

## IS THE BIBLE AGAINST WOMEN?

*Hi. This is Natalie Hoffman of [FlyingFreeNow.com](http://FlyingFreeNow.com), and you're listening to the Flying Free Podcast, a support resource for women of faith looking for hope and healing from hidden emotional and spiritual abuse.*

NATALIE: Welcome to Episode 135 of the Flying Free Podcast. Our guest today is Bruce Fleming. He's the founder of the Tru316 Project and the speaker on The Eden Podcast. Bruce is a former academic dean and professor of practical theology in French-speaking Africa. He's also the author of The Book of Eden: Genesis 2-3. Welcome to the podcast, Bruce.

BRUCE: Thank you very much, Natalie. I'm very happy to be with you.

NATALIE: This is kind of a last-minute thing. I've heard your name, and I think I've seen it on social media. I think we were both in a Facebook group called Biblical Christian Egalitarians, or something like that. (I'm not on Facebook that much.) And I've seen your podcast, but it's never registered. You know how you must see things several times before you think, "What is that?" Well, I did that this week. You know what it was? I saw someone comment... I think it was in that group. Their comment came up on my feed, and it said, "I've been binge listening The Eden Podcast, and I just love it!" I thought, "What is that?" I clicked over, and then I started binge listening to it.

BRUCE: Great!

NATALIE: I thought, "Oh my gosh, everyone needs to listen to this podcast! It is so amazing!" The thing I love about your podcast is that you break everything down into these short little episodes that are fifteen to twenty minutes long at the most.

BRUCE: That's right.

NATALIE: And you explain things clearly. I need you to explain things to me like I'm a kindergartener when it comes to theology. I just don't think that way. I've been immersed in the Bible since I was a kid, but I just read the Bible. I read the Bible, and I've done Bible studies. But I'm not familiar with the Greek and Hebrew, and I've never done anything like that. You break it down for those of us who aren't into all that in such a way that we can understand clearly what is going on in these verses. You've been blowing my mind!

BRUCE: Well, I'm happy to hear that. You're not the first one, but I'm happy to hear that is true for you too.

NATALIE: Here's the other thing I really like about your podcast and your voice. I come out of a very conservative Christian upbringing and was immersed in that my whole adult life. Your voice and the way you talk reminds me of that world where the pastors or the leaders sounded like they knew what they were talking about. When you come out of that... My brain, my programming, says, "That's how someone needs to sound if they're telling the truth." Now, some of those people weren't always telling the truth, but that's what my programming says. The people who need to hear your message are people coming out of that. They are the people who have been marinating in all these patriarchal... I want to call them straight-up lies. I don't think people know they are lying. I think they've just been believing this their whole lives. They don't understand that it's not true. But they've been marinating in it their whole lives, and they need to make some kind of connection with someone who seems like they are coming from that perspective to... Do you know what I'm saying? I've read books by people who are outside that perspective (and I love the new books I'm reading), but back then when I was immersed in this conservative culture, I thought people like that were heretics. In other words, I'm trying to say that I wouldn't have thought you were a heretic because you sound like a Christian pastor. Do you know what I'm saying?

BRUCE: Well, I happen to be a Christian, and I happen to be a pastor, and I happen to be a professor of practical theology. So I like keeping things practical. I've been deeply marked because I used to be a Youth for Christ staff member and a youth pastor. I was a junior high English teacher, and that's the level I like to present things at. If it's clear enough for that, then it's clear enough. I like that.

NATALIE: I love it! God has perfectly positioned you for this message at this time. It's so exciting to me, and I'm so glad you were willing to come on this podcast and that I can introduce your podcast to my listeners. If you're listening, by the time you're done, you're going to want to head over to his podcast (it's called The Eden Podcast) and start binge listening. I recommend starting... I think you have four or five seasons. How many seasons do you have now?

BRUCE: We're starting into season five. But the first four seasons are the key, and the first season is the foundation for everything.

NATALIE: Yes. That's what I was going to say. Start with season one and the very first episode. I like how you've laid it out, so it is easy to find everything in the right order. Otherwise I would have looked at all those Bible verses... That's the other thing I'm not good at — numbers. If I see numbers, they all look the same to me.

BRUCE: If you go to [theedenpodcast.com](http://theedenpodcast.com), there is a player right there, and you can start listening to episode one of season one.

NATALIE: Perfect.

BRUCE: I calculated when people started listening to our podcast that they would go to season one episode one. That's the one that has gotten more downloads than any. So I tried to front load it. I put all the good stuff right there.

NATALIE: In the show notes, I'm going to put my two favorites so far. It wasn't one. There were two that I loved so much, that blew my mind, so I sent it to my daughter and said, "You've got to listen to these two episodes!"

BRUCE: Six and seven are the secret. Episode six talks about the context, the way chapter three is structured. You must understand that. Episode seven goes right into Genesis 3:16. That's my second favorite 3:16 in the Bible. John 3:16 is my favorite.

NATALIE: Yeah.

BRUCE: But Genesis 3:16 is my second favorite, and that's where God speaks to the woman in the Garden of Eden in eleven words. My wife spent seven years researching her doctoral dissertation on those eleven words. When she did, she'd come home in the evening, and we'd talk about it. I'd say, "You know, what you're finding influences my thinking about these New Testament passages." She said, "That's good, but I've got to keep focused on the Genesis." I said, "Yeah, but these New Testament passages..." She said, "You do that." As it turned out, I ended up doing that because the Lord worked it out that my dissertation topic was stolen in Africa, and I had to fall back on other things I had done. I ended up working on the five New Testament passages related to Genesis 3:16. The big deal about Genesis 3:16 that Joy told me was that God didn't curse Eve or Adam or limit woman in any way. She was researching this while we were living in the jungle in Africa. We were surrounded by great villages and people who spoke many different tribal languages. We found out they all thought that God cursed three or four times or more, and they thought God certainly cursed the woman. She said, "No. Look at the Hebrew words. God didn't curse Eve at all." I said, "Well, keep going. I want to learn

more about this. Let's find out what's going on."

NATALIE: I was going to ask you about your marriage with your wife. How long have you guys been married?

BRUCE: Ever since the day we got married, so it's pushing four decades.

NATALIE: Wow! I'm curious to know, this is kind of a personal question, but how has your theology or what you've learned over the years impacted your marriage? How would you describe the impact if it has?

BRUCE: My Grandma Edna was the teacher of the largest adult Sunday School class in the church where I grew up. After she passed away, a kind of obnoxious politician in town turned out to be the Sunday School teacher, and the class dwindled to two people. He was convinced to give up the reins, which went to my mom. My mom built it right back up again, so I'm familiar with women in ministry. I was not in those classes, but I saw what was going on. I love my grandma, and I love my mom. Women in ministry are a wonderful thing in my heritage. When Joy came to seminary... She went to a Christian college. The second semester she said, "I want to take a Hebrew course." They said, "No, you have to start in the beginning in the fall because it's a continuous thing. You can't start Hebrew in January." She never took a Bible language in college. The summer after she was out of university she came back to town because she was in a wedding. She found out there was a suicide Hebrew class being taught at the seminary where I was, so she took a six-week intensive course. Once she learned it, she thought, "Now what do I do with it?" She stayed on for the fall quarter to try to learn the biblical content. While she was there for classes, that's when we met. She was involved in studying for seminary. I was involved on staff at that point, but I was also doing a second master's degree. That's never been a problem for us. I found out later that as she was walking across the campus, some obnoxious guys would actually stop her and say, "What are you doing here? You don't belong here. What's a woman doing here?" But she's very confident. She was polite but firm and kept going on the sidewalk.

NATALIE: Wow, that is interesting. So you describe your marriage as a partnership then?

BRUCE: I would say theologically we're correct. What I grew up in at home myself was not an egalitarian marriage. It was a typical hierarchical thing where my dad did what he wanted to do. My mom had a hard time with some of the things he wanted to do. It was a tough childhood growing up. She almost had a miscarriage with my younger sister, and because of that, had a chemically hard childbirth. She became an active alcoholic. So

for many years of my childhood, I had my dad, who was kind of an angry, domineering person, and my mom, who was an active alcoholic. I did not have a good model for myself, and I brought that into our marriage; so that wasn't good. Joy had a wonderful set of parents. Her mom was involved in Bible Study Fellowship. Her dad was a restaurant owner who had the Viking Village Smorgasbords here in town. He was active in church. They were wonderful in-laws for me. A great model too.

NATALIE: Good. Are your parents still alive?

BRUCE: No. We've lost all four now.

NATALIE: Okay. For those of you listening, Bruce and I live in the same neck of the woods in Minnesota. We're from the Twin Cities. When you meet people online, you don't expect them to be living near you. But what are you doing for ministry locally now?

BRUCE: When she met me, I was already accepted as a missionary candidate, and I knew where I was going. I was on my way to French-speaking Africa. There was a brand-new regional seminary for French-speaking Africa, and I was going to be a professor over there. As we were dating, she had to work that through. "Not only am I going to marry him, but I'm also going to become a missionary." I was praying like mad. She got that clarified, and we got married. The mission director said, "Joy, you're halfway through a Master of Divinity. Bruce is going over to be a professor at this graduate seminary in Africa. You've got one more year to go, but if you do that, it probably won't be good for your marriage to cram all that in. Brand-new newlyweds, working really hard on the master's degree. Why don't you take that one year and stretch it into two? Then you've got that master's degree. Don't leave the degree studies and just go over. No, you finish your master's degree, and the two of you go over as professors." So that's what we did. To spend my time, I wanted to be a church planting professor. The Lord helped us to go plant a church in a suburb of the Fox River Valley west of Chicago. So we planted a church. I started driving a school bus and thought I would meet kids and families and develop a ministry from that. Instead, while you are waiting at the school for the next load of kids to come out, the bus drivers would talk to each other, and I was able to lead some of them to the Lord. Our church was made up of converted school bus drivers, which I didn't expect. But that's how that happened. We organized a church and left it, and the next week we were gone on the plane for two years in France because we were going to French-speaking Africa, and Joy had never had French, and I only had junior high French. We went to a wonderful school that the French Christians had organized so missionaries would speak better French when they were ministering in France. We went there, and it only lasted a year. In Africa, they said, "Okay, come on

down.” We said, “We know some French, but we don’t know enough to be professors in a grad school in French. We’ve got to stay an extra year if we can please.” They said okay. The African leaders said to us, “If you’re going to work on a doctoral dissertation, do it about something we care about. Don’t pick an obscure verse that does us no good. Do it on something worthwhile.” So Joy ended up doing hers on Genesis 2 and 3 on the Garden of Eden: who is God, who is man, what is marriage, what is the first sin, what are the consequences for that? All of that is great foundational material.

Then when we got to Africa, she was a professor of Old Testament theology at the seminary. Then I was working, I thought, on missions, evangelism, church planting, and contextualization of theology. Our daughter was born a couple of months after we arrived in Africa. We had very little water in our house. There was just a city water tap outside our back door, so I was outside the back door holding the plastic jug we were trying to collect water from in the thirty minutes a day that we had water. Joy was in the back of the house nursing our little baby. Thieves broke in through the front of the house and stole toys, cutlery, keys, and what they thought was a treasure box. But it was a metal filing cabinet with all my hand-written doctoral notes. That night they stole the 55-gallon drum of kerosene that we had in our storeroom. It’s a long story, but the result was that all my doctoral dissertation was gone; all my research was lost. It was like a death in the family.

A year later, two of the doctors who assisted Joy in the delivery of our daughter, both Harvard med school grads, said, “Isn’t there anything else you’ve done at the doctoral level?” When we were in Strasbourg, France, we were working with graduate InterVarsity students in French. They asked Joy to do two monthly seminars on Genesis 2 and 3. Then they asked me to do the New Testament seminars, so we spent that whole academic year working with students. That provided the basis of the material that I used and went on and did my doctoral research. That’s how we got involved. Joy did the Old Testament; I did the New Testament. One thing that bugs me is if you go to the studies on women in the Bible passages, it seems like you get clarity, and then suddenly you turn in circles. You think you understand what that passage says, then all of a sudden you are turning in circles. I think we have to take very seriously what happened in Genesis chapter 3, where God says to the serpent, “I take what the woman said seriously, that you deceived her. Because you deceived her, I’m going to confirm that she and you are enemies. I’m going to place enmity between the two of you. I’m confirming that you and she are enemies.” People pay little attention to the fact that she has an enemy, nor do they pay attention to the fact that he is her enemy.



I think that when we've got passages about women, Satan is out there trying to mess them up. He's a liar; he's a distorter of truth. What he's done, first, is distorted the key verse, which is Genesis 3:16. Anytime you get these New Testament passages that touch on the Garden of Eden, you enter this warp zone. You're kind of dizzy and wonder what's going on here. To correct all that, I founded the Tru3:16 project. I want to true up the verse. We want to have it true and clear. When Joy came up with the clear understanding of the eleven Hebrew words, and then we came home we were asked by the Christians for Biblical Equality movement that was just starting, "Can you take your 407-page dissertation, Dr. Joy Fleming, and condense that into something we can read and publish for others?" She did. She got it down to about fifty pages. They printed it and sold it out. Then it was out of print. These last few years, I realized this whole new generation of people doesn't know what she wrote or what she said, nor the New Testament work I did afterwards. That's why a couple of years ago, I started doing Zoom workshops before anybody was doing Zoom. That has now turned into our YouTube channel with twenty workshops. Then we came back because I thought there weren't enough people paying attention to the YouTube channel, The Tru3:16 Project. So then I started the podcast. I'm excited about the podcast because every time someone listens to the podcast, they listen to more than one.

NATALIE: Yes.

BRUCE: The average is two and a half. Today I looked at the download numbers—how many people were signing in. I don't know who they are, but let's say there's a thousand people signed in today. Then I look at how many episodes were listened to today, and it's 2,500. That means they are listening to more than one episode. I'm delighted by that; that's great. It's sticky in that sense. What happens is if you look in Genesis 3, and you want to understand what happened in the Garden of Eden, and you look in your Bible that you have—an online Bible, on your phone, or in print—they do not show you what the clear Hebrew words are. In a sense, they have piled up garbage on top of it. They've polluted it. The worst problem is the first four Hebrew words. God says to the woman these four words in Hebrew: multiplying, I will multiply, your itsabon, and your heron. (Okay, I just said the two Hebrew words.) But I'm going to multiply and I'm going to multiply. When you say that twice in Hebrew, what that means is that I'm really going to multiply. I'm really going to do it. The word "to multiply" He said back in Genesis 1 — "Be fruitful and multiply." It's in the words of blessing when God talked to Abraham, and He talked to both of his wives. God said, "Multiplying, I will multiply your offspring like the stars in the sky and the sands on the seashore." There's only three times in the Old Testament — "multiplying, I will multiply." All three of those times, including Genesis 3:16, it is in the context of blessing. Nobody gets the sense of blessing when they read the

first words in their English translation of Genesis 3:16. But you are sort of set up. “Oh, good! Multiplying, I will multiply. What’s He going to do that’s so good?” Then He says “itsabon.” That’s bad news. Then He says “heron.” That’s good news. So let’s skip to it. Word number four, “Multiplying, I will multiply... heron.” What’s that? That is your conception. Let’s tie it in. What did He just say to the serpent? “Her seed will crush your head.” That’s the same concept. Seed–conception. So when He says, “I’m going to multiply your offspring—your seed—I’m going to multiply your Offspring (capital O),” that means, “I’m promising that the Messiah will come through you, and you will be the victor. Your child will be the champion who will crush the head of that liar and murderer.” That’s great, good news! Of course, “multiplying, I will multiply” is good, and “your conception” is also good. The first time that I remember I heard the word proto–evangelium was when I went to seminary. The proto–evangelium is in Genesis 3:16. That’s the first announcement of the Good News. It bothered me that the first announcement of the Good News was to the serpent in Genesis 3:15. God is talking to the serpent and says, “Her offspring is going to crush your head.” People say, “Yeah, that’s good news. He’s going to be crushed.” But it has bothered me that the announcement would be given to the serpent. As Joy worked this out, I realized that we have the introduction of this concept that the serpent will be crushed, but then, in the first words of 3:16, we have the promise to the woman that her offspring will crush his head. So the proto–evangelium overlaps into 3:16, and there we have the Good News. The gospel is given right there in Genesis 3:16 — “Multiplying, I will multiply, your conception of your promised champion of the offspring.” Of course, that is Jesus Christ; so, we have that blessing.

Now the bad news, people get that, and they get all hung up on that. The bad news is this word “itsabon.” If you know Hebrew, then you know Hebrews like to make puns. The word “tree” in Genesis 3:1 is “eyts” in Hebrew. This word in Genesis 3:16a is “itsabon.” So it sounds like “eyts.” You have a tree–related something going on. God says to the woman, “I will multiply these two things. I will multiply this ‘itsabon’ and I will multiply your conception. Well, what is the “itsabon?” He doesn’t tell her. I said to Joy one time, “He says what it is in the next verse when He’s talking to the man. But how come He’s doing it up here and not telling her what’s going on?” She said, “That’s a proleptic prophecy.” I suppose I learned what a proleptic prophecy was in my previous studies, but I didn’t remember. So I said, “What’s a proleptic prophecy?” She was very polite and said, “A proleptic prophecy is when the cause is given, but the results are not yet explained. So the cause of something is that she’s going to experience “itsabon,” but the result, what the “itsabon” is, we do not know. When you go down to Genesis 3:17, when God now turns to the man and says, “Okay, stinker. You have been an active rebel. You weren’t deceived like her. You disobeyed my voice on purpose, and you followed his



voice, the serpent's voice. Because of you, cursed is the earth, and you will experience itsabon." Now it is translated as "toil" or "sorrowful toil." Joy hyphenates it in Genesis 3:16 and 3:17. God says to her, "I will multiply your sorrowful toil and your conception." Then God says to him, "Cursed is the earth, and you will have sorrowful toil." What does that really mean? It's used one more time, so let's find out.

In Genesis 5:29, Noah's dad says, "Oh, boy! We're going to have a kid. Maybe this is the one. We've all been suffering from itsabon, which is the sorrowful toil from working the ground that the Lord has cursed." So what is "itsabon?" (By the way, Noah wasn't the promised capital o, Offspring. It wasn't until Jesus.) What is "itsabon" then? It's sorrowful toil in field work. That's not gender specific; that's gender inclusive. So God says it to her: "You're going to have itsabon, and you'll hear why in a moment." Then He says to the man, "Because of you, there is going to be itsabon." Later, Noah's dad says, "Hopefully this kid will help deliver us from this terrible 'itsabon' as we're trying to work the cursed soil that was cursed because of the man." So there's two great things there. God says, "I'm certainly going to give you 'itsabon' (actually because of him, but you will experience it) and I'm going to give you conception." Two things. But if you read your English Bible, they only list one thing. They take those two ideas... By the way, neither of them has anything to do with childbirth—at the end of nine months, the process of giving birth to a baby. Sorrowful toil and fieldwork? No, that's not childbirth. Conception? No. You don't feel it, and it's nine months too soon. There is nothing about childbirth in those first four words, and yet all your Bible translations say, "You will have pain in childbearing."

NATALIE: Yes!

BRUCE: And that's a terrible thing because when we got to Africa, everyone said, "See! God cursed the woman with pain in childbirth." We heard a story in a village not too far away of a young woman who was just having her first baby. (I haven't done this, so I don't know.) But I heard that if you have multiple children, the first one might take longer, and the other ones are sometimes quicker. Here she was surrounded by a batch of well-meaning ladies. In that village, they were the ones who were the midwives for this woman in this (I'll be polite) hut. In this hut, here are these midwives, and they are saying to her, "It's been sixteen hours, and you haven't given birth to your child yet. You are a terrible young woman. You are keeping your husband from getting this baby." They took red-hot, tiny little chili peppers and smeared the juice in her eyes to punish her, to get her attention, and to get her to work harder. They beat her on her belly, and they did other things, which made things swell up and made it harder. They did that to her because you are supposed to have pain in childbirth. These were Catholic women or

Protestant women. They all knew what their Bible said, and that was that you were supposed to have pain in childbirth. But that's not what it says!

One of the heartbreaking concerns we've always had since then is... Look. God didn't curse Eve or Adam. He just cursed. The word cursed is 'arar' and is used two times. The serpent is cursed, and the soil is cursed. Two curses. How do I know there's not more curses? Because it is only used twice. So if we've only used it twice, there are two curses. The man isn't cursed. The woman isn't cursed. Yet, it looks like it's equivalent to a curse, and people treat it like a curse. There's a wonderful book that says something about beyond the curse. I playfully said to Joy one day, "I think that book went beyond the curse—way beyond the curse—because they think there's a curse here, a curse there, and a curse somewhere else." The Jews in the Babylonian Talmud before the time of Christ actually talked about ten curses on Eve. There's no curse on Eve! In France, our professor took us to the great cathedral. For centuries, it was the tallest building in Europe. A beautiful spire going up in the sandstone pink cathedral. In the bas-relief statues in the front of the portal, there are the virgins with the oil and the virgins that don't have the oil. They are standing out from the stone. But on the end, there is Eve. She is holding out a piece of fruit. She looks beautiful. "I've got this piece of fruit for you." The professor with his French-German accent said, "Come around here and look on her back! Look and see what's there." Here she had stone serpents embedded in her shoulders, writhing down her back, and boils. He said, "The sculptor shows us his theology. He thought she was in-league with the devil, and she was filled with the poison of the serpent. That's how she offered the apple to the man, the poor sucker. She had all this satanic power in her according to the stone statues." That's all wrong! If you go back to Genesis 3, the first couple of verses, every time Satan says "you," it is plural in Hebrew. In other words, you two. "You two should eat. Y'all. Both of you."

NATALIE: Yeah.

BRUCE: People draw these beautiful pictures. There's a serpent hanging from a tree. Here's the fruit, and here's this young woman by herself at the tree. That's not what happened! Are you kidding? They are on their honeymoon at the Garden of Eden Bed and Breakfast. They will not be separated. They are going to go over to this important tree. They are both there, and he speaks to both of them. Why does he say, "The serpent spoke to Eve?" Because the serpent spoke first to Eve, that's all. But he said "you two" every time he talked. So they are both there, and they both listen, but they don't hear the same way. The woman actually corrects him. They are supposed to rule over the animals, so she does. She rules over him and says, "No, that's not right. That's incorrect." But then he is the biggest liar in the world. Jesus later called him the father of

lies and a murderer. He came to murder them. How did he murder them? He started lying by taking the form of a serpent. He didn't come there with his big, beautiful, angelic body and say, "Hello there. I'm the best angel in the universe. I have some contradictory advice for you." He didn't do that. He said, "I'm a serpent. You can rule over me, but I have a few words for you." He is lying just by getting into the serpent. Second, he is lying in the way he talks. In her dissertation, Joy talks in more detail about what he does. (By the way, on Tru316.com, Joy's dissertation is there. People can buy it in the shop. They can download all 400 pages and read the Hebrew and all that.)

NATALIE: Is there a way for them to get the shortened fifty page one, or is that no longer published?

BRUCE: For you, I've got such a deal.

NATALIE: Great! What is it?

BRUCE: If you go to Tru316.com, there will be a little green toolbar right across the top that says, "Podcast friends click on this green bar." I try to be clear. Click on that green bar and it will take you to a page. You can download the audiobook of her 50-page thing right there. It's about two hours as an audiobook, and it's free. So just go there and get it. You can also go to Amazon. Her book is called Man and Woman in Biblical Unity.

NATALIE: Thank you.

BRUCE: I want to make it a freebie, and I want people to get it. Now I lost my place. So the two of them got tempted and the two of them responded. She was deceived; he wasn't. Two times in the New Testament it says he wasn't deceived. So what does that mean? He did it on purpose. There were six cities of refuge that God instituted in Israel when the Jews moved into the Promised Land—three on one side of the river and three on the other side of the river. What was a city of refuge for? If you killed someone on purpose, so you were a first-degree murderer. Then you were supposed to have retribution, and you were to be put to death right away. But if you killed someone, and it was by accident, you didn't do it on purpose, then you were a second-degree murderer, and you could flee to one of these six cities of refuge. The pursuers couldn't go there and couldn't put you to death because there is a different level of guilt, yet you killed someone 100%. But you didn't do it on purpose. What happened with Eve was that she ate the whole fruit 100%, but she didn't do it on purpose. She was deceived. Now the man, however, he did it on purpose. So the man is what I call a first-degree eater, and the woman is a second-degree eater. The judgment level is different. By the way, people

talk about Genesis 2 as “creation” and Genesis 3 as “fall.” It’s like they think God built the man and woman and each had the right foot and the right leg a little shorter than the left leg. Eventually, these tipping persons were going to fall. God didn’t do a very good job if He created us so we could fall. I don’t like that word fall. I call Genesis 2 “creation” and Genesis 3 “attack.” Attack, not a fall. It’s the attack. What happened? We have this attacker. What were the results? He nicked her. He winged her. He got her to eat and killed her. But boy, he got that man dead on. He got right into the man’s heart because what happens? When they both eat, when they both realize that they are naked, when they both run and hide, when they both put on some fig leaf haute couture, when they are both out there hiding, and God says, “Where are you?” (The word is kind of general in my mind. It may have been, “Hey guys, where are you?”) The man comes and says, “I heard you. I did this, and I did that.” Where did this I stuff come from? They were there on their honeymoon. Everything was together. But suddenly, he is saying, “I, I, I did this.” Then God says, “Who told you this?” The man could have said, “Well, nobody told me that, but there was this voice over here that came out of that serpent. He told us you were wrong, God.” But the man didn’t point out the serpent. He didn’t even talk about the serpent. Instead, he says to God (this is after the attack), “The woman whom You gave to be with me.” He never says, “The woman You gave me. That’s wrong. Even Adam didn’t mess that up. He said, “The woman You gave to be with me. She gave to me, and I ate.” So there are two blamings going on right here and a huge amount of betrayal. He betrays the woman. In the blaming, he says, “The woman, she gave me, whom You, God, gave to me.” He is blaming God. He’s blaming her, and he’s blaming God. He’s not confessing. He’s not accepting. You know about sinful patterns in relationships, right? You talk about that all the time on your podcast. We have a terrible prototype of sinful relationship going on here. There is terrible betrayal by the husband and terrible blaming and accusation going on there.

When God speaks to the woman, He says, “Alright, I’ve just confirmed you as the enemy of Satan in Genesis 3:15, and in Genesis 3:16, I confirmed for you that you are going to have offspring, and your offspring will crush his head.” Now I want to tell you a couple of things. Joy calls this... She says that God was taking action in the first words of Genesis 3:16, but in the rest of Genesis 3:16, He’s not doing anything new. He’s just telling her, “Now that this attack has gone on, and you each have responded in this way, let Me tell you what is going to happen. You now have a mortal body, and with ‘etsev’ you will bring forth children.” Now, that is a mistranslated word. Again, people say, “With terrible pain you will have children.” The word etsev is used other times in the Old Testament, but never for childbirth. When we were in Africa, I came up with this illustration. When it rains in the tropics (and we were right on the equator where it rains all the time), and you’re going along in a banana truck, and you get caught in the mud, what happens?

Everybody must get out and push. It's hard, hard effort to push out that truck. That's etsev. It's hard effort. New muscles, pelvic floor, all this stuff. It's now hard to deliver a baby. When she was going to be outside the Garden of Eden (which God knew she was soon going to be—she didn't know that yet), with effort she was going to bring forth children. He wants her to understand when she's having new effort, it's not that she is dying. It's just that this is her first baby, and she will have a second and third. So that was the bad news. But then He says, "You will bring forth children." When He said conception, that could have been just one child. When He said, "Seed will crush Satan's head," that could have been just one child. But then He confirms, "Plural—you will have children. Just as I told you at the beginning on day six, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth,' I am confirming, I'm telling you this is going to happen. With effort, you are going to have children." That is good!

In the next line, He says to her, "Your desire for your husband." There is no verb, so in Hebrew you just put in "is." So your desire is for your husband. What kind of desire is that? Well, Joy calls it affection. That same word is used for another human back in Song of Solomon, where Solomon's lover says, "His desire is for me." It's good. It's great. I call it "love." Joy says you can't go quite that far—say affection. But I still say love. So her love is for her husband. God looks at her heart and says, "You disobeyed, but you were deceived. I'm looking in your heart, and your love is for your husband. Now I'm going to tell you about him. But he will rule over you." This ruling over is not a good thing; it's a bad thing. This is a warning to her. People think these words that God just told her are words that He said to the man. "Okay, man. Go out there and rule over your wife." That's not what He said. She is married to the most sinful man in the world—literally. This man is going to try to rule over her. How do we know that? When God talks to the man in verses 17, 18, and 19, and then He's done... We have one verse in Genesis 3:20 where they have a chance to do whatever they want, and the man rules over her by giving her a name. In Genesis 2, when the man ruled over the animals and he named their names, Hebrew scholars call this a naming formula. In England, they would have said, "I dub you Sir Lancelot." A naming formula. That's what it sounds like in Hebrew. "I dub you Sir Giraffe. I dub you Sir Ocelot. I dub you Lady Flipper. I dub you Queen Peacock." But then in Genesis 3:20, "I dub you," is what the man says. He is ruling over her as if she is one of those animals. So he has flipped things around. No longer does he allow God to rule over him because he decided to rule over himself and listen to Satan, and now he is going to try to rule over her. He does with naming her. In Genesis 4, she still has her heart right because in the Hebrew it says, "I have begotten a man, the lord." Dr. Kaiser, who first taught me this in my course in school, said, "This could be taken two ways. 'I've gotten a man with the help of the Lord.' Or 'I've gotten a man who is the lord.'" Is her first child going to be the offspring who is going to crush Satan's head? Maybe? So she says, "I've

gotten a man—the lord. Here he is.” History shows us that Cain was not the good guy, and that’s a shame. So think of all the heartbreak that she has. The man betrays her before God right there in the Garden of Eden. God confirms to her the good news. Then the man turns and treats her like an animal. Then her first child turns out to be like her husband. The second child turns out to be like her—worshipping God. It’s a sad marriage situation from the very beginning. Jesus comes, and He is the offspring; He restores us. When we go into the New Testament passages, if you don’t understand Genesis 3:16, if you think woman was cursed, it skews all these New Testament passages. That is in seasons two, three, and four of The Eden Podcast.

NATALIE: Wow! That lays a great foundation and is a great setup for people to go over there and listen to the rest. Here’s why it’s so important. We are coming out of... Our brains have been programmed after years and years of marinating in a certain theology that says that women are less than men and that God holds men up in higher esteem than women and that women are good for being helpers but that’s it. We bought into that, and it contributed to... Many of the people listening to this podcast are involved in marriages that are very problematic and very unequal. They are being spiritually manipulated and abused, not only by their partner, but also in their religious communities. It is important to understand the truth because that is not what your identity is. When God looks at you, He doesn’t see you how your husband sees you or that your church pastor or leaders may see you. He sees you the way God saw Eve. He sees you as precious and important in His whole grand scheme of things. He sees you. He sees the good that you do. One thing that just blew me away in my experience, and I’ve seen this repeatedly with other women, is that we do love our husbands. We love them and would have done anything we could to help them, to make the situation better, and to make that marriage amazing. That was our desire. We just kept hitting our head against a wall because I wasn’t being reciprocated. Yet what ends up happening is that many of these women end up being the scapegoat. Ironically, they are the ones who are accused, which is how the verses have been changed to make it seem like Eve was the bad one—these women are accused of being the one who is actually causing the problem instead of the one who is trying to redeem the situation and make it better.

BRUCE: I met a friend online. She’s a wonderful person. She was a Bible Study Fellowship leader for seventeen years and then a regional leader. She said, “I really like these workshops you did. Is that online?” I said, “Well, no.” She said, “You should put that on YouTube.” I said, “I don’t know how to do YouTube.” She said, “Do you mind if I put it on YouTube?” I said, “Great! Go ahead.” I didn’t know that she didn’t know how to put it on YouTube either. She went onto YouTube and figured out how to do it, and then she put up a channel for me.



NATALIE: Wow.

BRUCE: Her name is Joanne. So then she says (and I'm holding up for you a copy of The Book of Eden: Genesis 2 and 3), "I think each one of your episodes should have a study guide. So we put that up as our blog posts for the first eight episodes. While I was working through this, I decided this is Joy's material in Genesis. So I typed up and printed out every episode script before I ever recorded it, and I had Joy look at it, which took time on her part. She looked at it and she'd say, "That's not quite right," or, "You forgot this," or, "Oh, I like that." When I got done, I had eight approved transcripts, plus I had eight study guides written by Joanne. Joanne figured out how and made it into a book, and now it's on Amazon as The Book of Eden. So that really helped a lot. Right now we're in the middle of putting on (and you can see the cover of this) this one called Beyond Eden. This is Ephesians 5 and 6. It should be out pretty soon here. Then we will have book three for season three and book four for season four.

The big thing I want to talk about from season two is that it is supposed to be so good to be married that Paul, in Ephesians 5, uses a marriage between a husband and wife to give an example of how Christians are supposed to get along in church. In Ephesians 5:18, he says, "Be being filled with the Holy Spirit." Many people take that verse as a landing point. They touch down on that verse, and then they take off and add in all sorts of details they come up with in their own minds. "Be filled with the Spirit. This means that; that means the other thing." Maybe they get ideas from other verses, but it's not in that one verse. Paul is working his way through the structure of Ephesians 5, and he's going to tell us right after 5:18 what he means. What do you do when you are being filled by the Holy Spirit? He gives you four things: in the first part of verse 19, in the second part of verse 19, in verse 20, and again in verse 21. What he says is that you should be teaching and correcting one another because you are filled with the Spirit, and then in verse 21 submitting to that teaching and correction you get from one another. That doesn't talk about healing or speaking in tongues. That's talking about when you are being filled with the Holy Spirit, this is what you are doing. You are teaching and correcting one another—old or young can do that, male or female can do that to one another—and then you submit to one another. It changes the word 'submit' totally, not from an over/under/vertical submission. He turns it into a horizontal/reciprocating/mutual type of submission. He says, "Submitting yourselves one to another." He really changes the meaning. Then, in the very next verse, he gives an example of that kind of mutual submission—husbands and wives. If that wasn't a good example, he wouldn't have used it. He's talking about Christian husbands and Christian wives in a Christian household. He calls them "one flesh." Then he develops that idea of one flesh much more through the rest of chapter five, and he pulls it out of Genesis 2:24,

where the husband and wife become one flesh. The word in Hebrew for “one” is echad. It means a unity of parts in one. So you have two people become one flesh. That echad is also from later on in Genesis where he says, “Hear, O Israel, the Lord is one—echad.” There is some tremendous deep theology. To dare to compare a Christian marriage to this kind of beautiful unity that Christians have with each other and with Christ would not be right unless it was God’s plan for us to have good marriages.

NATALIE: Yes.

BRUCE: So as the Holy Spirit is in the heart of the guy and in the heart of the gal, and as they are together and they are with Christ, and they are submitting one to another, and they are teaching and correcting one another, that is how we are supposed to live it out.

NATALIE: Yeah. I think your example of how Joanne and your wife—how you related to them; you showed them honor, and all three of you worked together—look at what you have put together. The influence of the resources that you have available to people now—you do not know the impact that is going to make on the world. Not just in our generation, but in future generations.

BRUCE: I’m praying for that. I really am.

NATALIE: That’s because it’s a direct... I really believe that God honors men and women who honor one another just like that. If we had churches and marriages that lived that out, this world would change. We don’t; but we can do our part. That’s what you are doing, and it’s very encouraging to see.

BRUCE: We have listeners in fifty-seven countries now.

NATALIE: That is amazing. This message is super important. I hope that all of you listening will go check out his podcast—The Eden Podcast. It’s easy to listen to. It’s easy to find. I haven’t been on your website, but it sounds like you have all these downloadable resources to help too. It would be great if you guys are into this, put together a little study. Get together with another woman or two or three women and go through this like a study together. Talk about it. Talk about the implications of the truth of what he... He takes verses I’ve been reading a certain way my whole life, and it has poisoned in some ways...

As I was getting out of my abusive relationship, I thought, “The Bible is not safe for me,” and I loved the Bible before. But I thought the Bible wasn’t safe for me. But it is! We’re

just reading it the wrong way. It's like Satan's version of the Bible is definitely not safe for us, but God's version is. We just have to figure out what that is.

BRUCE: There are a lot of books that have come out in recent years. I love the people who have written them, and I know a lot of them. They are still turning around in circles because they don't have the Genesis 3:16 part fixed. They don't have that insight. We're just trying to get a preliminary presentation of what's in 1 Corinthians 11, what's in 1 Corinthians 14, what's in 1 Timothy 2 and 3, and what's in 1 Peter 3. As that gets out there and they realize we have to take into account what happened in the Garden of Eden and get that right, then I think it will open up a lot of eyes. It will help us out a lot.

NATALIE: Yeah. Thank you so much for coming on and spending some time talking with us. For those of you listening, thank you for listening. Until next time, fly free!