



# STUDY SHEET

## Imperial Thirst: The Four Pillars

Scripture: Genesis 1–3

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### I. WHAT IS IMPERIAL THIRST?

#### One-Sentence Definition

Imperial Thirst is the internal drive to seize control, influence, or dominance in order to soothe the wounded places in the soul that no longer trust God's abundance. It is the impulse to secure through power what God intended to give through presence.

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#### Theological Definition

Imperial Thirst refers to the spiritually disordered impulse toward self-sovereignty and domination that emerges when the primal temptation of grievance, the anthropological wound of shame, and the epistemic distortion of scarcity coalesce, producing a compulsive pursuit of order and control apart from divine dependence. It names the fall-conditioned tendency of humanity to exchange God's relational kingdom for self-constructed empires of security, identity, and power.

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### II. THE FOUR PILLARS OF IMPERIAL THIRST

(Seen in Genesis 1–3)

#### 1. THE OLDEST TEMPTATION — GRIEVANCE

*“God is withholding from me; I deserve more.”*

Genesis 3:1–5

### Biblical Origin

- The serpent introduces **grievance**: “Has God really said...?”
- Eve begins to see God’s boundary as deprivation rather than protection.
- The lie reframes abundance (Gen. 2:16) as restriction (Gen. 3:1).

### Key Insight

Grievance is the seed of distrust—where empire first takes root.

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## 2. THE DEEPEST WOUND — SHAME

*“I am not enough; something is wrong with me.”*

Genesis 3:7–10

### Biblical Origin

- After eating the fruit, Adam and Eve experience **shame** for the first time.
- “Their eyes were opened... and they hid.”
- Shame breaks fellowship with God and with one another.
- Shame leads to hiding, blame, and disconnection.

### Key Insight

Shame fractures identity—turning beloved sons into fearful fugitives.

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### 3. THE GREATEST ILLUSION — SCARCITY

*“There will not be enough for me; I must protect myself.”*

Genesis 3:7

#### Biblical Origin

- Adam and Eve sew *fig leaves* together—first act of self-sufficiency.
- Even in Eden’s abundance, they behave as though there is **not enough covering**, not enough safety, not enough identity.
- Scarcity is a *perception problem*, not a resource problem.

#### Key Insight

Scarcity is the illusion that replaces God’s abundance with fear of lack.

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### 4. THE MOST COMPELLING CRAVING — CONTROL (ORDER)

*“I will create my own security by shaping the world around me.”*

Genesis 3:7–13

#### Biblical Origin

- Fig leaves → first attempt at **self-made order**.
- Hiding → control through avoidance.
- Blame → control through narrative.
- Adam seeks stability by naming Eve’s fault; Eve seeks control by naming the serpent’s.

**Key Insight**

Control is the false salvation—what humans reach for when they stop trusting God.

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**III. THE GENESIS PATTERN (1–3)**

**Where Imperial Thirst Begins**

Pillar	Genesis Moment	Description
Grievance	3:1–5	The serpent reframes God’s goodness as deprivation.
Shame	3:7–10	Eyes opened; identity shattered; hiding begins.
Scarcity	3:7	Fig leaves reveal fear-driven self-provision.
Control	3:7–13	Hiding, covering, and blaming become strategies to restore internal order.

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**IV. REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Where do I feel grievance toward God?**  
(“Why did You allow this?” “Why not me?”)
- 2. Where is shame shaping my reactions?**  
(What do I hide? What do I fear being seen?)
- 3. Where do I believe the illusion of scarcity?**  
(“There won’t be enough love, security, forgiveness...”)
- 4. Where am I reaching for control instead of trust?**

(Fig leaves, hiding patterns, blame cycles)

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# SIX-DAY DEVOTIONAL

Imperial Thirst: Returning to Presence (Genesis 1–3)

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## DAY 1 — Created for Abundance

**Scripture:** *Genesis 1:28–31*

**Theme:** God's First Word Is Provision, Not Restriction

### Reflection

Before there was sin, before rebellion, before fear, there was abundance. God's opening act was generosity—filling the earth with everything humanity needed. Imperial Thirst begins when we forget our origin story. We were created from abundance, placed in abundance, and called to walk with a God of abundance.

### Heart Question

Where have I forgotten the abundance I was created from?

### Prayer

Lord, restore the memory of Your generosity in my soul. Remind me that You made me in abundance, not lack.

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## DAY 2 — Grievance: The First Drift

**Scripture:** *Genesis 3:1–5*

**Theme:** “God Is Holding Out on Me”

### **Reflection**

The serpent did not begin with desire — he began with grievance. He seeded the suspicion that God was unfair, restrictive, withholding. Before Eve reached for the fruit, she reached for an offense. Imperial Thirst takes root when grievance replaces gratitude.

### **Heart Question**

Where am I nursing a quiet grievance against God?

### **Prayer**

God, uproot the subtle lies that paint You as withholding. Restore gratitude where grievance has grown.

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## **DAY 3 — Shame: The Deep Identity Wound**

**Scripture:** *Genesis 3:7–10*

**Theme:** “I Am Not Enough; I Must Hide”

### **Reflection**

Shame was the first emotional fruit of sin. Adam and Eve hid not because God changed — but because *their identity did*. Shame convinced them they were suddenly unworthy of presence. Imperial Thirst grows in the soil of hiddenness and self-contempt.

### **Heart Question**

Where am I hiding from God, others, or myself?

### **Prayer**

Father, heal the places where shame has rewritten my identity. Draw me out of hiding with Your kindness.

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## **DAY 4 — Scarcity: The Illusion of Not Enough**

**Scripture:** *Genesis 3:7*

**Theme:** Fig Leaves and Fear

### **Reflection**

In a garden filled with abundance, Adam and Eve behaved as though there was nothing to cover them. Scarcity distorted their vision. It always does. Scarcity is not a lack of provision — it is a lack of trust. It is the illusion that God won't come through, so I must secure myself.

### **Heart Question**

Where am I living as though God will not provide for me?

### **Prayer**

Lord, break the illusion of scarcity in my life. Help me see Your provision even where fear clouds my vision.

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## **DAY 5 — Control: The False Salvation**



**Scripture:** *Genesis 3:7–13*

**Theme:** Hiding, Blame, and Self-Protection

### **Reflection**

Control is what humans reach for when trust collapses. Fig leaves, hiding, and blaming were Adam and Eve’s first attempts to regain order. Control is not just behavior — it is a theology of self-salvation. Imperial Thirst is the instinct to replace God’s care with our own control.

### **Heart Question**

Where do I rely on control instead of trust?

### **Prayer**

Jesus, teach me to surrender the need to manage outcomes. Replace my fear with Your peace.

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## **DAY 6 — Returning to Presence**

**Scripture:** *Genesis 3:8–9*

**Theme:** God Comes Walking Toward Us

### **Reflection**

After their rebellion, God did not abandon Adam and Eve — He came walking toward them. Grace is God’s instinct, not judgment. Imperial Thirst collapses when we realize God still seeks us, still speaks to us, still clothes us. Renewal begins with hearing Him ask: “*Where are you?*”

### **Heart Question**

What part of me is God calling out of hiding today?

## Prayer

Lord, thank You for walking toward me even when I run from You. Draw me back into Your presence, Your voice, and Your abundance.

**“Lord, reveal the grievance, heal the shame, shatter the scarcity, and free me from the delusion of control. Return me to Your abundance, Your presence, and Your Kingdom.”**

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## DAY 7 — Sabbath Reflection: Resting From Self-Salvation

**Scripture:** *Genesis 2:1–3; Genesis 3:21*

**Theme:** Rest Is God’s First Gift and Our Final Healing

### Reflection

Before humanity ever worked, God rested. Before Adam ever tended the garden, he Sabbath’ed in the garden. Rest was not a recovery from labor—it was a revelation of identity.

Sabbath is God’s weekly interruption of Imperial Thirst.

It is the divine reminder that:

- we are not sustained by our control,
- we are not protected by our strategies,
- we are not saved by our effort,
- and we are not kept alive by our anxiety.

In **Genesis 2**, Sabbath marks the completion of creation.

In **Genesis 3**, God clothes Adam and Eve Himself—demonstrating that grace, not self-made coverings, is what restores us.

Where we sew fig leaves, God sews garments.

Where we hide, God seeks.

Where we strive, God rests—and invites us into His rest.

Sabbath is the antidote to every pillar of Imperial Thirst:

- **Grievance melts** in worship.
- **Shame loosens** under grace.
- **Scarcity dissolves** in God's abundance.
- **Control releases** in God's presence.

Today is not about doing better.

Today is about **being held**.

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## Sabbath Heart Questions

1. Where am I still trying to fix myself instead of letting God clothe me?
2. What would it look like to let God be enough—for one full day?
3. Where do I need to stop striving and begin receiving again?
4. What covering am I choosing (fig leaves) that God wants to replace (garments of grace)?
5. How is God calling me to rest from self-salvation?

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## Sabbath Practice (Choose One or More)

- **Sit in silence for 5 minutes** and breathe deeply: *"Lord, You are my enough."*
- **Take a slow walk** and let nature remind you of Eden.
- **Release one burden** you've been holding onto all week.
- **Write a thanksgiving list** to uproot grievance.
- **Sit in God's love** until shame grows quiet.
- **Receive communion** as a sign that God covers what you cannot.

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## Sabbath Prayer

Father, I lay down the illusion that I can hold my life together.

I surrender the grievances I've carried, the shame I've hidden,

the scarcity I've believed, and the control I've clung to.

Today, wrap me in Your presence.

Cover me with Your grace.

Teach my soul to rest again in the God who seeks me, clothes me, and completes me.

Amen.