter of God could cry in the pain of repentance and also in joy over the one Seed who was to come and now has come.

The second word to Eve has to do with her relationship with her husband. Again, the unbeliever will experience this consequence in one way, those who strive to submit to the Word of God in quite another. Before the fall the relationship between husband and wife was perfect. Adam was head of the household and Eve was happy with his headship because God had established it. As long as their emotions, will, and reason were consciously and happily in harmony with God's will and Word, that relationship between Adam and Eve would have neither strain nor resentment in it. As a result of the fall, the relationship between husband and wife has been damaged. Now the headship of the husband will not always be so easily born, and his rule will not always be either gentle or willingly accepted. To the extent that the household is a Christian household, the headship of the husband will be a loving and serving one and the subordination of the wife will be willing and satisfying (Ephesians 5:22-33). Indeed, and ideally, husband and wife encourage each other in their respective roles when each carries out the role assigned respectively to husband and wife. Where one ignores that role, the other is hindered and discouraged, though not excused from the carrying out of the assignment God gives to each. All too often one sees husbands and wives to the great harm of marriage and the family throw away God's design and then justify the behaviour by the imperfection of the partner.

Where effort is made by a Christian husband and wife devoted to following the perfect lead of God in His Word, that effort becomes an act of worship by which the husband and wife seek to mirror the marriage of Christ and the church. It should be the goal of the young to seek and to find a spouse who wants to do exactly that. When only one partner to the marriage wants that kind of marriage, the imitation of the union between Christ and the church will be frustrated if not impossible.