

GENESIS 3:1-13 | THE FALL

This guide is designed to be used for community group discussions, but can easily be adapted for personal reflection.

ENGAGE (15-20 MINUTES)

Real Biblical community involves people “doing life together.” As much as we can, we want to create an atmosphere where people get to know one another, and feel comfortable sharing the ups, downs, and in-betweens of life. So take some time for people to get acquainted. A possible icebreaker question: Share a high and a low from the previous week. Or, rate your week 1-10. Or, make up one of your own.

REFLECTION AND STUDY (30-35 MINUTES)

It is hard to find a chapter in the Bible with more relevance than Genesis 3. Here we find the story of how sin entered the world and disordered everything. It offers an explanation of why the world is the way it is. And, as Martyn-Lloyd Jones says, “In addition to being history, it is an actual account of what everyone of us does.”

Read Genesis 3:1-13

- 1.) What was the serpent’s strategy?
- 2.) What did the serpent promise would happen if Eve ate from the tree? Was he right (see v. 15, 22)?
- 3.) What do you think was the essence of their sin?
- 4.) How do Adam and Eve react to being found out?

Read the Article on the next page.

- 5.) Are there any areas in your life where you are tempted to believe that following God’s ways will make you less happy than you would be by disobeying God?
- 6.) What are some practical ways to combat sin? How can we as a community help each other?
- 7.) How does this text point you to Jesus?

PRAYER (15 MINUTES)

Break into men and women for prayer. Share prayer requests and pray for one another. Pray especially for our battle against sin and temptation. Think about a specific area where you are having trouble resisting sin. Ask for prayer for this.

THE FALL

What Sin Is

In Genesis 2 God gave Adam and Eve free run of the world he had created. They were given the grace of enjoying God's creation and their needs were provided for (including being able to eat from the trees in the garden, including the Tree of Life). There was just one prohibition – they were commanded not to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. This was not a magic tree, but it was special in that God set it apart. God asks Adam and Eve to trust him and obey, simply because he is God.

In the temptation we learn the true nature of sin – *sin is desiring to be your own God*. The serpent tempts Eve by smuggling in a mistrust of God's Word ("did God really say?"). Then he calls God a liar ("you will not surely die"). And lastly, the serpent plants the idea that God does not have their best interests in mind ("for he knows that you will be like God").

As soon as we start to put ourselves in the place of weighing God's Word (is this command worth obeying?) then we are on our way to sin. And the big lie behind all of our sin is believing that disobeying God's commands will be better for us than obeying them. We see God as a rival rather than wanting to bless us.

How Sin Works

Verse 6 describes the actual act of rebellion against God. Every part of Eve is involved: body (she saw the tree was good for food and pleasing), mind (desirable to make one wise), and will (she took and ate). Sin loves company and she immediately gives the fruit to Adam, and he also eats. We don't like to be wrong on our own, so we often take others with us into sin.

In some ways the serpent was right – they don't die (at least not immediately). Their death was spiritual (later we learn that they will die physically as well). Sin affects the way they see themselves (the shame of their nakedness); it affects their relationship with one another (Adam blames Eve for his sin); and it affects their relationship with God (they run and hide from him in fear).

The serpent also was right in saying they would gain knowledge. But God didn't want to deny them knowledge of good and evil, he just wanted them to come by it the right way. You can learn about evil either by resisting it, or by committing it. Adolf Hitler and Dietrich Bonhoeffer both knew about evil, but they came by that knowledge in vastly different ways. To put it another way, there are two ways to know about the bubonic plague. You can study it and learn how to treat it, or you can catch it and die. Adam and Eve experience the latter.

What Can Be Done

Not much, by us. But the good news is that *God has done something*. God does not abandon his people to sin. He pursues them. He goes to Adam and Eve in the garden, and

calls out to them, “Where are you?” In the New Testament, Jesus continues this ministry of God seeking man (Luke 19:10). Jesus is the “second Adam” who succeeded where Adam failed. “For as by [Adam’s] disobedience the many were made sinners, so by [Jesus’] obedience the many will be made righteous” (Romans 5:19). And Jesus took the punishment that we all deserved – “by the grace of God he tasted death for everyone” (Hebrews 2:19).

God is still seeking sinful men and women. The gospel message is that we can be forgiven of our sins and restored in our relationship with God, if we would stop running and hiding, and embrace God’s remedy for sin – the work of Jesus Christ.