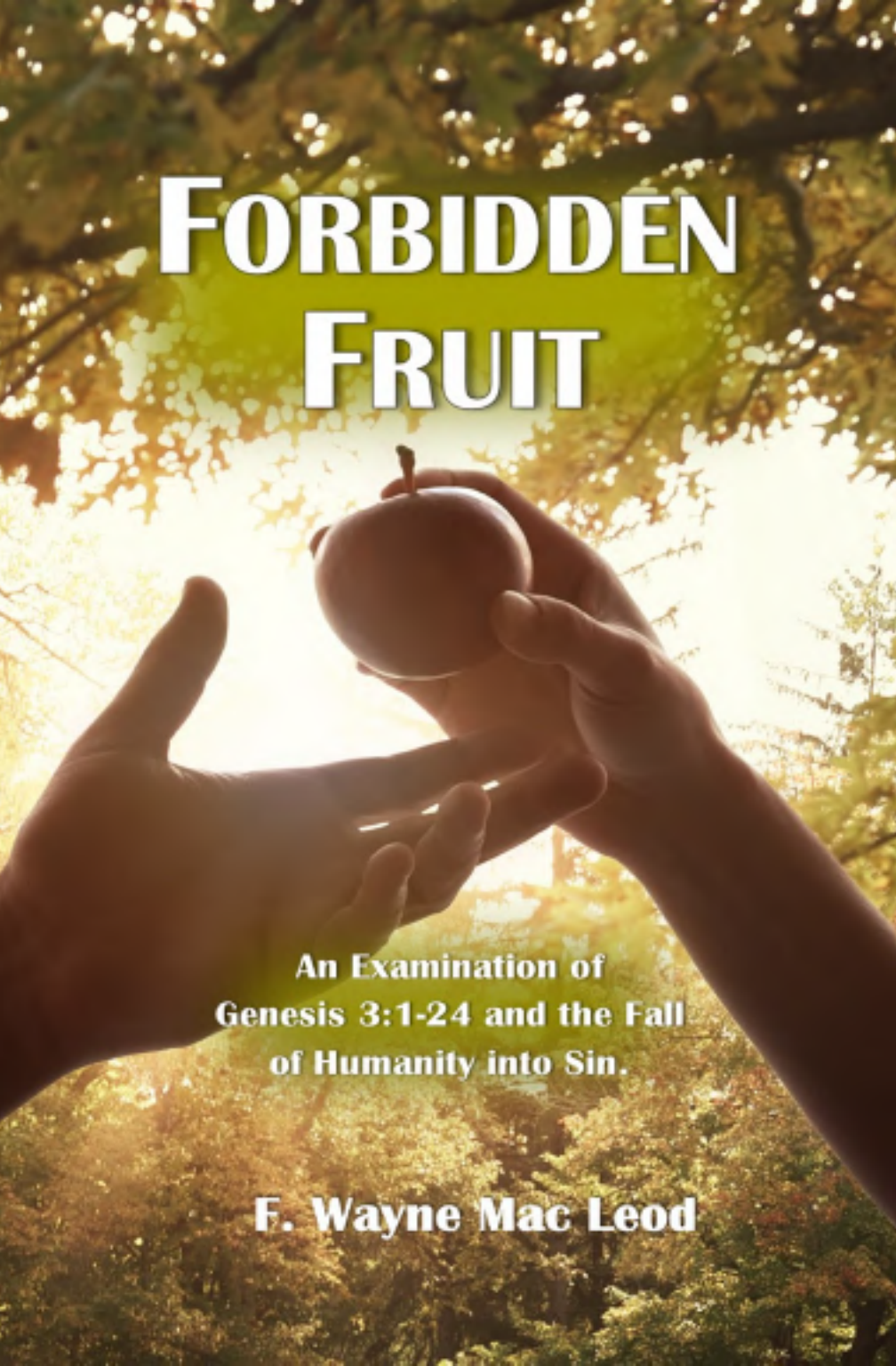


FORBIDDEN FRUIT

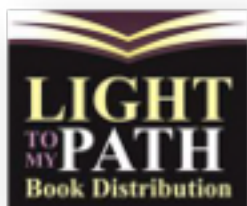
A pair of hands is shown holding a single red apple. The hands are positioned in the center of the frame, with the apple held between the fingers. The background is a dense canopy of trees with sunlight filtering through the leaves, creating a warm, golden glow. The overall composition suggests a theme of temptation or the forbidden fruit.

**An Examination of
Genesis 3:1-24 and the Fall
of Humanity into Sin.**

F. Wayne MacLeod

Forbidden Fruit

*An Examination of Genesis 3:1-24 and the Fall of
Humanity into Sin*



F. Wayne Mac Leod

Light To My Path Book Distribution
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Forbidden Fruit

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Preface

Genesis 3 is one of the most important passages of Scripture. Some of the most vital truths of the Christian faith are found in this chapter. It is here for the first time that we are introduced to Satan, sin and death. We discover the origin of evil in the human race and see its impact on future generations. We watch God banish Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden and the life-giving tree of life.

This chapter also reveals the grace of God. It shows His compassion toward Adam and Eve in their sin. Though banished from the garden, they would be fruitful and multiply. God gave them clothing to cover their nakedness. While Adam would work hard to cultivate the land, God provided all he needed for his family. Probably the greatest truth of Genesis 3 is the promise of a Saviour to remove the curse of sin. This Messiah would crush the head of the serpent.

Genesis 3 has also come under attack. The idea of a serpent speaking to Eve, angels with flaming swords and a lost garden never discovered by humankind has caused some to write it off as a fanciful story. The truth of this story, however, can not be taken lightly. It reveals the nature of the spiritual battle that still rages in our day. It explains the problem of evil. It demonstrates the importance of faith in God and His Word. More importantly, however, it shows us that while under the curse of sin at present, the Lord God

has provided a means of escape for all who will, by faith,
trust in His Son.

God bless,

F. Wayne Mac Leod

Chapter 1 - The Serpent

(1) Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" - Genesis 3:1 ESV

As Genesis 3 begins, we meet the serpent. Verse 1 tells us that it was more crafty than any of the other beasts of the field that the Lord had made. The word "crafty" is translated in different Bible versions as "subtle" or "shrewd." When we say that someone is crafty, we imply that they are sly, tricky, underhanded or able to work a situation for their own advantage.

Genesis 49:17 describes the tribe of Dan as being like a serpent when it says:

(17) Dan shall be a serpent in the way, a viper by the path, that bites the horse's heels so that his rider falls backward. - Genesis 49:17 ESV

The serpent hides on the path, unnoticed by anyone. When the innocent passerby draws near, it strikes out and bites them in the heel. The snake silently waits in ambush. To avoid it, we must always be vigilant about where we put our feet.

Notice what the second half of Genesis 3:1 says about this serpent:

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He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" - Genesis 3:1 ESV

There are several details we need to see here. First, the verse tells us that the serpent spoke to the woman. The snakes we know today do not have the physical ability to speak words. They communicate by releasing pheromones, body language or even a hissing sound as they push air through their glottis. Their anatomy, however, does not allow them to form words. Nevertheless, the verse tells us that this serpent did speak.

Second, observe that this serpent not only spoke but it communicated in a way that was understood by Eve. It spoke to her, understood her response and interacted intelligently with the woman.

Third, this serpent also had a keen awareness of the purpose of God for Adam and Eve. The words "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" show us that this serpent had spiritual insight and knew what God had told Adam and Eve.

Fourth, the serpent of Genesis 3:1 had a very particular purpose in his communication with Eve. His sinister plan was to cast doubt on the words of God. He challenged Eve to question the wisdom and words of her Creator.

Finally, the serpent lifted itself above God. He proclaimed that he had greater wisdom than God. He claimed to have knowledge that God was keeping from Adam and Eve. He boldly suggested an alternative to the purpose of God. We will examine these points in greater detail throughout this study.

The Serpent

The idea that Eve could have a conversation with the serpent has left many questioning the validity of this passage. Have you ever had anyone ask: “Do you really believe that a snake had an intelligent conversation with Eve? Maybe you have quietly wondered about this yourself. Genesis 3, however, is one of the most important chapters of the Bible. It describes the fall of humankind into sin. It is because of what took place in Genesis 3 that we need a Saviour. The impact of the words of the serpent: “Did God really say,” echo even to our day, causing many, like Eve, to question the truth of this passage. Let’s take a moment to examine some of the questions this verse brings up.

Genesis 1-2 describes for us the world God created. It was a perfect world with no sin. God, Himself said that it was very good, expressing His approval of what He had made (see Genesis 1:31). It is in this perfect world that we meet the serpent. He is described as crafty and deceitful. His words to Eve were rebellious and incited Eve to question what God had told her—*“Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden’?”* Where did this rebellious heart come from? There, in the garden, was the root of sin and rebellion. There in a perfect world was something so evil, it resisted and stood firmly against the Creator. Sin and evil existed before Eve fell to its temptation. Eve was not the first to rebel against God. There in the garden was a snake with evil intentions and rebellion in its heart against God.

To understand what is taking place here, consider what the apostle John said in Revelation 12:9:

(9) And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world— he was thrown down to the earth, and

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*his angels were thrown down with him. - Revelation 12:9
ESV*

John describes Satan as the “ancient serpent” who was thrown down to earth. What did he do on this earth? He was “the deceiver of the whole world.” We catch a glimpse of him here in the garden seeking to deceive Eve and turn her away from the purpose of God.

John says something similar in Revelation 20:2. Here he speaks of a time when “that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan” would be bound for a period of one thousand years:

*(2) And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years,
(3) and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while. - Revelation 20:2-3 ESV*

Satan, the serpent, would be bound for one thousand years so that he would no longer deceive the nations. Once again, we see Satan described as an “ancient serpent” whose purpose was deception.

These verses tell us that Satan is the ancient serpent. The word “ancient” implies that he goes back to the beginning of time. He was present when Adam and Eve lived in the Garden. The conversation that took place that day was not just with a serpent but also with Satan.

Does this mean that the serpent of Genesis 3:1 was not real? By no means. Notice what the verse tells us about it:

The Serpent

the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. – Genesis 3:1 ESV

The serpent in Genesis 3:1 was a “beast of the field that the Lord God had made.” These words leave no doubt that a physical serpent was involved in this temptation of Eve. Consider also the curse of God on the serpent in Genesis 3:14:

(14) The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. - Genesis 3:14 ESV

The Lord God cursed the serpent “above all livestock and above all beasts of the field.” He required that it crawl on its belly and eat dust all its days. This verse describes a literal serpent crawling on its belly. While a physical snake was involved in the temptation of Eve. The curse of the serpent goes on in verse 15 to say:

*(15) I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” - Genesis 3:15
ESV*

The apostle Paul refers to this in Romans 16:20 when he encouraged the Roman believers with these words:

*(20) The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. -
Romans 16:20 ESV*

Genesis 3:15 prophetically looks forward to the work of the Lord Jesus, who would crush Satan and his power by His

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death on the cross. Jesus would be bruised in the process, but Satan's power would be stripped from him. While Genesis 3:14 speaks about a physical serpent, the curse of Genesis 3:15 goes much further than this. It speaks to the crushing of Satan's power and the victory of the Lord God over Satan and his dominion of evil. It is clear then that both Satan and a physical serpent were used in the temptation of Eve in the garden.

This is not the only time in Scripture where demonic forces used the bodies of animals for their own purposes. In Matthew 8, the Lord Jesus came to the region of the Gadarenes where He met two demon-possessed men. Listen to the account of this encounter:

(28) And when he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men met him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one could pass that way. (29) And behold, they cried out, "What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?" (30) Now a herd of many pigs was feeding at some distance from them. (31) And the demons begged him, saying, "If you cast us out, send us away into the herd of pigs." (32) And he said to them, "Go." So they came out and went into the pigs, and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the waters. - Matthew 8:28-32

ESV

Notice a few details in this passage. First, the demons were living in the body of these men. Second, these demons spoke to Jesus. While they may have used the voices of the men they possessed, it is clear from the passage that the demons spoke:

The Serpent

“the demons begged him saying, ‘if you cast us out, send us away into the herd of pigs’” - Matthew 8:31 ESV

Another important fact is that when the Lord cast out these demons from the men, He sent them into a herd of pigs. These pigs were so disturbed they rushed down a steep bank and drowned in the waters below. This passage shows us that demonic forces speak and have been known to possess both humans and animals. Is this what was taking place in the Garden of Eden? Had Satan entered the body of this snake to communicate with Eve?

Some feel that Satan transformed himself into a snake to tempt Eve. The problem with this is that there is no evidence in Scripture that Satan has this ability. While he may possess the body of another creature, Scripture never says that he can become another creature to tempt us.

We have seen from Matthew 8 that the demons spoke through the men they possessed. It is easy to see how they would have been able to talk using these men's vocal organs. The problem in Genesis 3, however, is that the serpents we know today do not have the vocal organs required to make distinguishable sounds. How did Satan speak to Eve if the snake did not have the natural capacity to speak?

Consider the words of Moses to his people when he gave them the Ten Commandments:

(22) “These words the LORD spoke to all your assembly at the mountain out of the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, with a loud voice; and he added no more. And he wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me. (23) And as soon as you heard the

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voice out of the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, you came near to me, all the heads of your tribes, and your elders. (24) And you said, 'Behold, the LORD our God has shown us his glory and greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire. This day we have seen God speak with man, and man still live. - Deuteronomy 5:22-24 ESV

Moses reminded the people of his day that they had heard the "loud voice" of God out of the fire, cloud and thick darkness (verse 22). When God spoke that day, His people heard His words. Remember here that the God who revealed His presence in the fire did not have a physical body as we do. He spoke without a physical tongue and mouth to shape those words. He did so in a way that communicated clearly His intentions.

What is true of God is also true for His angels. Consider the story of Lot in Genesis 19. He was living in the evil city of Sodom at the time. God determined that he would destroy the city, but he sent two angels to warn Lot of the coming danger before doing so. Genesis 19:1-3 says:

*(1) The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed himself with his face to the earth (2) and said, "My lords, please turn aside to your servant's house and spend the night and wash your feet. Then you may rise up early and go on your way." They said, "No; we will spend the night in the town square." (3) But he pressed them strongly; so they turned aside to him and entered his house. And he made them a feast and baked unleavened bread, and they ate. - Genesis 19:1-3
ESV*

The Serpent

Notice several details about these angels. While they are normally invisible to the human eye, they made themselves visible to Lot. Not only did these two spiritual beings make themselves visible, but they also spoke clearly. We understand from this that these angels could speak with an audible voice. Satan as a fallen angel, has this ability as well.

Not all communication takes place with our physical voice. In an age of mass communication, we send messages through the air by email or text messages. Consider the vision of John in Revelation. John tells us that he was in the spirit on the Lord's day when he heard a loud voice speaking to him.

(10) I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet (11) saying, "Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea." - Revelation 1:10-11 ESV

While the revelation of future events came to John in the form of a vision, what He saw was a revelation of God's purpose for the world. God spoke to John "in the spirit." These revelations may not have been in an audible voice, but God communicated authoritatively to John.

In Acts 10, Peter was on a rooftop when the Lord God spoke to him in a vision. Peter saw a sheet descending from heaven with all kinds of impure animals. A voice spoke that day from heaven, telling him to arise and eat. It is not likely that a physical sheet with unclean animals literally descended from heaven to earth that day? What Peter saw was a vision. Would the voice of God be heard by anyone

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other than Peter? Maybe not. What is clear, however, is that God communicated a very important point to the spirit of Peter. That day, Peter rose and went to the home of a Gentile by the name of Cornelius. He watched as the Spirit of God wonderfully fell on these unclean Gentiles and made them God's children

God often speaks to us and leads us without audible words. While not heard by our physical ears, we understand perfectly what He is saying to our spirit. Was Satan speaking to the physical ears of Eve, or was this communication directly to her spirit? We have no way of knowing. What is clear is that this event took place. There was a real serpent before Eve. Satan hid behind that serpent and spoke to Eve in a way she understood.

That day Satan asked Eve a question that would cause her to think. To this point in time, she had never questioned the words of God. Satan was doing the unthinkable –he was challenging the authority and truthfulness of the Creator. He was encouraging her to pull away from God, take control of her own life and create her own truth.

For Prayer:

Father, we confess that there are passages of Scripture that perplex us. We do not always understand Your ways. We acknowledge that the question of Satan in the Garden of Eden continues to perplex many in our day. Some doubt the validity and authority of this passage of Scripture. They trip over difficult passages like Genesis 3:1. Satan still seeks to cast doubt on Your Word. Help us, Lord, to be more aware of His evil plot. Open our eyes to the truth.

The Serpent

Show us that You are worthy of our complete confidence. Give us faith to believe even when we do not understand. Help us to cling to the truth and not be distracted by the subtle lies of the enemy. Forgive us for doubting what You have said. Teach us to resist compromise and hold firmly to the truth of Your Holy and inspired Word.

Chapter 2 - Did God Actually Say?

1 He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" - Genesis 3:1 ESV

In the last chapter, we saw how Satan, using a serpent, spoke to Eve regarding the command of God. Let's take a moment to consider the words of Satan to Eve in Genesis 3:1.

Questioning the Words of God

There was something quite sinister behind the words of Satan to Eve that day. He understood her allegiance to her Creator and absolute trust in Him and what He said. The question he asks here was cleverly designed to distort the truth and cause her to question what God said.

Satan continues to use this technique in our day. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments have often been the object of His attack. After completing Bible School, I enrolled in a religious studies programme at a secular university. I remember listening to a professor lecture on the dangers of believing in the authority of Scripture. Throughout the ages, scholars have pulled the Scriptures apart. They have questioned whole passages and cast doubt on the inspiration of those words.

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Satan knows that if he can cause people to doubt whether God spoke the words of Scripture, he can mislead them. The one thing that stood between Satan and Eve was the authoritative word of God. That word was Eve's protection. As long as she understood this to be His command, she would be unwilling to listen to anything else. If she began to question that word, however, she opened herself to Satan's temptations.

Questioning the Character of God and His Motives

Consider the question from a slightly different angle. Eve was quite sure that the command not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was from God. Satan's question, however, challenged her to question the motives and intentions of God in issuing this order.

As we move on in the chapter, we see how Satan implies that God had some ulterior motivations. He told Eve that God was hiding certain things from her. The implication was that God was limiting her and keeping her from experiencing the fullness of life. He led Eve to believe that God had fenced her in by His command and that He did not have her interests and pleasures at heart when He forbade her the privilege of eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Satan's goal was to cause Eve to question the character of God and His purpose for her life. Once again, we do not have to look very far to see evidence of this work of Satan in our day. Have you ever heard people ask, "Why would a loving God allow such suffering in this world?" Listen to the words of the psalmist

Did God Actually Say?

(3) My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me all the day long, "Where is your God?" - Psalms 42:3 ESV

You can almost hear Satan screaming in the ears of the psalmist, "where is your God now?" As suffering and pain ravage our nation and our families, the question lingers. Many fall prey to the temptations of Satan and question the integrity and purpose of God in their suffering.

This world with its temptations can become so appealing that many begin to question why God is keeping them from such pleasures and benefits. They succumb to the idea that God is just a barrier to their achievements and happiness in life. What kind of God would keep us from such pleasures? What kind of God would create a tree that was appealing to the eye and delicious to the taste and tell us we cannot eat it? The purpose of Satan's question was to cast doubt on the character of a God who would place such a restriction on Eve.

Is That What God Meant?

Maybe Eve knew that the words of the command were from God. Perhaps she was unwilling to question the character of the God who had blessed her with so much. Satan, however, introduces yet another layer in his question. This third layer is related to Eve's interpretation of God's command.

Eve heard the words of God but did she correctly understand what God was saying? The focus here is not on God but Eve and her ability to understand God and His ways.

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Consider what God says through the prophet Isaiah:

(9) For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. - Isaiah 55:9 ESV

Because God's ways are different from our ways, how can we understand them? Who can know the thoughts of God? Can we, as mere mortals, comprehend His intentions? Can we grasp what He is communicating to us? While we may not be willing to question God's character or word, we may be willing to question our ability to understand Him.

This has led some to feel that they can never know the purpose of God. It has led others to endless speculation about what God really said. Believers clash with each other over their understanding of the truth. Throughout the church's history, we have seen extreme interpretations of Scripture that have led many people astray. False teaching was a problem throughout the New Testament. It continues even to our day.

The question, "did God actually say," challenges our understanding of God's command. It encourages us to examine the words of God in more detail to see if we have correctly interpreted what God is saying to us. While this can be a positive exercise, it has also led to the misinterpretation of Scripture. Instead of taking the words of God as they are, we can read into them and interpret them in ways they were never meant to be understood. We can apply our own personal and cultural biases and misread the purpose of God. We can justify our sinful ways by taking these Scriptures out of context.

Did God Actually Say?

Standing before the serpent that day, Eve is forced to ask the question: “Is this what God meant? This opened the door for her to compromise. It justified giving this command a second thought. It forced her to linger in the presence of Satan and his temptations. While we need to study the Word of God carefully, I have dealt with people who do not come to this Word with a heart of submission but with a desire to justify their rebellious ways. Satan can easily stir up an ungodly lust in our hearts and then cause us to justify our actions by watering down the truth of God’s Word or misinterpreting it for our end. The words, “did God actually say,” can lead you astray.

The Testing of What We Have Heard

As a full-time servant of the Lord, I believe that the Lord God has placed a call on my life. Originally, the Lord sent my wife and me to serve on Mauritius and Reunion, islands in the Indian Ocean. There were times when this call proved quite difficult. We experienced issues with our daughter’s health. People clashed in the church where we served. I was often reduced to tears as I sought to do what God asked me to do. At other times we felt the oppression of the enemy and his opposition to the ministry. How easy it would have been in those times to ask the question, “Has God actually said?” The only thing that kept us there at times was the knowledge of God’s call on our lives.

The Lord has now opened the door for me to reach people worldwide through writing and podcasting. I continue, however, to experience the temptation of the enemy in the words, “Has God actually said.” There have been times when I have felt Satan challenging the validity of God’s call

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on my life to teach the Word. He has tempted me to wonder if my ministry could affect those who read what God has put on my heart to write. I have often questioned how God could use me or whether I am truly walking as a worthy servant. In these times, it is faith in what God has revealed to me that keeps me going. I can listen to Satan and his discouragement or do what I believe God had given me to do. I choose to resist the temptation of Satan.

As Eve stood before the enemy that day, there was a great spiritual battle raging in her heart. We have no way of knowing all the emotions and thoughts racing through her mind and spirit in those moments. There is often a very thin line between obedience and rebellion. Often all that stands between them is our confidence in the Word of God and His leading.

Twisting the Truth

Let me conclude with a final statement about what Satan told Eve in Genesis 3:1:

“Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden’?” - Genesis 3:1 ESV

While there is some debate over how this verse should be interpreted, the English Standard Version and other respected translations seem to indicate that Satan is twisting the truth of God here. He insinuates that God had forbidden Eve to eat the fruit from “any tree” in the Garden. The actual command of God in Genesis 2:16 stated that Adam and Eve were free to eat from “every tree” except one:

Did God Actually Say?

(16) And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, (17) but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." - Genesis 2:16-17 ESV

The difference between "not eat of *any* tree in the garden" and "eat of *every* tree of the garden *but* the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" is significant. Satan seems to exaggerate things by adding a layer of untruth to his statement. He is asking Eve to believe a lie. He moves from causing her to question what God says to boldly lying about what God said.

A quick look at the church of our day will reveal that many have fallen into this trap. Many people live a Christianity that is never taught in Scripture. It is a Christianity filled with traditions and liturgies that have become more important than the commands of Scripture. Christianity, for some, is all about a lifestyle or political agenda. For others, it consists of meetings, practices or doctrines but has very little to do with a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus and the indwelling of His Spirit.

Have we believed the lie of Satan that if we go to church, everything will be okay? Have we bought into that myth that as long as we have the right doctrine, we will be right with God? Has the enemy twisted our concept of what it means to be a follower of Christ?

This brings us back to the question, "has God actually said?" You see, ultimately, all that matters is what God says. It is His Word that must be our guide. That command of God protects us from the attacks of the enemy. When the devil tempted Jesus, over and over again, He clung to

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the truth of God's Word. "It is written" was his defence against the enemy attacks. Let's trust God and resist the serpent's attacks by the protection of God's eternal and trustworthy word.

For Prayer:

Lord, all too often, we have allowed the enemy to break down our defences. We have fallen prey to his temptation and questioned the word of a holy and righteous God. Father, we confess You as a good and perfect God in whom is no sin. We recognize Your wisdom and surrender to Your way. Give us confidence in You as our Lord and Saviour. Teach us what it means to rely on You. Help us resist the attacks of the evil one who seeks to cause us to question Your word and character.

Chapter 3 - But God Said

2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, 3 but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" - Genesis 3:2-3 ESV

In the last chapter, we saw how the serpent questioned Eve about whether God had actually told her she could not eat from any tree in the garden. We considered the deception of Satan in this statement. As we come now to verses two and three, let's take a moment to consider Eve's response to Satan's question.

An Acceptance of God's Word

In Genesis 3:1, Satan twisted the words of God to say something He had not said. He insinuated that God did not want Adam and Eve to eat from any tree in the garden. Notice in verse two how Eve corrected Satan.

2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden," - Genesis 3:2 ESV

Eve remained true to the words of God. She saw Satan's misrepresentation and corrected him.

Notice also in verse three the phrase, "God said."

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3 but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” - Genesis 3:2-3 ESV

The words “God said” make it clear that Eve knew what God had commanded. She accepted this as the divine will and refused to give in to the devil’s temptation. Eve even repeated the words of God to Satan.

To this point, Eve is a wonderful example to us. Satan twists the Scriptures for his evil purposes. He knows the power of God’s Word and will do all he can to cast doubt on it. Many have given in to this temptation to water down or misrepresent God’s Word. Horrible atrocities have been committed because Satan has been successful in causing people to take the Scripture out of context. Many have fallen prey to the false teachings of cults distorting the truth of the Bible. Others have been distracted and, out of complacency, have not been serious in applying the Scriptures to their lives.

If we want victory over Satan’s temptations, we will need to know the truth of God’s Word. This Word is our defence against the enemy’s attacks and keeps us on the path of righteousness and truth. We resist the devil through the truth of Scripture, which is our shield and sword. When the enemy seeks to trip us, we respond with the words of Eve, “But God said.” When spoken from the heart, these three little words drive back the forces of hell. Satan has no authority over the Words and commands of God. He has no power against those who stand firmly on the truth. To this point, Eve accepted God’s command.

But God Said

An Appreciation of God's Blessing

Notice something else in verse two. Consider the phrase, "*We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden.*" By asking Eve the question, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" Satan wanted Eve to think that God was limiting her. He was trying to tell her that she was missing out on some of the wonderful things life had to offer.

When Eve responds by saying, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden," she is reminding herself and Satan that God had richly blessed her and her husband. Satan was focusing on one tree, but Eve understood that the whole garden was available to her. Eve and her husband Adam had all they needed in the many other trees available to them. They didn't need to eat from the forbidden tree to survive or enjoy the bounty of God. The other trees satisfied their hunger and delighted their taste buds. They were richly blessed by God, who had given them such a variety and abundance to eat.

If God gives us one hundred blessings but holds back one, our temptation is often to surrender the one hundred to experience the one held back. Contentment is something we need to learn as believers. Satan was pointing Eve to one forbidden tree in a garden filled with abundance. He was seeking to shatter her contentment in the blessings of God.

The apostle Paul had to learn how to be content in whatever situation he found himself:

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*(11) Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. -
Philippians 4:11 ESV*

Writing to Timothy, he warned him about the dangers of not being content with what God provided:

*(8) But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. (9) But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. (10) For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. - 1
Timothy 6:8-10 ESV*

Satan drew Eve's attention to the forbidden tree. To this point, however, Eve looked at the bigger picture. She had a whole garden of trees to eat to enjoy. Why should she risk losing everything for one forbidden tree?

Does it surprise you that a husband or wife would risk losing their family for a moment of pleasure with another partner? Does it surprise you that youth would endanger their future for a bottle of alcohol? The tactics of Satan have not changed over the years. He stands before us today, challenging us to risk the countless blessings of the Lord for one moment of sin.

As Eve stood before Satan that day, she saw a whole garden of blessing in front of her. If we want to overcome the enemy's temptation, we must take a moment to count the benefits of the Lord. Take a moment to reflect on His goodness, compassion and tender kindness. Will you surrender a whole garden for the sake of one tree? In

But God Said

reminding Satan of the garden full of trees available to her, Eve expresses her appreciation for the overwhelming generosity of God in her life. Satan and his demons are pushed back by a heart of gratitude to God.

An Acknowledgement of God's Protection

Consider the words of Eve in Genesis 3:3:

3 but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.' – Genesis 3:3 ESV

In this phrase, Eve demonstrates an understanding of why she was not to eat the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden. God told them that if they ate from this tree, they would die. While the concept of death was foreign to Eve, she knew it was not a good thing. She also knew that the command of God about that tree was for their protection. In this statement, she expresses her belief that God had her interest at heart when he told her not to eat or touch this tree.

Satan tried to get Eve to believe that God was keeping something from her. Eve reminded Satan here that what God was keeping from her was something harmful.

According to Eve in Genesis 3:3, God told them not even to touch the tree. There is an important lesson in what Eve told Satan. Not touching the tree added another layer of protection for Adam and Eve. This command not to touch the tree would have kept them from approaching it and plucking its fruit. All too many people fall into sin because they get too close to temptation. They pluck fruit from the

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tree of temptation and carry it around with them in their pocket. They put themselves in situations where they can be tempted.

When you put yourself in temptation's way, what will keep you from one day falling into that temptation? Do you feel you are strong enough to resist? Do you think that God is obligated to protect you when you consistently put yourself in this position? Jesus refused to jump off the pinnacle of the temple when Satan tempted Him. He would not test the Father. I have seen all too many believers reach out to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and touch it. I have known all too many believers to pluck temptation's fruit and carry it around in their pocket, comforting themselves by saying that as long as they don't take a bite, they have not sinned. Jesus reminds us, however, that you don't have to bite into the fruit of sin to be guilty. You can sin by desiring it so much that you touch that tree and carry its fruit in your heart.

By telling Eve not to touch the tree, God was adding a layer of protection. If we are going to overcome the enemy's temptations, we will have to commit ourselves to keep away from those places or situations where we can be tempted. Like Eve, we are to recognize that God has a purpose in His commands. What He forbids is for our good. Eve acknowledged that God's command was for her protection. To this point, she is an example to follow.

For Prayer:

Lord God, thank you for what You teach us in this passage about the temptation of Satan. I ask Lord that You help us

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know Your Word enough to see when it is twisted and misrepresented. Remove all doubt from our heart so, like Eve, in the face of temptation, we can reply: "But God says." Give us eyes to see Your many blessings and teach us to rejoice so much in the good trees of the garden that we are not tempted by the one forbidden to us. Help us to understand that Your commandments are for our protection and good. Keep us from temptation. Give us the discernment to distance ourselves from those places, situations or people who will be a temptation to us. May we not be guilty of testing the Lord our God.

Chapter 4 - You Will Be Like God

4 But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." - Genesis 3:4-5 ESV

We have seen how Satan very subtly sought to cast doubt on the words and character of God. To this point in the story, Eve has resisted his efforts. Her response to Satan in verse 3, "but God said," indicates that she did not doubt the words of God to them as a couple. Having failed in this attempt, Satan now resorts to a more direct approach in verse 4:

4 But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. Genesis 3:4 ESV

Satan had already questioned and twisted what God had said. Here in verse 4, he openly defied God. We cannot underestimate the impact of the words, "you will not surely die," in the life of Eve. Eve had never heard anything like this. She trusted God and believed everything He said. There was no reason not to do so. God had blessed her and her husband so abundantly. They fellowshiped with Him in the garden and experienced wonderful harmony and peace with Him.

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Here for the very first time, Eve heard words of rebellion and hostility toward God. Satan openly defied God. In essence, he was telling Eve that God was lying to her. This thought had never entered her mind. She knew God to be trustworthy in all He said. Here before her, however, was someone who openly and unashamedly opposed the God she knew and loved. Satan boldly lied to Eve.

Jesus described Satan as the father of lies. Speaking to the Jews of His day, He said:

(44) You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. - John 8:44 ESV

While Satan will often dress up his falsehoods and make them appealing, we cannot believe what He says. Many, however, have fallen to his schemes. We need the discernment of God's Spirit, a knowledge of the truth, a heart of faith and an obedient spirit if we are going to resist these lies.

Notice what Satan does in verse 4. Prior to these words of Satan, there was no cause to question what God said. Adam and Eve followed a single path, the path of obedience and confidence in God. Satan now brings them to a fork in the road. He presents them with an alternative route. Eve now stands before this fork and is forced to make a choice. Would she follow the path of obedient faith in God, or would she choose the direction of the knowledge of good and evil?

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The path of the knowledge of good and evil is very logical and scientific. The way of faith, however, leads us into unknown territory. Some time ago, I was at a print shop picking up some books. A young man was at the shop when I arrived and noticed the title of the book. He began to share with me his view of Christianity. He told me how he had a problem with some of its doctrines. One of those doctrines was the doctrine of the Trinity. He could not understand how Christians could believe that God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit could be one and yet three distinct persons. To him, this defied logic and could not possibly be true.

I remember the words the Lord gave me for him that day. I said, "I am so glad there are things about God I cannot understand. If I could understand everything about God, He would be no bigger than my human brain. I need a God that is bigger than me."

There are two responses to God. The first is the response of knowledge and reason, and the second is the response of faith. Having graduated with a degree in Religious Studies from a secular university, I experienced the attempt to reduce Christianity to human terms. For many of these professors, faith was a weakness. Their God was knowledge and reason. They could not believe anything they could not understand. While logic and understanding are important, we need to realize that they are not the measure of all truth. As human beings, we are limited in what we can understand. Some truth defies logic.

God sets before us two paths—the path of faith and the way of the knowledge of good and evil. The path of faith relies on what the Lord and Creator of this world has revealed. The path of the knowledge of good and evil depends on our accumulated knowledge and reason.

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Satan presented this second path to Eve in the garden. Listen to what he told her that day:

5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”
- Genesis 3:5 ESV

Notice the focus on knowledge here. Satan speaks about the knowledge of God in the phrase “for God knows.” He also talks about human knowledge in the words, “you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” The fruit Satan dangles before Eve in this verse is the fruit of human knowledge and reason.

Like God, Knowing Good and Evil

There are several details we need to examine in Genesis 3:5. Notice first how Satan makes a connection between knowledge and becoming like God in the phrase, “you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” The insinuation here is that Eve, by her growth in knowledge, could become like God. In other words, it was her ignorance that kept her from being a god.

We don't have to look very long before we see evidence of this philosophy in our day. Consider the things humanity has accomplished over our lifetime. What we achieved with our technology has never ceased to amaze me. We are finding cures for diseases long thought to be fatal. Who among us has not asked the question, “given time, is there anything we will not be able to do?” Our accumulated knowledge of this world has enabled us to do what was thought impossible at one point in history. These advances cause us to see ourselves as the masters of our own

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destiny. In essence, we believe we can do anything we set our minds to do. Our accumulated knowledge causes us to turn from God. We rely on our achievements and see no need for God. We see those who take the path of faith as weak and superstitious. In our minds, those who rely on a God they cannot see are defying knowledge. Our education and technology become the path to being like God.

For God Knows

Consider also the words “for God knows.” Satan seems to be telling Eve that God had knowledge He was not revealing to her. This knowledge would open Eve’s eyes. He seems to be insinuating that the difference between Eve and God was found in this knowledge. According to Satan, this was all that separated Eve from being like God. One almost gets the idea that Satan wanted Eve to believe that God was threatened by humans who accumulated knowledge.

From the beginning of time, God understood that knowledge would increase and become the god of the generations to come. Listen to the words of God to the prophet Daniel:

(4) But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.” - Daniel 12:4 ESV

This knowledge is no threat to God. Satan’s depreciation of God and His character is an insult. Scripture is clear about what will happen to Satan in the last days. He will be cast into the lake of fire:

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(10) and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. - Revelation 20:10 ESV

God is not threatened by the accumulated knowledge of Satan, his angels and his followers. They will answer to Him for their blasphemy. Satan's teaching that knowledge is the path to becoming like God only distracts us from what our Lord has prepared for us through faith in His Word and His Son.

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Satan told Eve that day that if she ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, she would be like God. There is something quite shocking about these words. Why would Satan tempt Eve to do something that would make her like God? It was God that Satan hated. He certainly did not want people to become like Him.

This, of course, was never the intention of Satan. In telling Eve she could be like God, he was setting her up in opposition to God. He wanted her to pull out from under His authority to be the master of her own life.

Realize that Eve loved and respected God. She desired to be like God in character and action. Satan was proposing a way for her to become like God through knowing good and evil. Satan, however, was hiding a vital truth from Eve. Becoming "like God" in his mind had nothing to do with drawing closer to God. By becoming "like God," in Satan's mind, Eve would set herself up against God. She would

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become lord over her own life and do what she believed best for herself.

Let me say one more thing about this phrase. While we desire to be like God in character and actions, the reality is that not one of us will ever be completely like God. While Satan told Eve that it was possible, the fact of the matter is that God will always be greater than us. He is God, and we are His creation. We will, throughout eternity, be dependant on Him. He will always be worthy of our praise and adoration because He is superior to us. Even the angels of heaven are not like God. They fall before Him in worship and serve Him as their Lord and Master. While I fully anticipate that my heart and purpose will be one day completely in sync with God in heaven, I will never be fully like Him. I will never be God. I will always bow my knee to Him.

The Knowledge of Good and Evil

Satan told Eve that if she ate from the tree, she would have her eyes opened to know good and evil. He told her that God knew about evil and convinced her that if God knew about evil, it could not be a bad thing. To this point, Eve's concept of evil was extremely limited, for she lived in a world where human beings had not yet experienced the effects of sin.

The words of Satan about God knowing good and evil can be perplexing. Realize, however, that Satan speaks here from personal experience. He was an angel in the presence of God but rebelled against Him and was cast out of

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heaven. Even before sin came to this earth, God had already addressed it in heaven.

Satan told Eve that day that she needed to know about evil. Her understanding of life was not complete if she only knew about good. There is an element of truth to what Satan is saying here. If we are to serve God and walk in His path, we need to know about evil. Understand here, however, that evil was not a problem in the garden. They certainly could have lived a happy and complete life without ever experiencing or even knowing about sin and rebellion against God.

God wants us to know about sin so that we can turn from it. However, there is a world of difference between knowing about evil and opening our hearts to it. Consider the words of the apostle Paul to the Ephesians:

(11) Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. (12) For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. - Ephesians 5:11-12 ESV

Notice that Paul tells us that we are to expose the “unfruitful works of darkness.” He goes on to say, however, that it is “shameful to even speak of the things that they do in secret.” How do you expose something when it is shameful even to speak of these things?

Paul understood that the works of darkness need to be exposed. That is to say, these sins needed to be addressed in the church. The church could not grow as long as these “works of darkness” were in their midst. These deeds needed to be uprooted and removed. The apostle also

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understood that it was possible to expose others to temptation by speaking of these deeds.

Have you ever been watching what seemed to be a harmless movie, and all of a sudden, a scene appears on the screen that presents something ungodly? As your eyes linger, you begin to feel the tug of lust or anger in your heart. Dealing with sin is like this. There is a fine line between exposing it and being tempted by its lure.

God was protecting Eve from evil because it would hurt her. He intended to shield her from anything that would break their fellowship with each other. Sin, like a horrible disease, would ravage both Eve and her husband. It would devastate the lives of their children and devour the world God had created for them. What God kept from Eve was for her good. Satan led her to believe, however, that it was limiting her. When we close our eyes, block our ears and turn away from sin, we recognize that not all knowledge is helpful. Just as we must watch what we eat if we want to be healthy, so we must also watch what we allow into our minds. The apostle Paul told the Philippians:

(8) Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. - Philippians 4:8 ESV

The apostle encouraged the Philippians to fill their mind with those things that were honourable, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent and worthy of praise. The phrase, “you are what you eat,” also applies to what we think. When we fill our minds with angry, jealous and lustful thoughts, this will become evident in our actions. While we must be

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aware of sin and evil in our lives and community, an unhealthy focus on the knowledge of evil can be detrimental to our spiritual life. Some things will only hinder our relationship with God. Other things are too shameful to even speak about (Ephesians 5:12).

In these verses, Satan encouraged Eve to take charge of her own life. He challenged her to pull out from her dependence on God and forge her destiny through the knowledge of good and evil. He attempts to remove the protection of God and give her an education in the knowledge of sin and rebellion. We see this temptation in our day as well. We each stand before a fork in the road. The road sign pointing in one direction indicates that it is the path of faith. The other sign identifies the path as the way of knowledge of good and evil. As we stand there considering the two paths, we are forced to make a decision. Shall we trust what God has declared, or shall we choose the path of human intellect and reason? There is no question that the path of the knowledge of good and evil is appealing. It leads to comfort, pleasure, approval and independence, but it does not lead to eternal life and fellowship with God. Each of us must choose the path we will tread.

For Prayer:

Father, as we look at the world in which we live, we see how Satan continues to speak the same words in our day. He still challenges men and women to become their own gods and determine their own future. He still promotes knowledge and human achievement as the pathway to a brighter future. This knowledge that Satan promotes often

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blinds us to our need for God. We become independent of God and feel that we can solve all our problems. Father, we thank you for the comforts and benefits our technology has given us, but I pray that we will never allow these comforts to take us away from You. We know that the day is coming when we will stand before You. Teach us even now to put You first in our lives. Help us in a day of great knowledge and achievement to keep our eyes on You. May this world and the sin of this world never distract us from your glory and the hope You offer in Your Son Jesus Christ.

Chapter 5 - Good, Delightful and Desired

6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. - Genesis 3:6 ESV

In verses four and five, we examined how Satan intensified his efforts to tempt Eve. The more Eve lingered in his presence and reflected on his words, the more she was tempted. Notice the words good for food, a delight to the eyes, and desired to make one wise in Genesis 3:6. The fruit of that tree was certainly appealing. We mislead ourselves if we think that sin has no allure to our flesh. However, we also deceive ourselves if we believe that the sinful satisfaction of our passions does not come at a cost. As Eve lingered before the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, she found herself attracted to its fruit. Notice what it was that appealed to her.

Good for Food

(6) So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food - Genesis 3:6 ESV

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The fruit of the forbidden tree was good for food. In other words, the fruit looked delicious and appealed to Eve's taste buds. She knew that she would experience great delight in tasting this fruit. It would be pleasing to her physical senses. Let's not deceive ourselves into thinking that sin is always sour, bitter and ugly.

The forbidden tree's fruit may be delicious, but not everything pleasing to the taste is good for us. Satan has a great ally in our flesh. He encourages us to give in to our impulses and desires. He tells us that these passions were created by God and only natural. Our natural passions, however, are not a guide to what is right. Imagine what life on earth would be like if every person surrendered to their desires without restraint.

The appetites of our flesh must be restrained. Satan calls us to surrender to every lust and passion. God calls us to self-control and obedience. If we are to resist Satan and his temptations, we must make it our commitment to live a disciplined life and keep the passions of our body under control. Listen to the words of Paul to the Corinthians:

(27) But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified. - 1 Corinthians 9:27 ESV

Discipline and control are vital in the Christian life. Our fleshly appetites must always be surrendered to the will and purpose of the Lord God. As appealing as sin and the gratification of the flesh is, the believer's commitment is to the purpose of God. Understanding the allure of sin to the flesh, those who walk with God will do all they can to avoid putting themselves in circumstances that will place them in the path of temptation.

Good, Delightful and Desired

A Delight to the Eyes

(6) and that it was a delight to the eyes - Genesis 3:6 ESV

Not only was the fruit of the tree good for food, but it was also a “delight to the eyes.” While the idea here is that the fruit was beautiful and pleasing to behold, we should not limit it to this meaning. The word “delight” in the Hebrew language can also refer to a sense of desire, craving and greed. In other words, it stirs up within the individual a covetous desire to have whatever appeals to its eyes.

There is within each of us a temptation to surrender to the lusts of our flesh. There is also a craving to have whatever appeals to our eyes. We see something and want it whether we need it or not. Consider the words of the apostle Paul to Timothy in 1 Timothy 6:

(6) But godliness with contentment is great gain, (7) for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. (8) But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. (9) But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. (10) For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. - 1 Timothy 6:6-10 ESV

The materialistic desire for more and more has led many into a snare of “senseless and harmful desires” that plunged them into “ruin and destruction.” This world with all its possessions can quickly become our god. The love of money and worldly goods has caused many to wander from

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their faith. An ungodly craving for wealth and material goods has led to “all kinds of evils” (1 Timothy 6:10). Just as our fleshly passions must be held in submission to God, so must the delights of our eyes. In an unhealthy desire for whatever delights their eyes, many have wandered from God. The unsatisfied desire for more has left them drunk with greed and envy. It has wasted their God-given resources and turned their attention away from God and His purpose in their lives.

Paul reminded Timothy that contentment was a great benefit in the Christian life. The lust of the eyes fills our life with clutter and diverts our attention from what is important. How important it is for us as believers to be aware of this temptation. All too many eyes have been distracted by the glitter of this world. Great resources have been diverted from God’s purpose. As the apostle Paul said to Timothy:

*It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. -
1 Timothy 6:10 ESV*

Desired to Make One Wise

*And that the tree was to be desired to make one wise -
Genesis 3:6 ESV*

Notice finally that the tree was desired to make one wise. Wisdom in the Scriptures is viewed in a very positive light.

(10) Take my instruction instead of silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold, (11) for wisdom is better than jewels, and all that you may desire cannot compare with her. - Proverbs 8:10-11 ESV

Good, Delightful and Desired

Proverbs 8:11 tells us that wisdom is “better than jewels,” and nothing we can desire can compare with it. While the wisdom of God is something we must always strive for, the wisdom this tree offered was not the wisdom of God. Scripture also speaks of the wisdom of this world:

(20) Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? - 1 Corinthians 1:20 ESV

According to Paul, the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God. Consider the skill that built the Tower of Babel in the book of Genesis. In an instant, however, these great plans were destroyed when God confounded their language.

Consider also the wisdom of the rich man, in the parable of Jesus, who decided to build great barns to store his wealth:

(16) And he told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man produced plentifully, (17) and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ (18) And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. (19) And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.” (20) But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ - Luke 12:16-20 ESV

As wise as this man was, his wisdom came to nothing when God required his soul. Consider also the words of Solomon in Proverbs 3:

(5) Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. (6) In all your ways

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acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

(7) Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil. - Proverbs 3:5-7 ESV

Solomon tells us not to lean on our understanding or be wise in our own eyes. Instead, we are to acknowledge and fear the Lord.

The wisdom the tree offered to Eve was worldly wisdom. This wisdom elevated human reason and achievement. It turned her attention from God and His purpose to her own understanding. It encouraged her to be in control of her destiny and promoted independence from God.

Those who surrender to the god of human wisdom place their confidence in human achievements and knowledge. This temptation is very real for the believer as well. I have met all too many Christian servants whose confidence is in their experience and education. I have attended seminars that instructed people on how to build the church according to secular business principles. While our experience and education are valuable, they are no replacement for the Spirit of God, prayer, and Scripture's timeless principles.

The wisdom of this world is not the wisdom of God. If I look to myself and my understanding to advance the kingdom of God, I will be disappointed. Listen to the words of Jesus in John 15:

(5) I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. - John 15:5 ESV

The Lord God is not looking for people who are wise in their own eyes but for those who will rely on His direction and wisdom. He is seeking servants who will make His Word

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their guide in all things. He cries out for men and women who understand their need for His Spirit to empower and direct each step of the way. Satan fears those who are filled with the Spirit and obedient to God's Word. He shrinks back from those who distrust their own wisdom and understanding and seek only to discern the will of their Father in heaven.

She Gave Some to Her Husband

She took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. - Genesis 3:6
ESV

There is one more detail we need to see in this passage. Notice in verse 6 that Eve finally gave in to the temptation of Satan. She ate from the tree and handed her husband some as well. He, too, ate of the fruit and stood with her in disobedience.

Of particular note in verse 6 is the phrase "her husband who was with her." While we may interpret this phrase to mean that Adam was with Eve in the garden, some interpreted it to mean that Adam was with her in front of the tree when she was tempted.

If this is the case, Adam saw what was happening but did nothing to stop Eve from eating the forbidden fruit. By his refusal to stop her, Adam became equally as guilty. This also removes any doubt that Eve deceived Adam into eating the fruit by not telling him where she got it. If Adam was present with Eve when she was tempted and ate the fruit she handed to him, he acted in willful disobedience to the command of God. While Eve likely picked the fruit and

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ate it first, Adam willingly joined her in her sin. Paul may back up this idea when he wrote the following in 1 Timothy 2:14:

*(14) and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. - 1 Timothy 2:14
ESV*

Genesis 3:6 teaches us that Eve fell prey to the cravings of the flesh, the eyes and the mind. The appeal of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was so powerful that she fell to its temptation. Adam willingly joined her in this rebellion. Satan successfully continues to use these tactics in our day. May God give us the grace to resist lest we too fall prey to his efforts.

For Prayer:

Father God, Genesis 3:6 shows us that our great enemy Satan constantly seeks to tempt us and distract us. Help us, Lord, to be in control of the passions of our flesh. Thank you that You have given us many things to enjoy. Teach us, however, to enjoy these things according to Your purpose. In a society that is filled with materialism, help us not to lose sight of You. May the things of this world never take Your place in our lives. May they never distract us from our relationship with You. Teach us also, Lord, not to rely so much on human wisdom that we become unwilling to surrender to the greater knowledge of God. Give us the grace to trust You more than our own reasoning. May we rely on Your strength and not our own. Forgive us for being distracted by the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Chapter 6 - Fig Leaves

7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. - Genesis 3:7 ESV

In the last chapter, we saw how Adam and Eve fell into the sin of eating fruit from the forbidden tree. The effects of eating that fruit were immediate. Verse 7 begins by telling us that their eyes were opened.

*7 Then the eyes of both were opened, - Genesis 3:7
ESV*

The "eyes" spoken of here are not physical eyes but the eyes of their mind and heart. As Satan told them, they began to understand the difference between good and evil. For the first time, they experienced rebellion and sin. We can only imagine the impact this had on them. To this point, they had lived without any understanding of evil. Harmony and peace reigned everywhere they went. Sin set a dark cloud over their minds and hearts, and they experienced guilt and separation from God.

Note in verse 7 that the eyes of "both" Adam and Eve were opened. Imagine as a young child you are with your friends. One of these friends goes into a store and steals some candy. When he comes out, he shares his loot with you, and together you sit down to enjoy the tasty treat. As you

Forbidden Fruit

eat, the store owner catches you and your friends with the stolen goods.

What is your response to the shopkeeper? Will you tell him that you are not guilty because you didn't steal the candy? Will you place all the blame on your friend and declare yourself to be innocent? The fact that you ate candy you knew was stolen makes you guilty. You do not have to be the one who took the candy from the shelf to be in the wrong. You make yourself guilty by enjoying the proceeds of sin.

Similarly, Adam could not claim innocence because he did not pick the fruit off the tree. He, too, was guilty because he ate the forbidden fruit. Adam joined Eve in her sin the moment he tasted what God told them not to eat. He shared equally the repercussions of that sin. His eyes were also opened, and he experienced the sin and shame of his wife.

Verse 7 tells us that when their eyes were opened, Adam and Eve knew they were naked.

and they knew that they were naked. – Genesis 3:7 ESV

Adam and Eve had been naked all along, but they had not given it a second thought. There was no shame in this for them. After they ate the fruit of the forbidden tree, however, things changed. This nakedness became painfully obvious to them. They felt ashamed for the first time. They experienced a desperate need to cover their nakedness from each other.

What caused this need to cover themselves? While we do not know what was going through their minds at that time, Genesis 3:5-6 does give us a hint. When Satan tempted Eve in these verses, he did so on three levels. First, he

Fig Leaves

appealed to her flesh by showing her that the fruit was good for food. Second, he appealed to her eyes by showing her how beautiful the fruit was. Finally, he appealed to her mind by reminding her that it would make her wise.

When Adam and Eve rebelled against God, they felt the impact in each of these areas of their lives. After eating from the forbidden tree, they began to experience the sinful cravings of the flesh for satisfaction. Their eyes began to covet and lust. Evil thoughts and desires filled their mind. It was as if a great tidal wave of sin came crashing in on them, changing everything. They responded by hiding their bodies in shame and fear.

Adam and Eve no longer saw each other in the same way. Their knowledge and experience of sin now altered their relationship. Their way of thinking was different, and their response to each other changed. Their thoughts about each other were foreign to them. This was a new experience and dramatically impacted their relationship with each other and how they saw themselves.

The response of Adam and Eve to this new reality was to sew fig leaves together to cover themselves. These leaves were likely chosen because of their size. They may have been among the largest leaves of the garden suitable for loincloths.

We can only imagine what it would have been like for Adam and Eve to put on these loincloths for the first time. These leaves were a visible demonstration of what had taken place in their hearts and minds. Their relationship with each other would never again be the same. They wore now a symbol of their shame, feeling compelled to hide from each other.

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While these fig leaves did cover their shame, they were a poor covering. The leaves could not address the problem of sin. In many ways, these fig leaves represent every human effort to deal with sin and evil. Nothing we do can remove the shame. Our religious activities, good works, and traditions are nothing more than fig leaves. There is only one solution to the stain of sin. That solution is found in the forgiveness offered by Jesus Christ when He took our penalty with Him to the cross.

Since the time of Adam and Eve, we have struggled with sin and guilt. We inherited this brokenness from our first parents. The wicked cravings of our flesh, the lusts of our eyes and the rebellious thoughts and attitudes of our mind still linger strongly in each of us.

Our relationships have suffered the effects of sinful thoughts and attitudes. Anger, resentment, jealousy and pride shape our dealings with each other. We put up walls to protect ourselves from hurt. We hide our true feelings and thoughts from each other. We become unwilling to open ourselves to each other because we are afraid of people's reactions.

We have come to see this as normal, but we have not experienced what it is like to live without sin and shame in our lives. Our pride and jealousy have been the source of wars, crime and hurt of all kinds. In our failure to find acceptance and love, we have surrendered to addictions and immorality.

We cannot underestimate what took place in the garden after Adam and Eve's fall into sin. The shame they experienced in their nakedness was a manifestation of what changed that day. Like a deadly disease, sin ravaged

Fig Leaves

their hearts and minds and destroyed the harmonious relationship they had once enjoyed.

For Prayer:

Father God, we confess we inherited the sinful nature of our first parents. That nature is obvious in each of us. In particular, it is evident in our relationships with each other. As we look around us in this world, we see brokenness and shame. We have said things to people we should never have said. We have done things we are ashamed of today. Forgive us. We recognize that our religious activities and good works cannot remove the shame we feel. Thank you that You sent Your Son, the Lord Jesus, to die so that the penalty and guilt of our sin could not just be covered but removed completely. May we who know this forgiveness be instruments of healing in this broken world. Teach us to live victoriously over sin and shame. May our lives and relationships demonstrate Your purpose for us as Your people.

Chapter 7 - Hiding from God

8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" 10 And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." - Genesis 3:8-10 ESV

After their disobedience, the day came when Adam and Eve heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden.

8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day – Genesis 3:8 ESV

If there is one thing we understand about God, it is that He knows all things. He knew that Adam and Eve had disobeyed Him by eating from the forbidden tree. Notice, however, that God appeared to them in the garden even after their fall into sin. There is no evidence in the passage that Adam and Eve saw God as He does not have a physical body as we do. They did, however, hear the sound of God in the garden. When they heard this sound, they distinguished it from all other sounds.

Consider what is taking place here. Adam and Eve had disobeyed God and were now living in sin. Despite this,

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God still takes the initiative to approach them. He enters the garden where they lived. Adam and Eve, despite their sin, still recognized the sound of God and were able to communicate with Him. Sin did not break all lines of communication. Nor did it keep God from approaching them.

Notice the response of Adam and Eve to the presence of God in verse 8:

and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. – Genesis 3:8

Adam and Eve felt compelled to hide from the presence of God. While God is everywhere present, there are times when He makes His presence known in special ways. While the revelation of God's presence was in times past a blessed thing for them, on this occasion, for the first time, they experienced fear. Instead of embracing God's presence, Adam and Eve ran from it and hid among the trees of the garden.

This attempt to hide was futile, for God knew where they were. We cannot hide from God. The Psalmist understood this when he wrote:

(7) Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? (8) If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! (9) If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, (10) even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. (11) If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night," (12) even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is

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*bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you. -
Psalms 139:7-12 ESV*

While Adam and Eve knew they could not hide from God, they still experienced that compulsion in their heart. It is quite likely that they hid, not because they did not want God to see them, but rather because they, themselves, did not want to see God in their condition. They experienced shame and fear of His presence. They were not ready to face Him in their sin and rebellion. They knew that they had grieved Him. By hiding from God, they reveal that they understood and felt their guilt and shame.

Notice how God calls out in verse 9:

*9 But the LORD God called to the man and said to him,
“Where are you?”*

God calls Adam only. There may be some significance to God not calling Eve at this point. God has business to deal with here. He calls Adam as the head and representative of the human race and his small family unit. God was aware of what Adam and Eve had done and came now to address this matter.

By calling out, “Where are you?” God is not so much asking a question as He is calling Adam to stand before Him. He was accountable to God as the head of his household. He was now to answer God for what had taken place under his watch. Adam stood before God as His judge.

Notice how Adam responds to the words, “where are you?” in verse 10:

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10 And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself."

- Genesis 3:10 ESV

Adam explained that he was afraid when he heard the sound of God in the garden. This admission was a confession of sin. The fear Adam spoke of here was unknown before sin. It is the fear a sinner experiences standing before a holy God. This presence of God confronts evil like light confronts darkness. Perfect holiness will not bear sin. The disobedience of Adam and Eve separated them from fellowship with God and placed a deep barrier between them.

Adam goes on in verse 10 to explain the cause of his fear – "I was afraid because I was naked." Adam's innocence had been lost. He was ashamed of who he had become and feared to expose this to the God who had made him perfect in every way.

Adam knew that he could not hide his sin from God. He felt naked and exposed before God, who saw to his very core. It was not just his physical nakedness that Adam feared exposing. Adam's very soul and spirit were naked and exposed to a holy and all-seeing God. This caused him great disgrace and fear.

We dare not underestimate the encounter of perfect holiness with sinful creatures. The all-penetrating eye of God sees what we cannot even see. It exposes what we do not even know we have within us. Perfect holiness will never compromise with sin. Absolute justice will always punish. The punishment for sin in any form was death.

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(16) And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, (17) but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." - Genesis 2:16-17 ESV

The death spoken of here is not just physical death but spiritual and eternal separation from God. This sentence will always be carried out. There is no exception to this rule. A perfect and holy God will never allow sin in any form into His presence. As the representative of humanity, Adam stood before God that day, pleading guilty of a crime that would sentence him and all of his posterity to eternal separation from God and His blessings.

All too many people, like Adam and Eve, seek to hide from God. Many of us will not even admit to ourselves that we have sinned. As painful as it was to stand before God that day, it was the only way to forgiveness and victory. Do you hear God calling. "where are you?" today? Sin in your life has placed a barrier between you and your Creator. If you hear that call today, will you step out from behind the bushes and stand before His holy presence to confess your sin. Admitting our sins and confessing them to God is the first step toward victory.

For Prayer:

Father God, we thank you that You are a holy and all-knowing God. The knowledge of this reality, however, strikes fear into our hearts. We know that no sinner will enter Your presence. We understand all who have the stain of sin on their hands will be eternally banished Your

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presence. Father, help us to understand this reality more deeply.

Lord God, despite our sin, we thank you that You took the initiative to approach us. We thank you, Lord Jesus, that you took our penalty. You paid the price for our sin by Your death on the cross. Your death alone can cleanse the stain of sin. Your death alone meets the legal demands of the law and grants us pardon. Thank you that what You did on Calvary's cross pays not only for our past sin but for all sin. Your holiness demanded death, but your love sent Jesus Christ to die in my place so that not only the demands of justice were met, but fellowship could also be restored.

Remind me daily, O Father, that it is because of what Jesus did that I am forgiven and restored to a right relationship with You. Remind me of the consequences of sin apart from the Lord Jesus and His work on Calvary's cross. Give me the courage to stand before you as Adam did to confess my sin that I might be forgiven and restore to fellowship with You.

Chapter 8 - Who's to Blame?

11 He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?"

12 The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." 13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." - Genesis 3:11-13 ESV

In Genesis 3:8-10, we examined how Adam and Eve hid when they heard the presence of God in the garden. Adam told God that he did so out of fear because he was naked. Notice the response of God to Adam's confession:

*11 He said, "Who told you that you were naked? –
Genesis 3:11 ESV*

God addresses Adam's nakedness here. His question about who told Adam he was naked leads us to understand that this was not God who revealed this to him. Before the entrance of sin in the garden, neither Adam nor Eve noticed their nakedness. They lived in a state of innocent bliss and harmony. They knew no shame.

There were some things God did not intend for Adam to understand or know. We live in an age that glorifies knowledge. We like to have degrees behind our name to show that we have accumulated knowledge and

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understanding. We respect knowledgeable people and value their opinion. While this is as it should be, we need to understand that not all knowledge is good for us, nor is it helpful.

Here in Genesis 3, we see how Adam and Eve come to the knowledge of sin and evil. Satan told them that their minds would be opened when they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This certainly happened, but opening their minds to sin and evil was not a good thing.

The entertainment industry classifies movies by age. They do this because there are scenes within these movies that are not suitable for younger people. In other words, there are some things our children ought not to know or witness. Our society knows that introducing our children to these scenes would be too much for them and would only cause them nightmares, anxiety and confusion.

What is true for our children is also true for us as adults. We know that a steady diet of junk food is not good for our bodies. We must also be discerning in what we take into our minds. We value an open mind. But what is more important than an open mind is a discerning mind. An open mind will take in both good and bad. Wise people, however, will be cautious about the knowledge they obtain.

In an age of mass media, we are bombarded with information and knowledge. Not all of that knowledge is true, nor is it helpful. How easy it is for the media to shape the mind of anyone willing to listen without a discerning ear. We can easily be manipulated to believe a lie. Not all information is beneficial for us and our society.

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It was in the Garden of Eden that Adam and Eve gained the knowledge of sin and evil. This knowledge had a devastating effect on their relationship with God, each other, and their environment. God hid this knowledge of sin from them because of the damage it would cause. The knowledge of good and evil was not what Satan led them to believe it was.

When God asked the question: "Who told you that you were naked," He is showing us that it was not His intention that Adam and Eve have this knowledge. Those who want to fellowship with God must close their minds to certain knowledge. Our society would tell us that this is a negative characteristic, but we, who love the Lord, choose to be discerning.

God continues with His questioning in verse 11:

Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" – Genesis 3:11 ESV

God knew that the only way Adam and Eve could have obtained the knowledge of evil was through disobedience to His command. Their disobedience gave them knowledge of sin, shame and fear. Have you ever gained knowledge you wish you could unlearn? Have you ever had experiences you would give anything to go back in time and never experience? This knowledge and experience sometimes change the whole course of our lives.

God demands a confession from Adam by asking him if they had eaten from the tree in the garden. Notice how Adam responds in verse 12:

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12 The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." – Genesis 3:12 ESV

There are a few details we need to notice in this statement.

First, observe that Adam confessed that he ate from the tree when he said: "I ate." He did not deny the fact that he had disobeyed God.

While Adam admitted that he ate from the tree, he also sought to justify his action by telling God that the woman that He had given him gave him the fruit. Some commentators take note of the words, "the woman whom you gave to be with me." They feel that Adam is actually putting some of the blame on God. They believe that Adam was telling God that he may not have fallen into this sin if He had not given him this woman.

Adam not only wants God to accept part of the blame, but he also points to his wife. Consider the words, "*she gave me fruit of the tree.*" These words show us that Adam was fully aware that he had eaten the fruit from the forbidden tree. Eve did not deceive Adam into eating the forbidden fruit. The source of the fruit he ate was not hidden from Adam. He knew what he was eating.

Adam, however, seems to be telling God that he was not the one to pick the fruit from the tree. Eve gave it to him. He recognized his guilt but seemed to be saying, "I wasn't the one to pick the fruit." He is diverting attention away from himself by making himself a victim. There is something in him now that wants to look better than his wife. He not only places the blame on God but also on Eve. He says something like this: If she hadn't given me this fruit, I would

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not have eaten it. He is willing to stain his wife's reputation to look better himself. We see in Adam the effects of pride and self-centeredness. Adam's response should not surprise us because it is also our first response to accusations of failure as well. We, too, demonstrated evidence of this same sin.

Upon hearing Adam's defence, God turned to Eve and asked, "What is this that you have done?" (verse 13). Notice the response of Eve:

13 The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." - Genesis 3:13 ESV

Eve also admits her guilt in the words, "I ate," but like Adam, she tells God that it was the serpent who deceived her. She, too, seeks to excuse her sin by blaming the serpent. She said something like this: If he hadn't deceived me, I wouldn't have eaten it.

While it is easy to see the blaming that is going on here in this chapter, it is also important that we see how God addresses the problem. When Adam told God that Eve had given him the fruit, God asked her to account for her actions. We will also see that when Eve accused the serpent of deceiving her, God also called the serpent to account. While it is true that each person seeks to excuse their sin by placing partial blame on another, God does hold each person accountable for how their actions affected someone else. While I am not responsible for someone else's response, I will have to answer for how my actions and words negatively impacted them and caused them to fall. Consider the words of Jesus in this regard:

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(42) "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea. - Mark 9:42 ESV

Listen to what the apostle Paul taught the Romans:

(13) Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother. - Romans 14:13 ESV

Paul encouraged believers to make it their purpose never to cause a brother or sister to stumble in their faith.

While the sin of Adam and Eve is evident in how they sought to blame others for their disobedience, it is also apparent in how they caused each other to fall by tempting them and inviting them to sin.

The excuses of Adam and Eve for their sin were no defence. Ultimately, Adam chose to disobey God whether he picked the fruit off the tree or not. Eve chose to believe Satan rather than the clear command of God. The words "I ate" found in both confessions were sufficient to seal a guilty verdict.

How easy it is to believe that our excuses will make us less guilty. Maybe you were tired and overworked, and you spoke harshly to a brother or sister. Perhaps you were going through a really difficult time in life, and the pressure of your problems caused you to wander. Maybe peer pressure caused you to give into sin. There are any number of excuses we can bring to the Lord. Whether you have a reason or not, today, you find yourself living in sin. This is what matters. It is the sin that needs to be addressed. Why

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you fell into sin is not the major concern, it is the fact that you find yourself separated from God and out of fellowship with Him.

We are facing a spiritual battle in our day. We will be tempted in many ways to wander from the path of godliness. Satan uses deception and lies in his efforts to distract us. He will shoot his arrow when we least expect it. We need the discernment, wisdom and protection of God to overcome these temptations. None of us will get through this life without scars. What is important is that we accept and confess our guilt. God called Adam and Eve to give an account of their actions. They came with their excuses, but they were still guilty of sin. All too often, we excuse ourselves rather than accept our guilt. We will perish in our excuses if we are unwilling to confess our guilt.

For Prayer:

Lord God, we see from these verses that not all knowledge is good for us. There is a knowledge that will only hurt us in our walk with You. Give us discerning minds to know what is helpful and pure. Forgive us for the times we have filled our minds with ungodly knowledge and thoughts. We pray that you would help us to trust you when we do not understand Your ways. Eve fell into sin because she chose knowledge of evil rather than faith in Your purpose. We confess that we have also fallen into this trap.

We also see in these verses the temptation to excuse our sin. Teach us that none of our excuses justify our actions, thoughts and words. Give us the grace to confess and recognize our error without excusing it.

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We confess, Father, that we have not always been a good example. We recognize that there have been times when our actions, words or inactivity have caused another to fall or suffer unnecessarily. Forgive us for the times we have placed a stumbling block in word and deed before a brother or sister.

We thank you, Lord, that despite our many failures and shortcomings, You love us and have provided through the Lord Jesus a solution to our wandering. We receive Your forgiveness and pray that You would give us the grace to walk in obedience and joyful fellowship with You.

Chapter 9 - A Curse on the Serpent

14 The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. 15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." - Genesis 3:14-15 ESV

When Eve told the Lord how the serpent deceived her into eating from the forbidden tree, He turned His attention to the reptile and said:

14 "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. – Genesis 3:14 ESV

While we understand that the serpent was merely the instrument Satan used to tempt Eve, it is nonetheless addressed here. God cursed it above all other animals of the field, requiring that it crawl in the dust all its days.

When an inferior army defeated Joshua at Ai, he and his men put dust on their heads as a symbol of their humiliation:

(6) Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the LORD until the evening, he

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*and the elders of Israel. And they put dust on their heads.
- Joshua 7:6 ESV*

When Job's friends came to visit him and saw his condition, they sprinkled dust on their heads, reflecting their grief and despair:

(12) And when they saw him from a distance, they did not recognize him. And they raised their voices and wept, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads toward heaven. - Job 2:12 ESV

The picture of the serpent crawling on its belly in the dust is one of humiliation. It would never rise above its shame but live forever in the dirt.

It might be easy for us to say that the serpent was an innocent victim. Why should God curse it? It was not necessarily a willing volunteer for Satan's efforts, nor could it even understand what was taking place. It was, however, the chosen instrument of Satan for the temptation of Eve.

Imagine that you have a road in your community that has a very dangerous turn. This curve in the road has been the source of many traffic accidents. What do you do? The first thing you do is put up a warning sign, letting people know that they are about to approach a dangerous section of the road. This warning is intended to make people more aware of the danger ahead. God cursed the serpent as a warning and reminder of what took place in the Garden of Eden.

There is something else we need to see here, however. Just as the actions of Adam and Eve affected the entire human race, so what took place that day through the serpent touched generations of beasts that followed. This serpent had been the instrument of tremendous evil. This

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was no light matter. The curse of sin was not only passed on through the human race but also the animal kingdom. Both human beings and animals would languish under the curse of sin. Just as Adam and Eve would suffer death due to their sin, now the whole animal kingdom would be placed under this same curse.

As we move to verse 15, the attention shifts from the serpent as the instrument to Satan as the tempter. Notice what God told Satan that day:

15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring - Genesis 3:15
ESV

While God cursed the serpent, He told Satan that He would put "enmity" between the woman's offspring and his offspring. This was a declaration of war. From that point onward, they would be sworn enemies. Let's consider this offspring in more detail.

Consider first, the offspring of Satan. What is the offspring of the devil? To answer this, let's go to the New Testament. Listen to the words of Jesus to the Scribes and Pharisees in John 8:

(44) You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. - John
8:44 ESV

He says something very similar in Matthew 23:

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(15) Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves. - Matthew 23:15
ESV

In these two passages, the Lord Jesus describes the Scribes and Pharisees as children of the devil and children of hell. They were the offspring of Satan, the father of lies. What made these religious leaders offspring of the devil was the fact that they rejected the Lord Jesus. They even sought to kill Him. The offspring of the devil are all those who follow Satan's ways and reject the Lord Jesus.

Notice the prophetic proclamation of God in verse 15 about the offspring of the woman:

"he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."
– Genesis 3:15 ESV

This phrase speaks of one descendant of Eve, referred to here simply as "he." God told Satan that this individual would bruise his head and wound his heel in the process. The picture here is of an individual stomping on the head of a serpent. Paul seems to use a similar illustration when he wrote to the Romans:

(20) The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. -
Romans 16:20 ESV

There can be no doubt as to the identity of the offspring of Eve. There is only one descendant of Eve that could "crush" the head of Satan. Consider the words of Hebrews 2:14 about the Lord Jesus:

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(14) Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, - Hebrews 2:14 ESV

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, took on flesh and was born as the woman's offspring. He came to destroy the power of the devil. He did so by taking the penalty for our sin to the cross of Calvary. Yes, Satan bruised Jesus' heel in the sense that this penalty cost Jesus His life, but the wound Satan inflicted would not prove to be fatal, for Jesus rose from the dead, conquering its power. Satan, on the other hand, was stripped of his hold over the children of God. All who trust in the work of Jesus are free of Satan's legal hold over them. In the Garden of Eden that day, God pronounced the defeat of Satan through the work of His Son.

What is encouraging for us is that while Adam and Eve lost this battle over sin, this was not the end. God did not give up on them. He determined to rescue humanity from Satan's grip. Genesis 3:14-15 is a declaration of God's intention to save His people from the curse of sin.

For Prayer:

Lord God, we confess that we have inherited the sin of our first parents. We are, by nature, separated from you and under the curse of sin. We recognize that through the serpent, that same curse was spread to the animal kingdom so that no living being has not been affected by the curse of sin and death. We thank you, Father, that you revealed Your intention for salvation and victory from the time of the

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first sin. We thank you today that You determined not to leave us in our sin under the dominion of Satan. There in the Garden of Eden, You declared your intention to send the Lord Jesus to rescue us. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for Your willingness to leave the glories of heaven to lay Your life down on a cross for us. Thank you that You conquered sin and death. Thank you for paying the legal price so that we could be freed from the power of Satan. We rejoice today that we who know You will one day see You face to face. May our hearts be forever grateful for this wonderful grace and favour.

Chapter 10 - The Pain of Childbearing

16 To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you." - Genesis 3:16 ESV

Having cursed the serpent for its role in the temptation of Eve, the Lord God now turns to Eve herself. In Genesis 3:16, the Lord unveils the three-fold effect of sin on her and her female descendant.

Pain in Childbearing

16 To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. – Genesis 3:15 ESV

God tells Eve here that He would increase her pain in bringing children into the world. It was the intention of God for Eve to bear children even before she fell into sin. Listen to God's command when He first created man and woman in Genesis 1:

(27) So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

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(28) And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” - Genesis 1:27-28 ESV

Notice how God told Adam and his wife to be “fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.” From the very beginning of time, it was the purpose of God to fill the earth with people. That would begin with Adam and Eve. We have no way of knowing what childbirth would have been like in a perfect world. What is clear is that God created Eve with the capacity to bear children and expected her to do so.

God told Eve in Genesis 3:15 that giving birth to her children would become more painful because of sin. What was to be a joyous event would now also become agonizing. Every child born would cause its mother to suffer. This suffering in childbearing also seems to reflect the type of world into which each child would be born. This new world groaned under the effects of sin and death. As Eve gave birth to her children, she was reminded of the impact of sin and the curse that resulted from it.

Her Desire

The second effect of sin on Eve is related to her relationship with Adam. Listen to what the English Standard Version of the Bible says in verse 16:

Your desire shall be contrary to your husband – Genesis 3:16 ESV

The Pain of Childbearing

Some versions of the Bible translate “*your desire shall be for your husband.*” The Hebrew word used here refers to a strong feeling toward someone. This feeling may be either positive or negative.

Consider the context of Genesis 3. Eve has eaten the forbidden fruit, and sin has now entered the world. God has just told Eve that sin would affect childbearing. He moves on to speak about its effect on her relationship with her husband. Sin does not produce godly desires. If anything, it breaks up relationships and makes us self-centred. Because of sin, we are willing to hurt our partners to get our way. Couples begin to pull in opposite directions.

How did the fall affect Eve’s feelings toward her husband? It would be perfectly logical to assume that her passions or strong feelings were not always godly. It would be safe to think that her desire was not always for him. This is born out in our own marriages. Because of sin, we tend to seek our way at the expense of our partners. The fruit of sin is jealousy, anger, selfishness, and impatience, to name a few characteristics. Who among us has not struggled with this fruit in our hearts and minds? Eve’s desire for her husband would no longer be pure and unhindered. She would now have to sort through her thoughts and attitudes toward him.

God created Eve to be a helpmate for Adam. Before the entrance of sin, Eve would have been completely fulfilled in this role. She was happy and satisfied as jealousy, pride, envy, resentment, and dissatisfaction did not exist in her mind. Sin, however, would change all that, and she would experience strong and often negative feelings toward her husband. These feelings would affect their relationship. She would now have to battle herself, her sinful thoughts

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and attitudes to live in harmony with her husband and love him as God intended.

Ruled Over

The final effect of sin mentioned in verse 16 is summed up in the words:

“but he shall rule over you.”- Genesis 3:16 ESV

God tells Eve here that sin would impact how her husband related to her as well. We have seen how Eve would be forced to do battle with her own feelings and desires. What was true for Eve was also true for her husband. He, too, had been touched by this same sin. It would impact how he led his family and treated his wife.

God intended that the man be head of his family. Adam would negatively rule over his wife. He would lack the compassion and tenderness needed to be a true leader. Adam, too, would suffer from selfishness and pride. There would be times when he only thought of himself and did not take the interests of his wife and family into account.

If Adam were to be the leader God called him to be, he would have to commit to battle sin and his sinful nature. His self-centred tendencies would have to be broken. Adam would need to trust God for patience and understanding. As a leader, he would not always make the right decisions. Some of those decisions would negatively affect his family. Eve would submit herself to an imperfect man who struggled with a self-centred impulse to sin. This was a fearful thing and only increased her strong negative feelings toward him.

The Pain of Childbearing

God told Eve that day that giving birth to children would become a painful experience. From that point onward, she would struggle with her feelings and desires toward her husband. She would have to live with a man who wrestled with sinful tendencies and often failed to be the leader God had called him to be.

The challenge of this verse for women, as descendants of Eve, is to recognize that sin will affect the attitudes of our hearts and minds toward their husbands. If you are to be the partner God has called you to be, you will first have to battle these feelings and attitudes. You must recognize that even the greatest men among us battle their sinful natures to be the husbands God has called them to be. Sooner or later, evidence of that battle will be evident in every relationship.

Sin is a great enemy to any relationship. God reminded Eve that she would have to live with an imperfect husband. She was to be aware, however, that her own feelings and desires toward him would be less than ideal. If their relationship was to thrive, both partners would have to conquer the sin that threatened to break them apart.

For Prayer:

Lord God, we understand that from the time of the fall in Genesis 3, we have all struggled to walk in tune with you. We see in these verses how sin affects our relationship as husbands and wives. You told Eve that she would have to battle her negative feelings and desires. Father, it grieves us to see how much sin affects our relationship with those we love most. Forgive us for the ungodly attitudes we have

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harboured in our hearts toward a husband or wife. Forgive us also for the selfishness and pride that keep us from ministering to each other. Open our eyes to see our sin. Teach us to love each other as You love us. Teach us to die to ourselves and the sin that affects us to love our partners. Banish, jealousy, pride, selfishness and discontent from our relationships. May we commit ourselves from this day forward to overcome sin so that we can love our partners as You intend.

Chapter 11 - By the Sweat of Your Face

17 And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; 18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. 19 By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return." - Genesis 3:17-19 ESV

Having addressed the serpent, Satan and Eve, God turns His attention to Adam:

*17 And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' – Genesis 3:17
ESV*

God accused Adam of listening to his wife and eating from the forbidden tree. Eve picked fruit from the tree, but she also offered it to her husband and invited him to eat it. This did not excuse Adam, for he had the choice to eat that fruit or not. However, he listened to Eve rather than God and joined her in sin.

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Have you ever noticed when you are stopped at a traffic light how you naturally follow when the vehicle ahead of you proceeds, without even looking to confirm that the light is green? This is our natural tendency as human beings. We follow people, often without considering whether what they are doing is right or not. The reality of the matter, however, is that the crowd is not always right. Satan knows the influence other people have on us. He likely knew that if he could get Eve to fall into sin, Adam would not be long following her.

We need to set our eyes on the Lord and His Word rather than what other people are doing. People are not accurate measurements of God's purpose. We must focus on the Lord and His Word if we do not want to be led astray. Adam was not guided by the Word of God when he ate the forbidden fruit.

A Curse on the Ground

Adam's choice to listen to Eve and eat the forbidden fruit had serious consequences. Listen to the words of the Lord in Genesis 3:17-18:

cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; 18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; 19 By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread,- Genesis 3:18-19

The words "cursed is the ground because of you" are very clear. Adam's choice to eat the forbidden fruit brought about this curse. God told Adam that he would eat the produce of the ground in pain. That pain would come through the thorns and thistles the earth would produce. It

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would take hard work for Adam to cultivate the soil and grow the food required for survival.

We often think of sin as a human problem. However, sin also affects our environment. While it is not clear how the earth produced fruit before the fall, it is evident that the entrance of sin impacted how the ground yielded its crops. Adam would have to wrestle with the soil and climate to cultivate the crops necessary for himself and his family. The earth would be more reluctant to produce fruit but would readily surrender to thorns and thistles that could not be eaten.

The effect of sin and the curse is seen not only in the soil but also in environmental disasters and natural catastrophes that ravage our planet every year. Death and decay have filled the earth. Disease and sickness of all kinds have become the norm. At the root of this devastation are sin and its curse upon our land. Sin is not just something we do but a disease that affects every aspect of our world. Adam would not have understood the immensity of the proclamation, "cursed is the ground because of you." His disobedience to God had a catastrophic impact on the earth for thousands of years to follow.

There was a glimmer of hope in the phrase, "*in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life.*" The words, "you shall eat of it all the days of your life," show us that God had not given up on Adam and Eve. They would have sufficient food to sustain their lives for the rest of their days. Admittedly, it would require a lot of work and pain to obtain this food, but they would have sufficient by the grace of God.

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Plants of the Field

Genesis 3:18 tells us something about Adam and Eve's food. The Lord God told Adam that he would eat the plants of the field:

*and you shall eat the plants of the field. -Genesis 3:18
ESV*

Adam and Eve ate plants. Their diet consisted of vegetables, plants and fruit from the trees in the garden. At that point, our first parents did not eat meat. There had not been any death in the garden. Animals had not been sacrificed or killed for food. All this would change in the years to come.

Listen to what God told Noah in Genesis 9:

*(3) Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you.
And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything.
- Genesis 9:3 ESV*

God would later set up dietary laws that defined the meat acceptable to eat. Adam and Eve, however, at this point in history, were vegetarians.

Until You Return to the Ground

The final aspect of God's curse on Adam was death. Listen to the words of God in Genesis 3:19

*till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken;
for you are dust, and to dust you shall return." - Genesis
3:19 ESV*

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By the sweat of his face, Adam would cultivate the soil for food to sustain himself and his family. As his body aged, it would become more and more difficult for him to do the work required. The day would come when that body would give up its spirit, and Adam and the ground, he had fought so hard to conquer, would one day claim his body. He would lie in that ground and return to dust.

Human beings would be born, fight to survive and die. All of this would seem futile if it were not for the hope of restored fellowship with God and victory over sin through Jesus Christ. For many who do not know the Saviour, this is their existence – they are born, battle with life, and die forever separated from fellowship with their creator.

The sin that ravages our lives and our land is our greatest enemy. The disobedience of Adam and Eve plunged us into chaos and despair. Our heritage is separation from God, broken relationships, pain, struggle, and a world filled with obstacles, ultimately ending in death. It is not until we understand the devastation of sin that we can fully appreciate what the Lord Jesus did on the cross of Calvary. He gives us victory over sin and eternal purpose in life. To know Him is to know victory over sin and its curse.

For Prayer:

Lord Jesus, we see just how devastating sin has been on this earth. How easy it is for us to blame You when death or natural catastrophes take the lives of our loved ones. However, we see here that it was us as human beings who brought sin into this world. It is You who died to provide a

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solution. Thank you for Your willingness to die so that we can overcome sin and its curse on this earth.

We also recognize Lord Jesus that we have not always been good examples to those around us. Like forbidden fruit, our attitudes, words, and actions have caused them to fall. Forgive us for our failure to be an example. Heal those we have hurt by our words and deeds. Teach us to be an example of godliness and truth to all we meet.

Chapter 12 - A Two-fold Blessing from God

20 The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. 21 And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them. - Genesis 3:20-21 ESV

God has spoken to Adam, Eve and Satan about their roles in opening the doors for sin and death. It would be easy to imagine that God was so angry with our first parents that He turned His back on them. This was not the case. In Genesis 3:20-21, we have extraordinary evidence of the tender grace and mercy of God toward them even in their rebellion.

A Blessing in the Midst of Shame

Notice first what Genesis 3:20 tells us about Eve:

20 The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. – Genesis 3:20 ESV

The verse tells us that Adam gave his wife her name. This is the first time the name Eve appears in the Bible. Up until this point, she was called woman:

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(23) Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." - Genesis 2:23 ESV

Why did Adam feel compelled to change his wife's name? The name Eve means "living." Genesis 3:20 tells us that Adam called her Eve, because she was the mother of all living. Let's consider this in the context of Genesis 3.

God told Eve that she would bear children in pain because of her sin. While she would suffer in childbearing, there is something quite wonderful in the understanding that Eve would still bring forth life from her womb. Eve would become the mother of all human beings. She would bear children and see them grow up before her. Admittedly, the reality of death was also real. She would die as would her children, but life would go on, and the world would be filled with her children.

Reflecting on this, Adam chooses to name his wife Eve. In doing so, he honours her as a woman. It is hard to say how Eve was feeling in those days. She had opened the door to sin and death, and this would have been very much on her mind. Adam, however, blesses her with a new name that focuses on her becoming the mother of all human beings. The new name gave her hope amid shame and discouragement. Despite sin in his heart, Adam is still sensitive to his wife and blesses her.

What is more important for us to note here, however, is the fact that none of this would have been possible were it not for the grace of God. Eve had rebelled against God by picking the forbidden fruit. This act had devastating consequences for humanity. However, consider the grace of God in allowing Eve to be the mother of all human life.

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Her offspring would fill the earth. Of all mother's she would be the most blessed. Her descendants could not be counted. Through her, the purpose of God would be fulfilled for the earth.

God did not give up on Eve. She had a vital role to play in His purpose. Her sin was great, and so were the consequences of that sin, but the grace and mercy of God were even greater. He would not abandon her or her children.

A Covering for Shame

The second great blessing of God in the lives of Adam and Eve is found in Genesis 3:21:

21 And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them. Genesis 3:21 ESV

The verse tells us that God clothed Adam and Eve in garments of skin. Remember that this first couple felt deeply ashamed after the fall because they were naked.

*(7) Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. (10) And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." - Genesis 3:7, 10
ESV*

God understood their shame but did not leave them there. God covered them with the skin of an animal. Have you ever been hurt by someone? What is your response when they are caught, and something bad happens to them? Are you tempted to say, "It serves them right; they got what was

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coming to them?" How thankful we need to be that God did not say this. If God were like us, He might have left our parents to live in their shame and nakedness. This is not what He did. The Creator felt Adam and Eve's pain and had compassion for them. He covered their shame through the death of an animal He had created.

God illustrated something very important here. For shame to be covered, something had to die. The fig leaves Adam and Eve were using were insufficient covering for sin. God showed them how the death of one living being for another could cover shame. It was not the purpose of God that Adam and Eve live every day in their shame. He determined to sacrifice the life of an animal to cover our first parent's guilt.

This sacrifice was the first for sin. As the story of the Old Testament unfolds, one animal after another was sacrificed for the sins of humankind. Millions of animals were slaughtered and offered to God to cover the shame of sinful actions, thoughts and attitudes. The immeasurable grace of God extended from one generation to another, and He accepted this covering for sin until the time that His very own Son would offer the final sacrifice for all time.

God covered the shame of sin with the skin of a sacrificed animal. The day was coming when He would do an even greater work. He would remove the burdensome penalty and strip sin of its authority and power over our lives through the death of His son Jesus. This blessing was foreshadowed by the death of that first animal to cover the sin of our first parents.

Despite their sin, God demonstrated His wonderful grace by promising Eve that she would become the mother of the

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human race. He also instituted a sacrifice system that would cover their shame until the time came for Him to offer His very own Son as the final sacrifice.

Though under the curse of sin, Adam and Eve continued to experience the grace of God in their lives. That same grace is extended to us today.

For Prayer:

Lord God, we confess that we have fallen short of Your standard for our lives. We have been born in sin and shame. Thank you for the blessing we see in the life of Eve. You chose to make her the mother of all living despite her sin. Thank you for the grace that blesses us even in our sin and shame. As we look at our lives, we see just how many blessings we receive from you.

Thank you also, Father, for how much you value us as human beings. We recognize that you have made us the crown of Your creation. You demonstrated this by the death of that first animal to cover the shame of Adam and Eve. When no animal sacrifice could cover our penalty, You sent Your Son Jesus Christ to cover the cost of our guilt. Thank you that His death not only covers the penalty but also transforms us and gives us power over the effects of sin both now and for all eternity.

Chapter 13 - Driven from the Garden

22 Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—" 23 therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. 24 He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life. - Genesis 3:22-24 ESV

In this final section of Genesis 3, we see one more result of sin in the life of Adam and Eve. Before we examine this, however, listen to the words of the Lord God in Genesis 3:22:

*22 Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. –
Genesis 3:22 ESV*

"Us"

Notice the word "us" in this phrase—"the man has become like one of us." The word "us" indicates that God is speaking to someone. Because He refers to Adam as "the man," He

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is not speaking to Adam but about him to someone else. To whom is God speaking in Genesis 3:22?

Some people see a reference to the angels in this verse. They believe that God is speaking to them about Adam. The problem with this interpretation is two-fold.

First, consider the direction the conversation is going. God is about to drive Adam and Eve from the garden and seal off the Tree of Life. Scripture presents angels as God's servants. He does not need to confer with them about the decisions He makes.

Second, the phrase "like one of us" seems to group God with whomever He is speaking and places them on the same level. Angels would not be given this place of honour.

A better approach may be to see a reference to the Trinity. God is three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three persons existed from eternity past. There is clear evidence in the Bible of these persons speaking with each other.

In Luke 23:34, when Jesus was about to die, He cried out to the Father:

(34) And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." - Luke 23:34 ESV

Luke 4:1 shows us that the Holy Spirit also communicated with Jesus by leading Him into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil:

(1) And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness - Luke 4:1 ESV

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The Father communicated with Jesus and showed Him what He was to do:

(19) So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. (20) For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel. - John 5:19-20 ESV

The Father, Son and Holy Spirit communicate with each other regularly. It may be best to see the word "us" in Genesis 3:22 to refer to the three persons of the Trinity. Here they speak to each other about the sin that ravaged the earth.

"Like One of Us"

As God speaks in Genesis 3:22, notice what He says:

22 "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. – Genesis 3:22 ESV

While God speaks about man here, it is clear that woman is also included in this statement. God says that they had become like Him. While we were created body, soul and spirit in the image of God, this is not what God is referring to here. Genesis 3:22 tells us that Adam and Eve become like God in "knowing good and evil."

Satan promised Eve that this would happen if she ate the forbidden fruit:

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(4) But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. (5) For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." - Genesis 3:4-5 ESV

If this knowledge of good and evil was the fruit of disobedience, how can we say that a perfect God has this kind of knowledge? Let's break this down and examine it in more detail.

First, God knows all things. This was the understanding of the psalmist when he wrote:

(1) O LORD, you have searched me and known me! (2) You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. (3) You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. (4) Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether. (5) You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. (6) Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it. (7) Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? (8) If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! - Psalms 139:1-8 ESV

According to the psalmist, this knowledge of God was not just about the past and present but also about the future – *"Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether"* – Psalm 139:4 ESV. From the beginning of time, God knew about Adam and Eve's sin and the effect it would have on the world. These things were not hidden from God.

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Second, even before Adam and Eve sinned against God, there had already been a rebellion in heaven. Satan and his angels turned against God and determined to take Adam and his descendants with them. God had already dealt with the fall of Satan and his angels prior to the temptation in the Garden.

When God created man, He made him without this knowledge of evil and rebellion. Adam and Eve lived peacefully in the garden in perfect obedience to God. God created them to live in perfect fellowship with Him. The knowledge of rebellion and sin would only have hindered that fellowship. Adam and Eve had no reason to distrust the word of God about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They were fully satisfied with what they had.

Satan sowed seeds of doubt in Eve's mind and tempted her to eat. When she did, her eyes were opened to the knowledge of good and evil. The concept of rebellion against God had been foreign to her, but now it was very real. She experienced a whole new world of sin, evil, selfishness, pride, and rebellion for the first time. Her eyes were opened to the knowledge of evil.

This knowledge shattered their innocence. This new world that opened up to them was not a pleasant one. They felt shame and fear. They felt alienated from God. Now, just like God, they saw evil and rebellion. They opened the door that God had locked for their protection. Their lives would never be the same.

God's Knowledge and Man's Knowledge

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While Adam and Eve had come to understand the difference between good and evil, there was a world of difference between their knowledge and God's. God knew about this world of rebellion and sin, and it repulsed Him. It had no attraction to Him whatsoever. He hated the brokenness and devastation it caused to His creation.

This knowledge of evil, for Adam and Eve, however, was quite different. They found themselves unable to resist it at times. Evil thoughts would fill their mind and plague them. Explosions of anger and frustration would detonate inside them and cause casualties among those they loved. The apostle Paul described this experience as follows:

(21) So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. (22) For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, (23) but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. (24) Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? (25) Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin. - Romans 7:21-25 ESV

The knowledge of sin and evil had a detrimental effect on Adam and Eve. It tempted them and caused them to wander from God. It filled their mind and hearts so that they were insensitive to God and His voice. While, like God, they understood good and evil, Adam and his wife would be haunted by this knowledge for the rest of their lives.

God continued to speak in verse 22 and said:

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Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—” – Genesis 3:22 ESV

The thought seems to be incomplete, but the sense is quite clear. Notice how God speaks here about the tree of life in the garden. According to Genesis 3:22, those who ate of this tree would live forever.

Revelation 2:7 tells us that this tree is in “the paradise of God,” and those who belong to Him and conquer Satan will one day have the privilege of eating from it:

(7) He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.’ - Revelation 2:7 ESV

Listen to John’s description of the tree in Revelation 22:

(1) Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb (2) through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. - Revelation 22:1-2 ESV

John confirms that the tree of life is in heaven. Notice that it bore fruit, but its leaves were also used to heal the nations. This tree has life-giving and healing effects.

Only those who have washed their robes and walk with God will have access to this tree of life:

(14) Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. - Revelation 22:14 ESV

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(19) and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book. - Revelation 22:19 ESV

As punishment for sin and rebellion, God removed access to the tree of life, guaranteeing death for every human being from that point on.

In Genesis 3:23, 24, God banished Adam and Eve from the garden.

23 therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. 24 He drove out the man, - Genesis 3:23-24 ESV

Adam and Eve would never return to the garden. God posted cherubim to guard the tree of life with a flaming sword assuring that no human being would have access to it. Notice that this flaming sword turned every way to protect the tree of life.

and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life. - Genesis 3:22-24 ESV

Only those who wash their robes in the blood of Jesus and know His forgiveness will be able to eat again from this tree (see Revelation 22:14). If you know the Lord Jesus today, this will one day be your privilege.

In the last chapter, we saw how God blessed Adam and Eve despite their sin. Here in this chapter, we discover that while they did know the blessing of God, they would also suffer the disastrous consequences of their rebellion and knowledge of evil. Adam and Eve would live the rest of their

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days under the curse of sin. The world they had once known no longer existed, but they would experience the joy of family and the provision of God each day of their lives. God did not abandon them, but their fellowship with Him would not be what it once had been. I wonder how many stories they told their children about the friendship they enjoyed with God and the blessings they had once known in that garden.

While access to the garden and the tree of life has been barred to us now, through the work of the Lord Jesus, that access will one day be restored. The first book of the Bible opens with the story of the tree of life being guarded by angels lest anyone eat of it. The last book of the Bible ends with access being restored to all who will wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb. What links these two stories is the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus and the promise of eternal life through His work on the cross of Calvary. Do you know this Saviour today? If not, take a moment to cry out to Him for forgiveness and new life.

For Prayer:

Father God, thank you that nothing takes you by surprise. You had a solution to the problem of sin from eternity past. We confess that our knowledge of sin has defiled us. We continue to wrestle with it and our ungodly attraction to it. Lord Jesus, thank you that You died on the cross to pay my penalty. Thank you that You offer forgiveness and eternal life to all who come to You. Holy Spirit, I recognize that You come to dwell in the hearts of all whom Jesus Christ forgives. Thank you for giving me new life and transforming

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me from the inside. Holy Trinity, thank you that as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, You have devoted Yourself to restoring us to fellowship with You.

We delight to know that Your work not only pardons us and gives us new life but also grants us access to the tree of life and the healing it brings. You, God, are our life and healing. Thank you that the day will come when we will finally conquer sin and will once again live in eternal and perfect fellowship with You.

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Light To My Path Book Distribution (LTMP) is a book writing and distribution ministry reaching out to needy Christian workers in Asia, Latin America, and Africa. Many Christian workers in developing countries do not have the resources necessary to obtain Bible training or purchase Bible study materials for their ministries and personal encouragement.

F. Wayne MacLeod is a member of Action International Ministries and has been writing these books with a goal to distribute them freely to needy pastors and Christian workers around the world.

These books are being used in preaching, teaching, evangelism and encouragement of local believers in over sixty countries. Books have now been translated into several languages. The goal is to make them available to as many believers as possible.

The ministry of LTMP is a faith-based ministry, and we trust the Lord for the resources necessary to distribute the books for the encouragement and strengthening of believers around the world. Would you pray that the Lord would open doors for the translation and further distribution of these books? For more information about Light To My Path Book Distribution visit our website at www.lighttomypath.ca

Forbidden Fruit