

Connection Group Discussion Questions

For the week of October 15, 2017

Genesis 3

These questions are to be used as a spring board for discussion.

Answers may or may not be found in the sermons.

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden'?" ²The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; ³but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" ⁴But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; ⁵for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." ⁶So 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. ⁷Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

⁸They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" ¹⁰He said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." ¹¹He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" ¹²The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." ¹³Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate." ¹⁴The LORD God said to the serpent,

"Because you have done this,
cursed are you among all animals
and among all wild creatures;
upon your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.

¹⁵I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;

he will strike your head,
and you will strike his heel.”

¹⁶ To the woman he said,

“I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing;
in pain you shall bring forth children,
yet your desire shall be for your husband,
and he shall rule over you.”

¹⁷ And to the man he said,

“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife,
and have eaten of the tree
about which I commanded you,

‘You shall not eat of it,’

cursed is the ground because of you;

in toil 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

until you return to the ground,

for out of it you were taken;

you are dust,

and to dust you shall return.”

²⁰ The man named his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all living. ²¹ And the LORD God made garments of skins for the man and for his wife, and clothed them.

²² Then the LORD God said, “See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever” — ²³ therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till 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 sword flaming and turning to guard the way to the tree of life.

New Living Translation (NLT)

The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the woman, “Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?”

² “Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,” the woman replied.

³ “It’s only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, ‘You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.’”

⁴ “You won’t die!” the serpent replied to the woman. ⁵ “God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil.”

⁶ The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. ⁷ At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.

⁸ When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the LORD God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the LORD God among the trees. ⁹ Then the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”

¹⁰ He replied, “I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked.”

¹¹ “Who told you that you were naked?” the LORD God asked. “Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?”

¹² The man replied, “It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it.”

¹³ Then the LORD God asked the woman, “What have you done?”

“The serpent deceived me,” she replied. “That’s why I ate it.”

¹⁴ Then the LORD God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this, you are cursed
more than all animals, domestic and wild.
You will crawl on your belly,
groveling in the dust as long as you live.

¹⁵ And I will cause hostility between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring.
He will strike your head,
and you will strike his heel.”

¹⁶ Then he said to the woman,

“I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy,
and in pain you will give birth.

*And you will desire to control your husband,
but he will rule over you.”*

¹⁷ *And to the man he said,*

*“Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree
whose fruit I commanded you not to eat,
the ground is cursed because of you.*

All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it.

¹⁸ *It will grow thorns and thistles for you,
though you will eat of its grains.*

¹⁹ *By the sweat of your brow
will you have food to eat
until you return to the ground
from which you were made.
For you were made from dust,
and to dust you will return.”*

²⁰ *Then the man—Adam—named his wife Eve, because she would be the mother
of all who live. ²¹ And the LORD God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and
his wife.*

²² *Then the LORD God said, “Look, the human beings have become like us, knowing
both good and evil. What if they reach out, take fruit from the tree of life, and eat
it? Then they will live forever!” ²³ So the LORD God banished them from the Garden
of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been
made. ²⁴ After sending them out, the LORD God stationed mighty cherubim to the
east of the Garden of Eden. And he placed a flaming sword that flashed back and
forth to guard the way to the tree of life.*

Connection Questions:

1. Genesis 3 is one of the passages of scripture that has permeated much of culture. People feel acquainted with God, Adam, Eve, and the serpent. Without reading the text, what would you have already known about these characters and their story?

2. Sometimes it's hard to hear a fresh word from a story we think we already know. Try to put aside what you know about Genesis 3, and try to hear it afresh as you read. What do you notice that you might not have noticed before?

3. What structure to life did God give Adam in Genesis 2:15-17 (hint: one per verse)? How is each important and what does each reveal about God's plan for life? How might these help you in your life?

4. Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann notes that verses 1-5 represent the first conversation that God's creation has about God rather than with God. What happens when we talk about people instead of with them?

5. Have you ever felt a fig leaf? Rev. John Holbert points out that they feel like sandpaper—a poor choice for a loincloth. What does this say, he asks, about how we solve problems without God? How does God respond? How does God help us now?

6. Reflect on the relationship between God, Adam and Eve and creation in Genesis 2:4-24 with the same set of relationships in chapter 3. How do these portraits reveal the hopes and struggles in our relationships with God, each other and creation?