

In the beginning, in the opening pages of the bible, we find God creating all sorts of trees. They are good for food and pleasing to the eye, and God wants them to be enjoyed. God creates this garden and places people in the middle of it because God wants these people to enjoy it. The word God uses for this is "good". It's all good from God's perspective.

But for it truly to be good, it can't be forced upon these first people. That wouldn't be good. It had to be their choice. And so there is a tree in the middle of the garden called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil... the idea is that there is some other way for these people to live, outside of how God designed things. And if they eat the fruit of this particular tree, they will see what the other way is like, a way separated from the life of God.

And so we have a man and a woman in a garden eating a piece of fruit. The text puts it like this: "When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye...she took some and ate it." We are told that the fruit engages her senses: she sees, she notices, she appreciates, she takes, she eats. Her sight, her touch, her senses of smell and taste are all involved. Our senses are incredibly strong. Maybe it's her perfume or the feel of the fabric or how these have a particular shape and form or what it feels like to open a package of those. We are sensory creatures.

The problem for Adam and Eve isn't the food. The food is good. This is what Eve notices about it, that it's "good for food." It's created by God for the enjoyment of people. The same goes for most of the things and people we lust for or desire. In most cases, there is nothing wrong with them inherently – her body, that product, this food. The problem for Adam and Eve is what the fruit has come to represent. Rebellion against God. Rejection of the good, the true and the beautiful. Another way. The appeal to Eve's senses come with a promise that the fruit will deliver something it can't – specifically a better reality than the one God has made. The problem isn't the fruit, it is what is promised through the fruit – that she won't die if she eats it. The problem is that she is told "when you eat of it..." and then she's told things that aren't true. Promises are made to her that the temptations can't come through on. It's a lie. Sin promises what it can't deliver.

**Romans 1v18-20:** God's wrath is expressed for good reason since his power and divine nature are clearly revealed through the world he has made, and yet he is rejected by all people. The entire natural world bears witness to God through its beauty, complexity, design, and usefulness. without excuse. No one should complain that God has left insufficient evidence of his existence and character; the fault is with those who reject the evidence.\*

\*From the ESV study Bible

**Genesis 3v15:** The first messianic prophecy. This is the first occurrence in the bible of a prophecy of the coming of Jesus. The picture is that through a man, the serpent that was instrumental in the downfall of man will itself be crushed by the seed of the woman – Jesus. When Jesus returns, the sting of death itself will be drawn and the last enemy defeated. (1 Corinthians 15)\*

Genesis Chapter 3, verses 1 - 24 & Romans Chapter 1 verses 18-20

## Study 2: Man's Fall from Grace

"You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honour and power. For you created everything, and it is for your pleasure that they exist and were created."  
– Revelations 4:11

So we have jumped ahead a bit to chapter 3. In between God has made Eve to keep Adam company and they are living in marital bliss (or the ancient equivalent!). But we move on now to one of the most defining points in human history – the "fall" of man.

We hope in this study to not simply just look the story of Adam and Eve and the devil, but to the nature of sin itself. The bible shows that all sin is detestable to God, but in order to understand this, we need to try and engage with what is at the root of sin or we will forever see it as "man didn't do what he was told and God got angry" – although that is what is happening on the surface of it.

Only from a proper biblical understanding of what sin is will we begin to not only see the seriousness of it, but more importantly, the NEED for grace...

### Prayer

"How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up, you are still with me! Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life."

– Psalm 139:17, 18, 23 + 24

This study could be quite heavy in places, so pray the verse above so that your focus may be on God alone...

### Preparation for the study

Before you start your study as a group, try 2 things:

First, write a small statement as to how you would describe sin to someone or how you think of it. Secondly, quickly write down your own version of what you know "the fall" story in Genesis 3 to be. Now, read the account as told in Genesis 3 and play "spot the difference".

Are there any? Did you write apple? Did you assume Adam wasn't there? This might seem random, but we will come back to it later...

# Study 2: Man's Fall from Grace

## The Fall: Genesis Chapter 3 verses 1 - 6

- Look at the differences in your "fall" account. This is essentially what the devil does here with Adam and Eve; he takes something true or known about God and twists it subtly. Look at Genesis 2:16+17.
  - What influences Eve here? What words does the passage use about how she is tempted? What engages her? From these 6 verses alone, how would you describe sin?
    - ◉ Do you see how this applies in your life to the things that you struggle with?
    - ◉ How do you decide what is sin in your own life? Do you have certain rules or measurements you assess things by?

## The Effects: Genesis Chapter 3 verses 7 - 13

- What are the first effects of the fall/the introduction of sin?
  - What does this reveal about how Adam and Eve's view of their identity/standing before God has changed?
  - How does their relationship with God change?
  - How does their relationship with each other change?
    - ◉ Suddenly they know shame. It is no longer comfortable for them to be exposed and vulnerable as God created them to be. They feel incomplete, not at ease with the way they were created to be.
    - ◉ Can you relate to this in your own life with who God has made you?
    - ◉ How does your surrounding culture make you want to hide the person God wants you to be?

# Study 2: Man's Fall from Grace

## The Verdict I: Genesis Chapter 3 verses 14 - 24

- What are the repercussions of their actions on their relationship with God, each other and the creation they live in?
  - What elements of God's provision and care do you see here?
  - Why didn't God just let them off?
    - ◉ How do you see, if at all, these consequences most in today's world?

## The Verdict II: Romans Chapter 1 verses 18 - 20

- So, from these verses, how would you define what sin is?
  - Why does God despise sin so much?
  - What does it do?
    - ◉ Do you have a better understanding of why grace is needed?

"Our first problem is that our attitude towards sin is more self-centred than God-centred. We are more concerned about our own "victory" over sin than we are about the fact that our sins grieve the heart of God. We cannot tolerate failure in our struggle with sin chiefly because we are success orientated, not because we know it is offensive to God.  
W.S. Plummer said, "We never see sin aright until we see it as against God...All sin is against God in this sense: that it is His law that is broken, His authority that is despised...Pharaoh and Balaam, Saul and Judas each said, "I have sinned against heaven and before thee; and David said "Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned".  
- Jerry Bridges, "The Pursuit of Holiness"