



# THE POWER OF A DECISION

## INTO THE WORD

### LESSON 3

- WHAT YOU WILL LEARN IN THIS LESSON:
  - God's character and Satan's tactics
  - Creation of Adam and Eve
  - Fall of man and how sin and death entered the world
- BIBLICAL THEMES:
  - God gives men and women free will and the responsibility to choose
  - Often God's judgment is followed by a promise
  - Sin separates us from God
- SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES:
  - Creation of Adam and Eve (Genesis 1:27-28)
  - Fall of Man (Genesis 3:1-21)
  - The First Promise of the Redeemer (Genesis 3:15, Isaiah 9:6, John 15:13)
- FOR FURTHER STUDY:
  1. God has given every person a free \_\_\_\_\_ .
  2. The Devil focuses on the negative; God dwells on the \_\_\_\_\_ .
  3. How did Jesus combat Satan during His time of fasting in the wilderness?  
(Matthew 4:4-11)
  4. What separated Adam and Eve from God?
  5. What brought death into the world?
  6. In your own words, what was God's promise to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:15?

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#### Introduction:

One of the most powerful things we own is our ability to decide, to choose, and to exercise our free will. Although there may be occasions when we feel as though we do not have a choice, if we are honest with ourselves, in most instances, we do. The decisions we make, and consequently the actions we take define who we are. Character is made manifest through action. According to scripture, we are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) and as such, the power to choose to obey or disobey, to follow good or evil is a gift from God. He affords us the opportunity to learn what is good and righteous, and to then make a conscious decision to follow after these things; this is a divine privilege and a tremendous responsibility.

In this lesson, we will explore the creation of Man and will witness just how powerful one simple decision can be, for good or otherwise. One action based on one decision can impact the rest of our lives. The consequences of our decisions will leave a legacy. If we consciously choose to follow after the things of God, that legacy will be a blessing in the lives of many.

Consider the following scripture:

- Revelation 22:17 (NLT)  
<sup>17</sup>The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." Let anyone who hears this say, "Come." Let anyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who desires drink freely from the water of life.

Salvation is freely given and available for all. However, we must choose to accept and believe that God exists and to follow His plan of salvation for our lives. We must exercise our free will and consciously choose God's ways over our own. In time, with God's help, we will find our ways becoming more like God's ways as he transforms us into His image.

## Into the Word:

### 1. Man is Given Responsibility and Free Will

In Genesis Chapter 2, we read that God planted a garden. Mankind is given a perfect environment, a paradise in which to live, dress and keep. Mankind is given dominion over this beautiful place.

- Let's take a closer look at how God creates man and the responsibility He affords to Adam. Adam was made in "His image", in the image of God.
  - Genesis 1:27-28 (NLT)  
<sup>27</sup> So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. <sup>28</sup> Then God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground."
- In the following scripture, God gives Adam specific instructions:
  - Genesis 2:8-9; 16-17 (NLT)  
<sup>8</sup> Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he placed the man he had made. <sup>9</sup> The LORD God made all sorts of trees grow up from the ground—trees that were beautiful and that produced delicious fruit. In the middle of the garden he placed the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.  
<sup>16</sup> But the LORD God warned him, "You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden—<sup>17</sup> except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die."
- Note how plentiful the garden is, full of lush fruit and vegetation. Adam is given great freedom and many "delicious" fruits to enjoy. However, God gives Adam one commandment: "...you can eat of any tree but..." (Genesis 2:17). Some have wondered why God placed the forbidden tree in the garden at all. Perhaps the question overlooks God's purpose of creating man. God did not create a puppet or robot; He created us with the power of choice, or free will.
- Would it be possible for God to have joyful fellowship with a being who had no choice? One of the major differences between mankind and the animal kingdom is the power of choice; the opportunity consciously to choose good or evil.

God felt that it was not good for Adam to be alone, so He gave him a helper suitable to him. In the creation of Eve, in addition to the responsibility of caring for this beautiful garden, Adam is also given a complementary relationship and the joy of an intimate relationship with another human being. Read the following scripture:



○ Genesis 3:1-21 (NKJV)

<sup>1</sup> 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?'"<sup>2</sup> And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; <sup>3</sup> 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.'"<sup>4</sup> Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. <sup>5</sup> 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."

<sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where *are* you?" <sup>10</sup> So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself." <sup>11</sup> 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?" <sup>12</sup> Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate." <sup>13</sup> And the LORD God said to the woman, "What *is* this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

<sup>14</sup> So the LORD God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, You *are* cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust all the days of your life. <sup>15</sup> And I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."

<sup>16</sup> To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire *shall be* for your husband, And he shall rule over you."

<sup>17</sup> Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed *is* the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat *of* it All the days of your life. <sup>18</sup> Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. <sup>19</sup> In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you *are*, And to dust you shall return."

<sup>20</sup> And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. <sup>21</sup> Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.

Note how Eve must have been in the vicinity of the forbidden tree in order to have been tempted. This is a good lesson for us to learn. It is wise to stay away from places and situations that may present a temptation for us. Often when we let our guard down in one area, in time we will continue this process, and eventually find ourselves in a place where we never intended to go.

Consider this experiment from Malcolm Gladwell's best-seller, The Tipping Point:  
Two cars left in a similarly bad neighborhood – One pristine, clean and new was untouched after a week. Same car, similar neighborhood, but with one window broken after 7 days was stripped of all valuable parts and destroyed.

When we are careful to maintain and look after things, we send the message that this thing is valuable to us. When we no longer act with such care, it is no longer apparent how much we care about this possession. In turn, others are much less likely to treat this possession with care as it appears as if it has no value. Our salvation is a thing of great value. The way we treat it should reflect that value. Do not place yourself in a position which may compromise the value of your salvation.

- Romans 13:14 (NLT)  
<sup>14</sup> Instead, clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And don't let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires.
- Ephesians 4:27 (NLT)  
<sup>27</sup> for anger gives a foothold to the devil.
- 1 John 2:16 (NLT)  
<sup>16</sup> For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world.

Let's continue with the story in Genesis:

Satan comes to the tree as a cunning serpent to speak to Eve and tempt her (Genesis 3:1)

- Note the cunning tactics of the devil. Satan casts doubt by saying: "Has God indeed said?" Additionally, he focuses on the negative, "You shall not..." In contrast, God is positive "you may freely eat" (Genesis 2:17).



## Scripture Reading Response and Analysis

- When Eve drew close to sin, she was tempted. What precautions can we take to avoid committing sin? What are some forbidden fruits in your life?
  
- God encourages Adam to eat from all of the trees in the garden except one. Where does the devil place his focus? What can we learn from this?
  
- Why does God place the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the middle of the garden?

### *God's Character and Satan's Tactics*

- Note how Eve's lack of knowledge of God's Word (Genesis 3:2-3) contributes to her downfall. Read the scripture carefully. Eve adds to the Word of God. The Word of God is our sword, and in order to use it properly against Satan, we must know what the word of God says; we must wield our sword with precision and accuracy. Eve could have defeated Satan as Jesus did in the wilderness, by refuting Satan's lies with the truth of the Word of God: "It is written..." (Matthew 4:1-11).
- Note how Satan attacks God's motives (Genesis 3:4-5) and tries to project his punitive characteristics of fear and insecurity onto God. He accuses God of lying, "Ye shall not die..." Satan implies that when you walk in obedience to God's laws, that you're missing out on something and God wants to keep you in ignorance and bondage ("You shall be as gods..."). In reality it is a life of sin that keeps us in bondage. Although it may have its pleasure for a season, ultimately, the wages of sin is death.



## Scripture Reading Response and Analysis

- Satan tried to impose his character onto God. Explain some examples of this in Genesis 3. How does this aspect of the Devil manifest today?

Author Nahum M. Sarna writes:

The sin of Adam and Eve, thus has implications far beyond the immediate context of the narrative. The conversation between the serpent and the woman shows that the most seductive attraction that the creature could offer was the potentiality of the forbidden fruit to make humans like God.

"...as soon as you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God..."

Now the imitation of God is indeed a biblical ideal. Man was fashioned in the divine image and "to walk in God's ways" is a recurring admonition of the biblical writings. But true godliness is an expression of character, an attempt to imitate in human relationships those ethical attributes the Scriptures associate with God. The deceptive nature of the serpent's appeal lay in its interpretation of godliness which it equated with defiance of God's will, with power, rather than with strength of character" (Understanding Genesis, page 27, 1966).

- In contrast to the ways of Satan, God's ways are positive. Adam and Eve already knew good. In the garden of Eden, they possessed everything they needed for a holy and glorious existence. They had "joy unspeakable" (1 Peter 1:8).

Now let's consider also consider Adam's disobedience in this episode. According to 1 Timothy 2:14 we learn that Adam, unlike Eve who was completely deceived, was not deceived by Satan. He therefore took and ate of the fruit in full knowledge of what he was doing. Therefore, although we see Eve's guilt in placing herself in a place of temptation, and not fully knowing the word of God, it is Adam who is given responsibility by God for the sin that is committed in the garden (Romans 5:12-19)

Eve was deceived, Adam was not, but they both acted out of human reason and not faith.

### 3. Often God's Judgment is Followed by a Promise

When Adam and Eve fell in the garden, they died a spiritual death. In turn that spiritual death passed to all men: (1 Corinthians 15:21-22) and immediately they experience something that was hitherto unknown: shame.

Read this passage again:

- Genesis 3:9-11 (NKJV)

<sup>9</sup> Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where *are* you?"

<sup>10</sup> So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself." <sup>11</sup> 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?"

God comes walking into the garden, and looks for Adam and Eve. They hide from his presence in shame. Their relationship with God is broken. Sin separates us from God and causes us to hide from his presence, feeling dirty and unworthy in his sight. The impulse to run from God after we break His laws is also part of sin's power over us.

- Isaiah 59:2 (NLT)

<sup>2</sup> It's your sins that have cut you off from God. Because of your sins, he has turned away and will not listen anymore.

- Romans 6:17-19 (NLT)

<sup>17</sup> Thank God! Once you were slaves of sin, but now you wholeheartedly obey this teaching we have given you. <sup>18</sup> Now you are free from your slavery to sin, and you have become slaves to righteous living. <sup>19</sup> Because of the weakness of your human nature, I am using the illustration of slavery to help you understand all this. Previously, you let yourselves be slaves to impurity and lawlessness, which led ever deeper into sin. Now you must give yourselves to be slaves to righteous living so that you will become holy.

The right thing to do is to run into God's presence seeking forgiveness. He will never turn us away when we come to Him with genuine repentance.

Another natural consequence of sin, it to refuse accountability for our actions and want to shift the blame onto others; we play the "Blame Game". Both Adam and Eve are guilty of this. (Genesis 3:12-13). Eve blames the serpent, and Adam blames Eve; neither admit their own fault. Again, the natural impulse of sin causes us to refuse to face our own guilt. However, when we admit fault, we are on the road to forgiveness and freedom from sin.

Adam and Eve were given dominion over the earth, yet when they sinned they became servants of sin (and the Devil). This was the result of their decision to disobey God's command to not eat of the fruit of the forbidden tree.

Consequently they received judgments for their sins.

1. Curse on the Devil (Genesis 3:14-15)
2. The Curse on the Woman (Genesis 3:16)
3. The Curse on the Land (Genesis 3:17)
4. The Curse on the Man (Genesis 3:19)

Nahum Sara comments in his book, Understanding Genesis:

Man is a free moral agent and this freedom magnifies immeasurably his responsibility for his actions. Notice how each of the participants in the sin was individually punished. Freedom and responsibility are burdens so great for man to bear that he is in vital need of discipline. Significantly, the very first divine command to Adam pertains to the curbing of the appetite. But man is free to disregard the moral law, should he wish to, though he must be prepared to suffer the consequences. In short, we are being told by the Garden of Eden story that evil is a product of human behavior, not a principle inherent in the cosmos. Man's disobedience is the cause of the human predicament. Human freedom can be at one and the same time an omen of disaster and a challenge and opportunity (27-28).

- God's character is, however, driven by mercy. While he must judge our sin, He is also moved with compassion by our frailty. With each judgment that God decrees in the garden, he also offers a promise. God will not leave us without a means of escape and rescue.
- The promises of God:
  1. The First Promise of the Redeemer (Genesis 3:15, Isaiah 9:6, John 15:13)
  2. First Blood Shed (Genesis 3:21, Revelation 13:8, Hebrews 9:22)
  3. Man Driven from the Garden (Gen 3:22-24)

We see the prophecy of the Messiah and the victory of salvation promised in the first book of the Bible. Although man is now a fallen creation, the creator Himself has already created a plan of redemption. We also see the principle of innocent blood covering the sins of the guilty established here in Genesis. God himself sheds the blood of an innocent animal in order to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve with the animal skin. Later in the Bible, we will see God shedding His own innocent blood in order to cover the transgressions of all mankind. God also banishes Adam and Eve from the garden, not wanting them to eat from the tree of life and live eternally in their fallen state. He guards the garden with angelic protection and so the journey to salvation begins, until one day man will live in perfect relationship with God once more.



## Scripture Reading Response and Analysis

- What did God use to cover Adam and Eve's nakedness (Genesis 3:21)? Explain why this is significant here and throughout the entire Bible.
- Did Adam choose to sin or was he deceived?
- After Adam and Eve sinned, God drove them out of the garden and placed an angel with a flaming sword to guard the tree of life. Does this act display God's judgment or mercy? Why?
- In what ways did Adam and Eve die?
- Adam and Eve were given dominion over the earth. When they sinned, they became servants of sin (and the Devil). How does this act affect the world?