

A Reckless Choice

Genesis 3:1-13

SS Lesson for 10/07/2018

Devotional Scripture: Romans 7:15-25

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Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

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Introduction

Overview and Key Verse of the Lesson

The lesson examines how **A Reckless Choice** to disobey God caused man to fall from God's favor. The **study's aim** is to remember that disobedience to God leads to broken fellowship with Him. The **study's application** is to realize that if we seek God's blessing, then we must be prepared to obey Him in all things.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

Key Verse: Gen 3:6

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

3:1-7. These verses provide both the record of the historical Fall of man and the archetypal temptation. This passage is a perfect case study of temptation, for sin cannot be blamed on environment or heredity. Genesis 1-2 recorded what God said; **now the serpent** (the devil, Rev. 20:2) spoke. The word of the Lord brought life and order; the word of the serpent brought chaos and death. Truth is older than falsehood; God's word came before Satan's lies. Genesis 3:1 is connected with 2:25 by a Hebrew wordplay: Adam and Eve were "naked" (*ārūmm*); and the serpent **was more crafty** (*ārūm*, "shrewd") than all. Their nakedness represented the fact that they were oblivious to evil, not knowing where the traps lay, whereas Satan did and would use his craftiness to take advantage of their integrity. That quality of shrewdness or subtleness is not evil in itself (indeed, one of the purposes of the Bible is to make believers so, according to Prov. 1:4, where *ārmāh* shrewdness, is trans. "prudence"). But it was used here for an evil purpose. The tempter was a serpent (Satan in the form of a snake), thus suggesting that temptation comes in disguise, quite unexpectedly, and that it often comes from a subordinate (someone over whom one should have exercised dominion; cf. Gen. 1:28). Also there may well be a polemical element here, for the serpent was worshiped by pagans. Their symbol of life was in fact the cause of death. Divinity is not achieved (the promise of Satan here; 3:5) by following pagan beliefs and symbols. That is the way of death, not of life. Eve either did not know God's command very well or did not want to remember it. By contrast, Christ gained victory over Satan by His precise knowledge of God's Word (Matt. 4:4, 7, 10). (See the chart "Satan's Temptations of Eve and of Jesus," near Matt. 4:3-11.) Eve disparaged the privileges, added to the prohibition, and weakened the penalty—all seen by contrasting her words (Gen. 3:3) with God's original commands (2:16-17). After Satan heard this, he blatantly negated the penalty of death that God had given (3:4). Satan is a liar from the beginning (John 8:44), and this is his lie: one can sin and get away with it. But death is the penalty for sin (Gen. 2:17). The tempter also cast doubt over God's character, suggesting that **God** was jealous, holding them back from their destiny (3:5). They would become **like God** when they ate—and God knew that, according to Satan. So Satan held out to them the promise of divinity—**knowing good and evil**. With this the work of Satan was finished. The woman was then left to her natural desires and physical appetites. The word for **desirable** (*neḥmād*, v. 6) is related to a word that appears later in the command, "You shall not covet" (*taḥmōd*, Ex. 20:17). Physical practicality (**good for food**), aesthetic beauty (**pleasing to the eye**), and the potential **for gaining wisdom**—to be "in the know"—these draw a person over the brink once the barrier of punishment is supposedly removed. The results, of course, were anticlimactic. The promise of divine enlightenment did not come about. They both ate and saw, but they were spoiled by so doing. They were ill at ease with one another (mistrust and alienation) and they were ill

at ease with God (fearful and hiding from Him). Satan's promises never come true. Wisdom is never attained by disobeying God's Word. Instead the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 1:7).

3:8-13. The remainder of this chapter falls into three sections: (a) the confrontation with **the LORD** in which the two sinners, hearing Him, feared and **hid... among the trees** (vv. 8-13); (b) the oracles of the Lord in which new measures were given to the serpent, the woman, and the man (vv. 14-19); and (c) the clothing by the Lord as a provision for the new order (vv. 20-24). The effects of sin are punishment and provision. Whereas **the man** and the woman had life, they now had death; whereas pleasure, now pain; whereas abundance, now a meager subsistence by toil; whereas perfect fellowship, now alienation and conflict. The motifs in chapter 3—death, toil, sweat, thorns, the tree, the struggle, and the seed—all were later traced to Christ. He is the other Adam, who became the curse, who sweat great drops of blood in bitter agony, who wore a crown of thorns, who was hanged on a tree until He was dead, and who was placed in the dust of death.

3:14-19. God spoke **to the serpent** (vv. 14-15), to Eve (v. 16), and **to Adam** (vv. 17-19). God's words to the serpent included (a) the announcement that the snake, crawling and eating **dust**, would be a perpetual reminder to mankind of temptation and the Fall, and (b) an oracle about the power behind the snake. God said there would be a perpetual struggle between satanic forces and mankind. It would be **between Satan and the woman**, and their respective **offspring** or "seeds." The "offspring" of the woman was Cain, then all humanity at large, and then Christ and those collectively in Him. The "offspring" of the serpent includes demons and anyone serving his kingdom of darkness, those whose "father" is the devil (John 8:44). Satan would cripple mankind (**you will strike at his heel**), but *the* Seed, Christ, would deliver the fatal blow (**He will crush your head**). Then God told the **woman** that she would have **pain** in bearing **children**, and that she would be mastered by her **husband** whom she desired. Because Eve's **desire** probably refers in this context to her prompting Adam to sin, it is better to translate the verse "Your desire *was* for your husband." Having overstepped her bounds in this, she would now be mastered by him. God then told Adam that he would experience great pain in scratching out a livelihood (3:17-19). (**Painful toil** translates the same word used in v. 16 for the woman's pain. This word occurs only three times in the OT, in vv. 16-17 and 5:29.) Death will be his end—he will **return to the ground** (*ʿādāmāh*; a gracious provision in view of the suffering), and he will **return to dust** and become the serpent's prey again (cf. 3:14). So much for ambitions for divinity! Man may attempt to be like God, but he is dust. These punishments represent retaliatory justice. Adam and Eve sinned by eating; they would suffer in order to eat. She manipulated her husband; she would be mastered by her husband. The serpent destroyed the human race; he will be destroyed. God also made gracious provisions. Mankind will die and not live forever in this chaotic state, and children will be born (v. 16) so that the human race will endure and continue. Ultimate victory will come through Christ, the Seed (Gal. 3:16) of the woman (cf. Gal. 4:4, "born of a woman"). No matter how hard people try to do away with male dominion, agonizing labor, painful childbearing, and death, these evils will continue because sin is present. They are fruits of sin.

3:20-24. Adam's faith and God's provision are noted in these verses. God would save them and ensure that they would not live forever in this state. Adam's faith is seen in his naming **his wife Eve** (lit., "living"). Thus Adam was looking to the future and not primarily to death. Eve's faith is seen later (4:1) when she named her firstborn Cain because he was from the Lord. All God's dealings with people as sinners can be traced back to this act of disobedience by Adam and Eve. **God** is a saving God, however, and the fact that He **clothed... Adam** and Eve testifies to that. An animal was sacrificed to provide **garments of skin**, and later all Israel's animal sacrifices would be part of God's provision to remedy the curse—a life for a life. The sinner shall die! (Ezek. 18:20; Rom. 6:23) Yet he will live if he places his faith in **the LORD**, who has provided a Substitute. The skin with which God clothed Adam and Eve perpetually reminded them of God's provision. Similarly in the fullness of time God accepted the sacrifice of Christ, and on the basis of that atonement He clothes believers in righteousness (Rom. 3:21-26).

Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

My friend Sandi and I were late. We were both section leaders of the band. Our previous director had left, and we had yet to meet the new one. It was the first day of band camp. We had seven minutes to make a trip that normally took fifteen. What did we do? I am guessing that most of you know. Did we drive safely and arrive late? We did not. Instead, we turned up the radio, gunned the engine, and careened down the roads at breakneck speed. We arrived with a minute to spare, peeling into the parking lot and causing people to stare. Have you ever made a decision like that one? I suspect that most of us would admit that we have. Whether it stems from youthful folly, thoughtlessness, or something else, each of us has made

choices that were not the wisest. Such was the case with Adam and Eve. They ran into the earth's first devious salesman. Picture the situation. Eve was young and naive. The devil came to her, speaking words that sounded logical. He gave her a reason why she could not do without the fruit of that one tree. He gave her a false line, leading her to believe that things would be better if she and Adam would just eat. We all are thinking that we would not fall for this. But let us be honest with ourselves. Have we not all fallen for a similar lie at some point or other? Has Satan ever prompted you into what you knew was sin, yet you made the choice to do it anyway? The reality is that we all have fallen into this trap. It is easy to condemn Adam and Eve, until we look back at ourselves. We all are prone to sin (cf. I Kings 8:46). In our fleshly nature we are vulnerable to it. Adam and Eve were prey to Satan's enticements, and we can be pulled into his web as well. How do we combat this? First, we need to remember that believers do not live under the dominion of the sinful flesh. We have been given a new nature when we receive Christ and are regenerated. Because of this, we already have victory. Second, we need to be aware when Satan is knocking on the door of our hearts and minds. Scripture tells us that he seeks to devour us (1 Pet. 5:8). His suggestions will have persuasive power. Many of them may seem harmless at the time. We might even think that what he suggests is the right thing to do. That is why we must put on God's armor to protect us (cf. Eph. 6:11-13). When we protect ourselves with God's armor, we are able to discern Satan's attacks and stand against them. We can be steadfast when we are tempted. What if we have already made a bad choice? We can seek forgiveness for it. We may not be able to undo all the consequences, but we can repent of our sinful decisions and trust God to be gracious. Are you feeling tempted? Have you already fallen into reckless behavior? God can redeem and rescue you. He is always there, so seek Him and ask for His help.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

The Temptation (Gen 3:1-5)

1 Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'"
2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden;
3 but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'"
4 Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.
5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

The question to raise doubt (1)

Doubt through Satan who leads the world astray (Rev 12:9)

The great dragon was hurled down-- that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

Doubt through being a stumbling block (Matt 16:23)

23 Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."

Doubt through worldly shrewdness (Luke 16:8)

8 "The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light.

Doubt through using earthly wisdom (James 3:15)

15 Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil.

The half thought out response (2-3)

A response to a liar (John 8:44)

44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

A response to a deceiving spirit (1 Tim 4:1)

4 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.

A response that should have sensed danger (Prov 22:3)

3 A prudent man sees danger and takes refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it.

A response should have been shunned (Prov 14:16)

16 A wise man fears the Lord and shuns evil, but a fool is hotheaded and reckless.

A response given without being alert and self-controlled (1 Thess 5:2-7)

2 for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 4 But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. 5 You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. 6 So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled.

The questioning of God's Word (4-5)

Satan uses half-truths (Gen 3:22)

And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever."

Beware of questioning God because of God's power (Isa 40:13-14)

13 Who has understood the mind of the Lord, or instructed him as his counselor? 14 Whom did the Lord consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge or showed him the path of understanding?

Beware of questioning God because of my lack of understanding (Job 42:3)

3 [You asked,] 'Who is this that obscures my counsel without knowledge?' Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know.

Beware of questioning God because God's knowledge is well beyond mine (Ps 139:4-6)

4 Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O Lord. 5 You hem me in — behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.

Beware of questioning God because God is my creator (Rom 9:20-21)

20 But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? "Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'" 21 Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?

Beware of questioning God because God's ways are just (Ezek 18:25-27)

25 "Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' Hear, O house of Israel: Is my way unjust? Is it not your ways that are unjust? 26 If a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits sin, he will die for it; because of the sin he has committed he will die. 27 But if a wicked man turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he will save his life.

Making the Wrong Choice (Gen 3:6-7)

6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

Satan's age-old temptation technique (6)

The 3 ways Satan tempts us (1 John 2:16)

For all that is in the world-- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life-- is not of the Father but is of the world.

These three ways are evident in verse 6 as follows:

1. To Eve the fruit was a "delight to the eyes" – Lust of the Eye
2. Eve "saw that the tree was good for food" - Lust of the Flesh
3. To Eve the fruit was "desirable to make one wise" - Pride of Life

Stages of Sin (James 1:13-15)

13 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; 14 but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. 15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

Adam was not deceived, but "willfully" disobeyed God (1 Tim 2:14)

And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.

The transgression of Sin (7)

Man's view of things are warped by sin (Rom 8:6-8)

6 The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; 7 the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. 8 Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

God created man holy, man decided to sin (Eccl 7:29)

This only have I found: God made mankind upright, but men have gone in search of many schemes."

God's absolute truth (eyes opened) reveals sin (Rom 7:7)

What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "Do not covet."

Sin is known through God's Word (Rom 4:15)

because law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.

Sin entered the world through Adam (Rom 5:12-13)

12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned-- 13 for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law.

Sin causes us to become self-conscience (Gen 2:25)

The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

The Ruin and Results of Sin (Gen 3:8-13)

8 And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

9 Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?"

10 So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."

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

12 Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate."

13 And the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

God's Conviction (8)

We are convicted through the Holy Spirit (John 16:8)

When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment:

We are convicted by our consciences (Rom 2:15)

since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.)

We are convicted when God see our sins (Job 34:21-23)

21 "His eyes are on the ways of men; he sees their every step. 22 There is no dark place, no deep shadow, where evildoers can hide. 23 God has no need to examine men further, that they should come before him for judgment.

We are convicted when we understand that God knows us (Ps 139:1-5)

1 O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. 2 You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. 3 You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. 4 Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD. 5 You hem me in-- behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me.

Fear (9-10)

The spirit of fear comes from Satan (2 Tim 1:7)

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

God gave us a Spirit of sonship not fear (Rom 8:15)

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."

Knowledge of sin brings on fear of penalties (Matt 10:28)

Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

Satan uses "preconceived punishments" as a tool (1 Kings 19:13-14)

13 When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" 14 He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

Judgement (11)

God judges us through our consciences (1 Cor 4:4-5)

4 My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. 5 Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.

God judges based on His Word (Rom 10:4-5)

4 Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes. 5 Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: "The man who does these things will live by them."

Jesus will judge things we have done in the body (2 Cor 5:10)

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

We are judged through the reminding of the law (John 14:26)

But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

The excuses and blaming of others (12-13)

Moses gave the excuse that he couldn't talk (Exodus 4:10-12)

10 Moses said to the Lord, "O Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue." 11 The Lord said to him, "Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the Lord? 12 Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say."

Aaron gave the excuse of peer pressure (Exodus 32:21-24)

21 He said to Aaron, "What did these people do to you, that you led them into such great sin?" 22 "Do not be angry, my lord," Aaron answered. "You know how prone these people are to evil. 23 They said to me, 'Make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him.' 24 So I told them, 'Whoever has any gold jewelry, take it off.' Then they gave me the gold, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf!"

Excuses make one unfit for service (Luke 9:59-62)

59 He said to another man, "Follow me." But the man replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." 60 Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God." 61 Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say good-bye to my family." 62 Jesus replied, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

Excuses could cause missing God's invitations (Luke 14:21-25)

21 "The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.' 22 "'Sir,' the servant said, 'what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.' 23 "Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in, so that my house will be full. 24 I tell you, not one of those men who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.'"

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Concluding Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh

Man's Sin (3:1-7)

The serpent suddenly appears in verse one rudely and without introduction. Adam, Eve, and the garden we are prepared to find, for we have seen them before. The serpent is said to be one of God's creatures, therefore, we must take this creature literally. While it was an actual snake, later revelation informs us that the beast was being used by Satan, who is described as a dragon and serpent (cf. II Corinthians 11:3; Revelation 12:9; 20:2).

While we may wish to know the answers to questions pertaining to the origin of evil, Moses had no intention of supplying them for us here. The point God wishes to make is that we are sinful. To pursue more distant causes only removes our responsibility for sin from the focus of our attention.

Notice especially the approach which Satan takes here. He does not come as an atheist, or as one who would initially challenge Eve's faith in God. Satan may manifest himself as a Madalyn Murray O'Hair, but very often it is as an "angel of light" (II Corinthians 11:14). Satan often stands behind the pulpit, holding a Bible in his hand.

The wording of Satan's inquiry is significant. The word 'indeed' (verse 1) is dripping with innuendo. The effect of it is this: "Surely God could not have said this, could He?" Also the word God ("Has God said," (verse 1) is interesting. Moses has been using the expression "the Lord God," Yahweh Elohim:

"Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made" (Genesis 3:1). But when Satan referred to the Lord God it was merely God. This omission is indicative of Satan's rebellious attitude toward almighty God.

Satan's initial approach is to deceive, not deny; to cause doubts, not disobedience. Satan came to Eve as an inquirer. He deliberately distorted the command of God, but in such a way as to imply, "I may be wrong here, so correct me if I am mistaken."

Now Eve should have never begun this conversation. It was a complete overturn of God's chain of authority. That chain was Adam, Eve, creature. Adam and Eve were to express God's rule over His creation (1:26). Eve would no doubt have rebuked such a conversation if it were not for the manner in which it was initiated by Satan.

Had Satan begun to challenge the rule of God or Eve's faith in Him, her choice would have been an easy one. But Satan erroneously stated God's command. He stated the question so as to appear that he was misinformed and needed to be corrected. Few of us can avoid the temptation of telling another that they are wrong. And so, wonder of wonders, Eve has begun to walk the path of disobedience while supposing that she was defending God to the serpent.

Did you notice that Satan has not mentioned either the tree of life or the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? What a subtle attack! His question brought the forbidden tree to the center of Eve's thinking, but without any mention of it. She brought it up. By his question Satan has not only engaged Eve in dialogue, but he has also taken her eyes off of the generous provisions of God and caused her to think only of God's prohibition. Satan does not wish us to ponder the grace of God, but to grudgingly meditate upon His denials.

And this is precisely what has imperceptibly taken place in Eve's thinking. Eve has revealed her change of attitude by several 'Freudian slips.' While God said, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely" (2:16), Eve said, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat" (3:2). Eve omitted "any" and "freely," the two words which emphasized the generosity of God.

Likewise Eve had a distorted impression of the severity of God in prohibiting the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. She expressed God's instruction in these words: "You shall not eat from it or touch it, lest you die" (3:3). But God had said, "But from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die" (2:17).

While exaggerating the prohibition to the point where even touching the tree was evil, Eve had unconsciously downplayed the judgment of God by omitting the word 'surely,' and by failing to report that death would come on the day of the offense. In other words, Eve emphasized God's severity, but underestimated the fact that judgment would be executed surely and soon.

Satan's first attack on the woman was that of a religious seeker, in an effort to create doubts about the goodness of God and to fix her attention on what was forbidden as opposed to all that was freely given. The second attack is bold and daring. Now in place of deception and doubt there is denial, followed by the slander of God's character: "And the serpent said to the woman, 'You surely shall not die!'" (Genesis 3:4).

God's words of warning were not to be understood as the promise of certain punishment, but as the mere threats of a self-centered deity.

We may wonder at the dogmatism of Satan's denial, but it is my opinion that this is precisely what weakened Eve's opposition. How could anyone be wrong who was so certain? Many today, my friend, are convinced more of the dogmatic tone of a teacher than they are by the doctrinal truthfulness of his teaching. Dogmatism is no assurance of doctrinal accuracy.

Satan's fatal blow is recorded in verse 5: "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:5).

Many have tried to determine precisely what Satan is offering in verse 5. "Your eyes will be opened," Satan assures them. In other words, they are living in a state of incompleteness, of inadequacy. But once the fruit is eaten, they would enter into a new and higher level of existence: they would become "like God."

As I understand Satan's assertion, the statement is deliberately elusive and vague. This would stimulate the curiosity of Eve. To know 'good and evil' may be to know everything. But how could Eve possibly grasp the specifics of the offer when she did not know what 'evil' was.

One of my friends tells me that women are, by nature, more curious than men. I do not know if this is so, but I know that I have an active curiosity as well. The mysteriousness of this possibility of knowing more and living on some higher plane surely invites speculation and consideration.

I find an illustration on this play upon human curiosity in the book of Proverbs:

The woman of folly is boisterous, she is naive, and knows nothing. And she sits at the doorway of her house, on a seat by the high places of the city, calling to those who pass by, who are making their paths straight; 'Whoever is naive, let him turn in here,' and to him who lacks understanding she says, 'stolen water is sweet; and bread eaten in secret is pleasant' (Proverbs 9:13-17).

The woman of folly is herself naive and unknowing, but she entices her victims by offering them a new experience, and the fact that it is illicit simply adds to the appeal (verses 16-17). That is the kind of offer which Satan made to Eve.

Satan, I believe, leaves Eve with her thoughts at this point. His destructive seeds have been planted. While she has not yet eaten the fruit, she has already begun to fall. She has entered into a dialogue with Satan and now she is entertaining blasphemous thoughts about God's character. She is seriously contemplating disobedience. Sin is not instantaneous, but sequential (James 1:13-15), and Eve is well on her way.

Notice that the tree of life is not even mentioned or considered. Here before Eve were the two trees, the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Seemingly it was not a choice between the one or the other. She only saw the forbidden fruit. It, alone, appeared to be 'good for food and a delight to the eyes' (verse 6), and yet in 2:9 we were told that all the trees had these features in common. But Eve had eyes only for what was forbidden. And this tree offered some mysterious quality of life which appealed to the woman.

Satan lied outright in assuring Eve that she would not die, but he simply failed to tell her the fine print in his promise of what the forbidden fruit would offer. Having studied that tree for some time (I would imagine), she finally determined that the benefits were too great and the consequences were unreasonable and therefore unlikely. At that moment she snatched the fruit and ate it.

One may shake his head at Eve's action, but the real wonder is that Adam seemingly without hesitation succumbed to Eve's invitation to share her disobedience. Moses employs 5 3/4 (Gen. 3:1-6a) verses to describe the deception and disobedience of Eve, but only a part of one sentence to record Adam's fall (Gen. 3:6b). Why? While I am not as dogmatic on this possibility as I once was, two words of Moses could give us the answer: "with her" (verse 6):

When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eye, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate (Genesis 3:6).

Is it possible that Eve was never alone with the serpent? Could it be that Moses, by these two words, ‘with her,’ is informing us that Adam was present throughout the entire event, but never opened his mouth? If he were there, listening to every word and assenting by his silence, then it is little wonder that he simply took the fruit and ate it when it was offered by Eve.

It is something analogous to my wife and I sitting in the family room. When the doorbell rings, my wife gets up to answer it while I keep on watching my favorite TV program. I can overhear my wife letting in a vacuum cleaner salesman and listening with increasing interest to his sales pitch. I do not want to stop watching my program, so I let the conversation continue, even to my wife signing a contract. If she were then to come into the room and say to me, “Here, you have to sign this, too,” it will come as no shock if I sign it without protest. By default I have allowed my wife to make a decision and I have chosen to go along with it.

If Adam were not present throughout the entire dialogue between the serpent and his wife, one can still conceive of how it may have happened. Eve independently could have eaten the fruit and then hastened to tell her husband of her experience. I can well imagine that Adam would want to know two things. First, he would want to know if she felt any better—that is, did the fruit have any beneficial effect on her. Secondly, he would want to know if it had any detrimental effect. After all, God had said that they would die that very day. Had she found the fruit pleasurable and as yet sensed no harmful effect, Adam would surely be inclined to follow his wife’s example. What a tragic error!

Verses 7 and 8 are particularly informative, because they instruct us that sin has its consequences as well as its punishment. God has not yet prescribed any punishment for the sins of Adam and Eve, and yet the consequences are inseparably coupled with the crime. The consequences of sin mentioned here are shame and separation.

The nakedness which Adam and Eve shared without guilt was now a source of shame. Sweet innocence was lost forever. Remember, there was no man in the garden but the two of them. But they were ashamed to face each other without clothing. Not only could they not face each other as they had before, but they dreaded facing God. When He came to have sweet fellowship with them, they hid themselves in fear.

God had said that they would die in the day that they ate the forbidden fruit. Some have puzzled over this promise of judgment. While the process of physical death began on that fateful day, they did not die physically. Let us recall that spiritual death is separation from God:

And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power (II Thessalonians 1:9).

Isn’t it amazing that the spiritual death of Adam and Eve occurred immediately—that is, there was now a separation from God. And this separation was not one imposed by God; it was initiated by men.

I must digress to say that the spiritual death experienced by Adam and his wife is the same as that of today. It is the alienation of man from God. And it is that which man himself chooses. It is his preference. Hell is God’s giving men both what they want and what they deserve (cf. Revelation 16:5-6).

(Adapted from URL: <https://bible.org/seriespage/4-fall-man-genesis-31-24>)

Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

1. Real trouble begins when Christians dwell on what God forbids and forget what God provides (Gen. 3:1)
2. Appreciate that God’s love limits our freedom for our protection (vss. 2-3)
3. When tempted, remind yourself of God’s Word, believe it, and walk away from sin (vss. 4-5)
4. No one can walk by sight and by faith at the same time. Choose faith (vs. 6)
5. Sin produces shame and guilt which destroy the intimacy God desires with His people (vss. 7-10)
6. Honest confession is the first step to reconciliation, not the last resort (vss. 11-13)