

International Conversation Cafe

Old Testament: When Relationships Fall Apart, Genesis 3

Have you ever wondered why we struggle with relationships? When things go wrong, we cover up our guilt and shame and quickly blame another person -- or even God -- for the mess we find ourselves in. This pattern is as old as the beginning of time. The first story about deception, shame, and blame is in the first book of the Bible, Genesis chapter 3. By reading this Scripture we learn something about God and ourselves.

In the first chapter of the Bible, Genesis 1, we see God creating man and woman, whom he named, Adam and Eve. God loved Adam and Eve and he wanted them to love him in return. So he gave them a choice. They could love him or they could turn from him. Adam and Eve chose to turn from God.

The choice took place in a garden. They could eat from any tree in the garden except one in the middle. That tree was forbidden. There in the forbidden tree was a serpent that tempted Eve to eat the forbidden fruit. He tempted her to disobey God by causing her to doubt God's love and goodness.

The Bible tells us that it was Satan who appeared to Adam and Eve in the form of a snake in order to turn them against God. Satan is a spiritual being who still exists today and still deceives people by turning them away from God.

Genesis 3:1

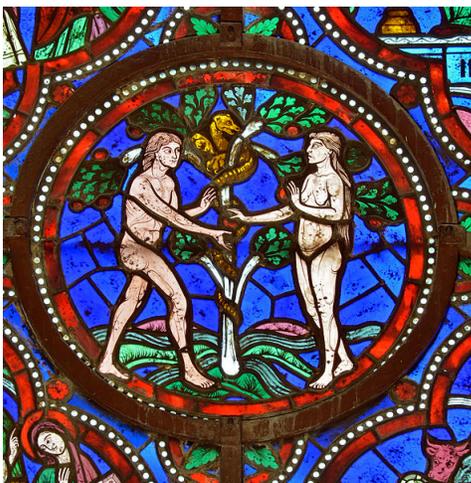
The serpent said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat the fruit of any tree that is in the garden?'"

The woman said to the serpent, "We can eat the fruit of the trees that are in the garden. But God did say, 'You must not eat the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden. Do not even touch it. If you do, you will die.'"

"You can be sure that you won't die," the serpent said to the woman. "God knows that when you eat the fruit of that tree, you will know things you have never known before. You will be able to tell the difference between good and evil. You will be like God."

The woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good to eat. It was also pleasing to look at. And it would make a person wise. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her. And he ate it.

Then both of them knew things they had never known before. They realized they were naked. So they sewed fig leaves together and made clothes for themselves.



Stained glass window. 12th Century. Saint Julien Cathedral. Le Mans, France

*What words would you like defined?
Restate the story in your own words.*

*What questions does this story bring up?
How did the serpent say that caused Eve to doubt God's goodness?*

When Adam and Eve realized how wrong they had been, they were afraid and tried to hide from God. Yet God pursued them because he wanted to restore their relationship.

Then the man and his wife heard the Lord God walking in the garden. It was the coolest time of the day. They hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called out to the man. "Where are you?" he asked. "I heard you in the garden," the man answered. "I was afraid. I was naked, so I hid." The Lord God said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten the fruit of the tree I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "It was the woman you put here with me. She gave me some fruit from the tree. And I ate it." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What have you done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me. That's why I ate the fruit."

*Tell this part of the story in your own words.
Why do you think God went looking for Adam and Eve?
After Adam and Eve turn from God, their relationship begins to fall apart as they blame someone else for their own choice. Is there a connection between their turn from God and their turn from each other?
What things does this passage teach about God?
What things does this passage teach about people?
Does this story change your attitudes about God or people? If so, how?*

The Bible teaches that Satan is still an enemy of God that seeks to influence people. The apostle Peter writes in his first letter, "Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour."

What kind of temptation do you think Satan brings to people today?