

YOU DESERVE A BREAK, GENESIS 3:1-19

Liar Liar #5

◆Intro: Have you ever noticed when it comes to jokes how lawyers really take the heat? There are a lot of jokes about lawyers. For example...

◆Q: What's the difference between a vacuum cleaner and a lawyer on a motorcycle? A: The vacuum cleaner has the dirt bag on the inside.

◆Q: What's the difference between a jellyfish and a lawyer? A: One's a spineless, poisonous blob. The other is a form of sea life.

◆Q: What do you call 25 attorneys buried up to their chins in cement? A: Not enough cement.

◆Q: What do you throw to a drowning lawyer? A: His partners.

◆Wow! That's tough going. Some of my friends are lawyers and I think very highly of them. Hey, John Calvin was a lawyer! I suppose lawyers get picked on in part because the bad ones help people get what they don't deserve. And we get testy when our sense of justice and deserving is offended. Ironically, it's very easy for us to be unfairly biased about our own deserving. It's easy to think we deserve more and better than we have. Back in the 70's a commercial sang "You deserve a break today... (at McDonalds)". But as one author insightfully points out, why didn't they say, "You could probably use a break today." or "A break today would be nice." or "Would you like a break today?" We are prone to tell people who have treated themselves to something, "Good for you, you deserve it." We say, "You owe it to yourself to buy this nice car." Again, not, "You would probably like this car." or "Wouldn't it be nice to have a new car?" I heard of a new disease called TDS. Engaged women and married females sometimes get it. It stands for "Tiny Diamond Syndrome". Hey, I know it

YOU DESERVE A BREAK, GENESIS 3:1-19

Liar Liar #5

sounds a lot like greed, but if you call it a syndrome, or a sickness it goes down so much smoother. People shouldn't be "sick". Now we ought to have more. The idea that we deserve something is called entitlement. It is the outlook that says "Somebody, or something owes me." Entitlement is a lie straight from hell and makes us live as miserable people.

◆ **1. The truth is I do not deserve anything, and everything I have is more than I deserve.** This is the biblical worldview.

◆ A. That is to say, I am not really entitled to anything on this planet. And you do not deserve a break today, or tomorrow for that matter. You do not owe it to yourself to buy a nice car or to have a big diamond. For that matter (on this week after Independence Day) we do not "deserve" life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

◆ Now don't get this confused. These things are all legit desires. And you and I have the freedom to desire them. Some of them we might also agree are the way things "ought" to be. Desiring good things is not wrong. It is demanding good things that leads us to sin and misery. The lie is that we deserve the good, and this is pathological, a mental and spiritual distortion.

◆ "I had my friends over. Now they owe me a favor by having me over."

◆ "I'm a college grad. I deserve more money than the other guy doing the same job because I went to class."

◆ "I took care of my children. Now I figure they owe it to me to take care of me when I'm old."

YOU DESERVE A BREAK, GENESIS 3:1-19

Liar Liar #5

◆“I’m a senior. I deserve to spend my time and my money on me. I deserve the respect of younger people. I ought to have...”

◆These sound real nice, but they’re lies.

◆B. It’s what happened with Adam and Eve.

◆“You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.” Genesis 3:4-6, NIV.

◆It would make you wise, like God. God said “Don’t do it,” but why shouldn’t I be like God? Don’t I deserve it? Don’t I owe it to myself to eat this fruit? After all, I use Loreal because “I’m worth it.” So with a bounce of her silken, flowing locks, Eve grabbed the fruit in her manicured fingers. It was an act of entitlement. “Your eyes will be opened...” You deserve more.

◆As a result we have ever since lived under the most easily proved biblical doctrine: complete depravity. We like to tell ourselves that good things happen because we were good people. But the truth is, no one is good.

◆“A certain ruler asked him, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No-one is good--except God alone.” Luke 18:18, 19, NIV.

◆“As it is written: “*There is no-one righteous, not even one; there is no-one who understands, no-one who seeks God. All have turned*

YOU DESERVE A BREAK, GENESIS 3:1-19

Liar Liar #5

away, they have together become worthless; there is no-one who does good, not even one... "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," Romans 3:10-12,23 NIV.

◆ 2. The lie of entitlement leads me to bitterness, resentment, and disappointment.

◆A. We can see it in Adam and Eve's example. Now, there are different ways of reading what happened when the first man and woman sinned. We can read the text as prescriptive. That is, that Adam and Eve were bad, so God got mad, and made them sad. Prescription. You were naughty, so now off to your bedroom for your licking. Adam, I'll make it hard on you to live. From now on its toil and trouble at work. And you, young lady, your punishment is being bossed around by your man. And the joyful things (birth) I will now make miserable (labor). Indeed there is a certain sense of punishment and consequence to their sin but be careful lest you see God in the wrong light. Ps.103 clearly says that God does not punish us as our sins deserve. Is there another way to read this?

◆We can read it more like God is describing what they have gotten themselves into. That is, Adam and Eve were bad, and God was sad, because they lost for themselves what they had had.: Description. So in this angle God is saying, "Man, Adam. Look what you did now! You know what goes along with importing sin into my perfect world, don't you. It ruins everything. You Adam, are connected to everything, even the dirt. Now it's not going to grow like before you sinned. Now you're not going to focus right either. Instead of finding your significance in my love for you, you will ever lean toward finding it in your job. And Eve, you have now stained your

YOU DESERVE A BREAK, GENESIS 3:1-19

Liar Liar #5

unique role as well. Childbearing will be painful, don't you see? In addition, you will ever be leaning to usurp leadership that is not yours, just as you did at the Tree of Good and Evil. (v16 your desire will be to take over your husband.) You will try to fill the empty spot that doubts your significance with conquering and controlling your man, when it was meant to be found in me.”

◆ Ever since, men have been making their production the center of their lives, and woman have been making a relationship the balance of their joy. Both, thinking they deserved better, lost the purity they had, their closeness to God, and their contentment of soul. Are we any different? When we believe the lie that “we’ve got more coming to us” what happens? We are never happy. You figure you work hard, bring home the bacon, or at least the money and send her to buy the bacon. You actually listened for a few minutes the other day. The wife owes you now, right? If she’s not greeting you at the door in high heels with a flower in her teeth you feel resentful. You’re entitled. Lets say she does greet you at the door in said manner. As an entitlement thinker, you expected nothing less. After all you deserve such treatment from her. She’s just giving you what you ought to get as the fine stallion that you are. Guess what? Now you won’t really appreciate it so much.

◆ The lie of entitlement keeps me from feeling appreciation. Some years ago I was in MS with a church workgroup doing relief with World Renew after hurricane Katrina. We had been assigned to drywall a kitchen of a flood damaged home and put in new cabinets.

YOU DESERVE A BREAK, GENESIS 3:1-19

Liar Liar #5

The lady of the house was a 30-something black woman who laid on the couch in the living room with a TV at her feet and never said a thing to those of us traipsing through her house, except every hour or so she'd raise her voice from the couch and yell, "You gonna do my cabinets too, ain't chu? When I gonna get my cabinets?" No smiles. No joy. No relating. No feeling our compassion. She was a very dark and bitter person. I wanted to say, "Hey lady, get off your duff and get in here and help, or at least be friendly. We be fixing your house for you." I think she believed the lie of entitlement. No body owed her help. God didn't owe her help. She didn't have cabinets coming just because she got flooded. But because she couldn't see that, she had no gratitude for what she had even when she got it.

◆B. Can I make a few observations, biblically speaking?

◆1) You don't deserve your wife's fidelity. And ladies, your husband doesn't owe you his dedication. Yes you have committed yourself in marriage, and these things are right before the face of God. But you are not entitled to them by your merit. Love is a gift. It is only and ever a gift. Marriage is a daily gift. A promise made. Marriage is a covenant not a 50-50 contract. or debt.

◆2) You and I are not citizens in America because we had it coming. You did not determine where you would be born. It could have been at any other coordinates on the globe, maybe in a Third World country.

YOU DESERVE A BREAK, GENESIS 3:1-19

Liar Liar #5

◆3) Do you find yourself getting angry when life doesn't seem fair? Do you feel that your children owe you obedience for all the sacrifices you've made for them? Are you made when people don't thank you for your generosity? Are you tempted not to volunteer again after having used your talents, or expended energy and not gotten noticed for it or appreciated? You might be believing the entitlement lie.

◆We need an attitude like David at the building of the temple.

◆““But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand. We are aliens and strangers in your sight, as were all our forefathers. Our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope. O LORD our God, as for all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name, it comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you.” 1 Chronicles 29:14-16, NIV.

◆3. Countering the Entitlement Lie

◆Here are a few things to consider to get out from under this lie...

◆A. Speak accurately about the truth. It matters how we talk about things. Some things should be because God says they should be. Because they are right and holy. But these reasons are not about my deserving. We should not abort our children because it is *right* to respect life that God creates, not because the child *deserves* to live. There is a difference and we should say it rightly. We should care about the poor in the world because God cares about the poor and tells us to, but not because they deserve everything we happen to have. They don't deserve it, and neither

YOU DESERVE A BREAK, GENESIS 3:1-19

Liar Liar #5

do we, for that matter. And it would probably do us well to clearly say in our journals, and prayers things like...

◆ I am not entitled to this good job I have, though it is fine to enjoy it and be grateful.

◆ I am not entitled to perfect health, though it is normal to desire it.

◆ I do not deserve my children's good behavior, though it is right for them to live it and for me to require it.

◆ B. Learn to express your needs and desires rather than your demands.

Doing this is far different than getting upset with a person, or a circumstance. For example, saying to your spouse, "You never give me a back rub, even though I give you them" is far different from saying, "Honey, I really would appreciate a back rub. Would you please?" One is an entitlement complaint. The other is a request and expression of a desire. The one will create bitterness. The other creates openness.

◆ C. Allow yourself to be hurt and disappointed. It is appropriate to be disappointed or hurt over legitimate needs or desires. God created us with needs and desires, which of course we must weigh on the scales of his laws and designs. It is usually when we cover our emotions, particularly hurt and disappointment, that they come out as other things like anger, resentment, depression, bitterness. So parents too, need to allow their children to feel their hurts, speak of them. Rather than telling your daughter to buck up and not feel bad when left out by a friend, it will be healthier to simply acknowledge that it hurts, and stinks, and that you feel badly about it too. Do you see the difference? Her hurt will come out some

YOU DESERVE A BREAK, GENESIS 3:1-19

Liar Liar #5

day one way or another. Why not deal with it now in a healthy environment?

◆ Conclusion:

◆ *“Once you were dead, doomed forever because of your many sins. You used to live just like the rest of the world, full of sin, obeying Satan, the mighty prince of the power of the air. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. All of us used to live that way, following the passions and desires of our evil nature. We were born with an evil nature, and we were under God’s anger just like everyone else. But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so very much, that even while we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God’s special favor that you have been saved!)” Ephesians 2:1-5, NLT.*

◆ God’s word gives us perspective. We are not the owners. We are not the Creator. We are the created! Everything we have is gift to begin with. Secondly, we are rebellious creatures, sinning creatures. I’d highly recommend that we not demand what we are actually entitled to. Do not plead for justice. Plead for mercy. Third, and most happily, we are or can be saved creatures, not by our deserving, but by his compassion. We are not owed a wealthy existence. We do not deserve freedom. We are not guaranteed a place in heaven merely because we are human. These things are gifts, very good gifts, but gifts. It is fine to want them. It is wonderful to have them. It hurts to lose them. But let us not mistakenly assume we deserve them. Our Constitution says that all men have certain unalienable rights, and among them are life, liberty and the pursuit of

YOU DESERVE A BREAK, GENESIS 3:1-19

Liar Liar #5

happiness. But don't neglect the former truth. These are endowed, gifted to us by our Creator. They are good because he says they are so.