

# The First Sin

## SESSION 3

**Genesis 3:1-7,21-24**

**Memory Verse: Genesis 3:15**

**God's creation was marred by humanity's sin against Him.**

Genesis is the book of “beginnings,” and chapter 3 highlights the beginning of sin and humanity's rebellion against the Creator God. This chapter remains applicable today because we all are sinners. This session will reach back to the very beginnings of sin and show us how its roots are grounded in the human desire to be God. We all want to be the captain of our fate, the master of our life. The result is continual rebellion against the God who created us.

As you prepare to teach this lesson, keep in mind this universal tendency to always choose self over God—including your own selfishness and rebellion. Use this lesson to reflect on the cost that God paid by sending Jesus Christ to bring redemption to our sin-ravaged world.



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Imagine preparing for a formal occasion, such as a wedding, a funeral, or a prestigious awards banquet. You pick out your finest attire, put it on, and admire how good it looks on you. As you first arrive at the event, someone bumps you and you spill coffee all over your fine clothes. Imagine your disappointment. Genesis 3 reveals an infinitely greater tragedy. God created the totality of this wondrous universe and observed that it was very good; but when humanity sinned against God, His good creation was marred. (PSG, p. 28)

**In what ways was God's good creation marred by humanity's sin?**



## Understand the Context (Genesis 3:1-24)

Genesis 3 is, perhaps, the most significant chapter in the Bible. Think about this: If the events recorded in this chapter had never taken place, what need would there be for the Bible? The rest of Scripture is the story of the terrible consequences of Adam and Eve's rebellion and God's gracious pursuit of humanity. Everything moving forward in Scripture emphasizes His plan to restore the broken relationship that resulted from the sin that first entered the world in Eden.

In addition, Genesis 3 points like a laser to our need for a Savior. The result of the disobedience in this chapter is summed up by Paul in Romans 5:12: "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, in this way death spread to all people, because all sinned."

This account of humanity's spiritual fall in the garden of Eden is not a myth or legend that can be easily discounted or ignored. It is a historical fact that carries eternal consequences. If this were just a made-up story, the Christian faith is based on fiction and not fact, and the death of Jesus Christ on the cross would certainly not have been necessary.

But the truth of Genesis 3 reverberates throughout Scripture, from beginning in Genesis to end in Revelation. In these sixty-six books of the Bible, we see the ongoing conflict between Satan and God, sin and righteousness. We also see the picture of God pursuing sinful people, pleading with them to return to Him. All of this culminates in the sacrificial death and miraculous resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of

God. And, one day, He will return to judge those who continued in the rebellion against Him that began with Adam and Eve's decision in Eden.

Genesis 3 serves as a bridge between the wonderful creation of God narrated in chapters 1–2 and the dire situation described in the chapters that follow. The catalog of sins to follow in Genesis all have their roots in the disobedience of the first woman and first man in Eden.

There was murder (Cain) and polygamy (Lamech) in chapter 4. In Genesis 6–8, human wickedness led to God's judgment by flood in Noah's day. Even righteous Noah sinned against God in his act of drunkenness in chapter 9. Further examples include the prideful attitude of those gathered in Babel (Gen. 11) and the depravity of residents in Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19).

Of course, the string of sinful choices among human beings isn't limited to Genesis or even the pages of the Bible. We still suffer from the consequences of sin today. But while each of these instances point back to humanity's original sin in the garden, they also remind us that God made a way for our salvation.

**As you read Genesis 3:1-7,21-24, consider what God reveals about Himself concerning human sin. (PSG, p. 29)**



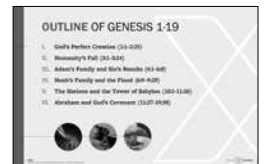
**PREPARE:** Prior to the session, post or display photos of children. On the board, write: *Identify in five to seven words a recent example you observed of a child doing something wrong that required punishment.*

**INTRODUCE:** As the group arrives, direct attention to the photos and the question on the board. Encourage the group to write responses on the board. After several minutes, review the responses and discuss some of them.

**ASK:** **When and why is punishment required for children?  
What is the intended goal of punishment?**

**EMPHASIZE:** Direct attention to Understand the Context on page 29 in the PSG and summarize the main theme of Genesis 3.

**PREPARE:** Display **Pack Item 2** (*Poster: Outline of Genesis 1–19*) on a focal wall. Review the title and theme of the previous sessions and introduce the title and theme for this session.



**READ:** Read aloud the opening paragraph on page 28 of the PSG. Allow a few volunteers to share how they would feel in that situation—or felt if a similar situation actually happened to them.

**ASK:** **In what ways was God’s good creation marred by humanity’s sin?** (PSG, p. 28)

**TRANSITION:** *As you study the verses in this session, consider what God reveals about Himself concerning human sin.*

NOTES

## Group Activity Option

### Music

Using hymnals, or printed lyrics, review the verses (especially verse 2) of “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name” (*Baptist Hymnal 2008*, No. 314) or Chris Tomlin’s song “Good, Good Father.” Lead the group to review the lyrics of the song and discuss how God extends His grace toward sinners through Jesus Christ. Share that today’s verses will explain where sin started and why we need to experience His grace.

# Tempted (Genesis 3:1-5)

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**1** Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You can’t eat from any tree in the garden?’” **2** The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit from the trees in the garden. **3** But about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, God said, ‘You must not eat it or touch it, or you will die.’” **4** “No! You will certainly not die,” the serpent said to the woman. **5** “In fact, God knows that when you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

**(v. 1) Serpent:** This is the Hebrew word generally used for a snake. Moses pointed out that the **serpent** was a creation of God, meaning that it was part of the creation that He initially declared good. Satan conscripted a part of God’s creation to carry out his warfare against the Creator.

Satan was personally present in the garden in the snake. Other biblical references point to Satan and his demonic cohorts inhabiting animals (see Mark 5:11-12).

**(v. 1) Cunning:** The description is not of the snake, but rather of Satan, who spoke through the snake. The word rendered **cunning** here means “crafty” and immediately calls for great caution. Scripture calls Satan a deceiver (Rev. 12:9) and the father of lies (John 8:44). He used deception in the garden of Eden and he continues to use it to his advantage today.

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## Key Concept

### Questioning God

The first words out of the serpent’s mouth (and the first question asked in the Bible) cast doubt on the truthfulness of God. Satan dishonestly implied that God had restricted every tree in the garden. Satan knows that if he can plant a seed of doubt about God’s goodness or the validity of His words, he has a much better chance of leading individuals into sin.

Of course, that is not what God said. He had said Adam and Eve could eat freely of all the trees but one. God was expressing great care and generosity. Satan, on the other hand, was picturing God in a negative light, suggesting He was harsh and restrictive.

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**(v. 3) Touch it:** Like Satan, Eve referred to “God” and not the “LORD God.” Since the name “LORD” emphasized His covenant relationship with His people, some biblical scholars have suggested that addressing Him

only as “God” may have reflected a step backward relationship with the Creator. However, the text is not clear on this point.

It is clear, though, that Eve added words to God’s directive that were not a part of the original injunction: **touch it**. In some ways, this makes the command of God even more foreboding.

**(v. 4) Certainly not:** Satan, who is often pictured as accusing God’s people (Job 1:6; Rev. 12:10), accused God of not being truthful. Although Adam and Eve didn’t die immediately when they disobeyed God, the sentence of physical death fell on them. Not only that, but they would soon be banished from the garden in which they had enjoyed God’s presence. This banishment symbolized the spiritual death that separates human beings from God.

**(v. 5) Eyes will be opened:** As a master of half-truths, Satan meant something totally different by this statement than Eve initially understood. She desired something that would elevate her to a position of equality with God and a knowledge of what He knows. But Satan knew that the eyes of Eve and Adam would be opened to their nakedness, their guilt, and their sinfulness. They would immediately experience the devastating realization of their disobedience and its consequences.

**(v. 5) Good and evil:** Satan’s temptation was designed to divert Eve’s focus from the goodness of God. Once Eve started questioning God’s goodness, disobedience was just an action away. Through their disobedience, Satan promised they would be like God in knowing good and evil. This certainly proved true as they became aware of the innocence and righteousness they had lost.

# EXPLORE Genesis 3:1-5



**APPLICATION POINT:** Satan is crafty and is actively looking for ways to deceive.

**GUIDE:** Review **Pack Item 7** (*Handout: Genesis Time Line*) to set the context for these verses. Supplement the discussion using **Pack Item 8** (*Handout: Background of Genesis*).

**READ:** **Invite a volunteer to read aloud Genesis 3:1-5**, as the group listens for the temptation the serpent presented.

**LIST:** Lead the group to identify the three things the serpent said and write them on the board. (See verses 1, 4, and 5.) Lead the group to compare the serpent’s question in Genesis 3:1 with what God actually said in Genesis 2:16-17. Talk about the motivations behind Satan’s questions and the nature of Eve’s response.

**IDENTIFY:** Lead the group to review the information for Genesis 3:2-3 on pages 31-32 of the PSG. Highlight the pull quote: *We open ourselves up to Satan’s ploys when we are unclear about or begin to stray away from God’s Word.* (PSG, p. 32)

**ASK:** **How are Satan’s tactics today similar to his tactics in Eden?** (PSG, p. 33) Point out that he hasn’t really changed because he still leads people to doubt God’s words and to seek their own pleasure.

**TRANSITION:** *As Eve began thinking about the serpent’s argument, she also began to look at the fruit differently.*



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## Group Activity Option

### Object Lesson: Smart Phone

Encourage adults to hold up their smart phones. Explain that smart phones are incredible pieces of technology that provide a lot of good things in our lives: making phone calls, tracking calendars, researching topics, sharing photos, and even reading the Bible. *But our smart phones also hold the potential for leading us into a variety of temptations that can become sin in our lives.* Share that in some ways, our smart phones are like the fruit in today’s story. Note that Satan often twists good things to lead people toward sin.

## Fallen (Genesis 3:6-7)

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**6** The woman saw that the tree was good for food and delightful to look at, and that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. **7** Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

**(v. 6) Saw:** This was not a passing glance. The Hebrew word means to inspect, to view with the intent to understand or discern. Eve evaluated the fruit of the tree, and her conclusion was that it was **good, delightful, and desirable**. She also evaluated the words of the serpent and weighed them against God's directive.

While Eve was deceived by the words of the serpent, Adam was not (see 1 Tim. 2:14). Instead, he willfully disobeyed God and doubted God's trustworthiness. Some Bible scholars see an element of pride in the fall of Eve and Adam. There was the desire to be more than they were created to be. They wanted to be equal with God.

**(v. 6) Good . . . delightful:** The fruit was appealing, and Satan's words made it even more so. The irony here is that the word **good** also carries the meaning of morally right. In pursuing that which appeared right, Adam and Eve took a path that was morally wrong.

Eve was created in innocence. Unlike humanity today, her temptation did not come from within. Instead, it came from an outside source, the serpent. But once the seeds of doubt were sown toward God and the desire for the forbidden took root in her heart, yielding to temptation became easy. As noted, Adam willfully followed suit.

**(v. 6) Desirable:** The same Hebrew word is used to describe coveting in the Ten Commandments. It is a longing for something which should be forbidden. Ironically, the word also means desiring something that is costly. Adam and Eve failed to consider the ultimate price they would pay when they acted on their desire for the forbidden fruit.

**(v. 7) Knew they were naked:** Before choosing to disobey God, Adam and Eve knew complete innocence. There was no awareness of their nakedness. However, when they violated God's directive concerning the forbidden fruit, they suddenly discovered how vulnerable they were.

Their act of self-centeredness and their desire to be like God carried an immediate impact on their relationship with Him and with each other. The trust

and security they had shared was replaced by fear and selfishness. Of course, their rebellion also damaged their relationship with the rest of His creation. The world created in wonder and perfection now became a hostile place.

In their vulnerability, Adam and Eve sought a way to protect themselves from the world around them. They did this, symbolically, by covering their nakedness.

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### Key Doctrine

#### Man

In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. (See Romans 1:19-23; 5:19.)

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**(v. 7) Coverings:** The same Hebrew word for **made** flows throughout these first chapters of Genesis. God made man and woman in His own image (1:26). All that He had made (1:31) was very good. God rested from all that he had made (2:2). He made trees to grow in the garden (2:9). God made a corresponding helper for Adam (2:18; 2:22).

After Adam and Eve discovered the shame of their nakedness, they, too, "made" something: **coverings** for themselves out of fig-leaves. However, their creations were less than perfect. Their coverings were a poor defense against the mess they had made. These garments could never cover their sin and shame and were certainly inadequate in standing before God. Because of that, Adam and Eve sought further protection by hiding in the trees.

## EXPLORE Genesis 3:6-7



**APPLICATION POINT:** The promises that accompany temptation lead to brokenness.

**READ:** Call for a volunteer to read aloud **Genesis 3:6-7**, directing the group to listen for how the woman and the man both fell in sin.

**ASK:** How can we be led into sin by the appeal of something or someone?

**GUIDE:** Place the group into two smaller teams. (*Note: For larger groups, you can place adults in an even number of teams and more than one team can work on the same assignment.*) Instruct the first team to use the PSG (p. 33) to review Genesis 3:6 and determine what led to the fall. Instruct the second group to use the PSG (p. 34) to review Genesis 3:7 to identify the immediate impact of the fall. After a few minutes, allow the teams to report on their discoveries.

**DISCUSS:** What is the appeal of something that promises to make a person wise? (PSG, p. 34)

**TRANSITION:** *The man and the woman were only beginning to recognize the depth and repercussions of their sin.*

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### Group Activity Option

#### Bible Skill

Encourage the group to work in pairs to complete the Bible Skill activity on page 33 of the PSG: Create a comparison chart to study Genesis 3:1-7. In 1 John 2:16, the Apostle John lists three impacts on our life when we choose to love anything that is not of God—“lust of the flesh,” “lust of the eyes,” and “pride in one’s possessions.” Create a chart to track the similarities between Genesis 3:6 and 1 John 2:16. Write your observations in the third column and then consider how these apply to your own life.

## Grace Found (Genesis 3:21-24)

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**21** The LORD God made clothing from skins for the man and his wife, and he clothed them. **22** The LORD God said, “Since the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil, he must not reach out, take from the tree of life, eat, and live forever.” **23** So the LORD God sent him away from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. **24** He drove the man out and stationed the cherubim and the flaming, whirling sword east of the garden of Eden to guard the way to the tree of life.

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### Key Background

Verses 8-20 recount the confrontation between God and the guilty couple. Within these verses we find the excuses Adam and Eve provided for their disobedience, the cursing of the serpent and the ground, and the consequences of disobedience. Note that only the serpent and the ground are cursed. The consequences for Adam and Eve were hardship in the labor of childbirth and hardship in the labor of tilling the ground. Even so, God gave a ray of hope with His promise of a coming deliverer (v. 15) and the merciful provision of covering for Adam and Eve.

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**(v. 21) LORD God made clothing from skins:** Here is another appearance of the Hebrew word **made**. These animal **skins** would cover their embarrassment and provide protection from the environment into which they were about to be thrust. While it is not stated clearly, the implication is that these animal skins would be provided by the slaying of the animal. If so, this was the first instance of death recorded in Scripture.

In some ways this is a foreshadowing of animal sacrifices to cover the sins of God’s people. This is also a foreshadowing of the sacrificial death of God’s Son to cover the sins of humanity. Here in the beginning, accompanying God’s work of creation, is the foundation for God’s work of salvation!

**(v. 22) Like one of us:** This phrase might be taken one of two ways. One could be that man had achieved his sought-after goal of knowing good from evil as God does, even though it led to bondage and death. Another possible interpretation might be as an expression of grief from God: “What has become of my created ones who were made in our image?”

**(v. 22) Tree of life:** The text finally returns to the **tree of life** mentioned in 2:9. Had Adam and Eve obeyed God’s directive concerning the tree of the knowledge

of good and evil, they might have eaten from the tree of life forever. Their failure involving the tree of the knowledge of good and evil precluded that possibility. The consequence of their sin was death.

**(v. 22) Live forever:** God’s original design obviously included immortality. However, eternal bondage to sin was not a part that plan. Thus, God had to prohibit this by separating Adam and Eve from the tree of life. At the same time, God was already setting into motion His plan to correct the consequences of this rebellion. That plan, put into place before the world was even founded, was the atoning death of Jesus to secure release from the curse of sin (see Eph. 1:4).

**(v. 23) Sent him away:** This is the same terminology used of Abraham sending Ishmael away in Genesis 21:14 and his other sons in Genesis 25:6. The thought is reinforced in verse 24 with the words “drove the man out.” It was a forcible ejection from the garden.

**(v. 23) Work the ground:** This reiterates the consequences pronounced upon Adam by God. The ground would produce thorns and thistles, and the work would produce sweat and hardship.

**(v. 24) Cherubim . . . flaming, whirling sword:** Although Scripture gives limited information on this category of angel, we do know that **cherubim** (plural of cherub) serve as guards and attendants. Images of the cherubim formed the mercy seat above the ark of the covenant (Ex. 25:18-22). Here, they are responsible for guarding the entrance to the garden and preventing Adam and Eve from gaining access to the tree of life.

The **flaming, whirling sword** was indicative of God’s judgment and divine wrath. Psalm 104:4 speaks of lightning bolts as symbols of God’s wrath and holiness. This is perhaps the picture here.



# EXPLORE Genesis 3:21-24



**APPLICATION POINT:** God offers grace in the middle of our rebellion against Him.

**READ:** Call for the group to read silently **Genesis 3:21-24**, looking for how God extended grace to the man and the woman.

**MINI-LECTURE:** Present a brief overview of Genesis 3:8-20, highlighting the consequences of Adam and Eve’s sin described in verses 17-19, as well as the promise of the Messiah/Redeemer in verse 15. Share information about verse 21 from pages 34-35 of the PSG.

**EXAMINE:** Distribute copies of **Pack Item 10** (*Handout: Covenants in Genesis*) and point out the Adamic covenant.

**ASK:** **What is the key to the Adamic covenant?** Emphasize that God takes all sin seriously, but He also offers grace. Use the information related to verses 22-24 (PSG, p. 35) to highlight God’s gracious response to Adam and Eve in providing both forgiveness for their sin and clothing for their nakedness. Highlight His spiritual and physical provision.

**TRANSITION:** *It’s important to recognize that Satan is a real enemy who is out to keep believers from walking in close relationship with God. He will do whatever he can to keep us from what God has for us. Thankfully, God is stronger than Satan, so we can always find hope in Him.*

Covenant	Parties	Key Verse	Significance
Adamic	God and Adam	Genesis 1:26-30	Established the relationship between God and humanity, giving Adam dominion over the earth and animals.
Noahic	God and Noah	Genesis 9:1-17	Established the relationship between God and all of humanity, promising never to destroy the earth again.
Mosaic	God and Israel	Exodus 24:3-8	Established the relationship between God and the nation of Israel, giving them the Law.
Abrahamic	God and Abraham	Genesis 15:18-21	Established the relationship between God and the nation of Israel, promising a Messiah.

NOTES

## Group Activity Option

### Reflective

Share that Adam and Eve’s experience reminds us that individual sin has individual consequences. However, it is also true that individual sins can have a negative impact on others. Note that even Jesus, who never committed a sin, suffered because of our sin. Challenge the group to silently reflect on Genesis 3:21 and to consider how God has shown them grace in the past. Challenge them to examine their lives and to identify sins they can confess to God. Remind them of the power of His grace and His restoration.

## CHALLENGE

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- SUMMARIZE:** Review these points from Apply the Text on page 36 of the Personal Study Guide:
- *Satan is crafty and is actively looking for ways to deceive.*
  - *The promises that accompany temptation lead to brokenness.*
  - *God offers grace in the middle of our rebellion against Him.*
- DISCUSS:** Guide the group to reflect on these questions from page 36 of the PSG: **How is Satan actively looking for ways to deceive? How has God offered you grace in the midst of your rebellion against Him?** Challenge adults to memorize the week's memory verse (Gen. 3:15) and to find ways to embrace His grace and share it with others.
- EXPLAIN:** Use the Plan of Salvation on the inside front cover of this resource to briefly walk through the gospel. Encourage individuals who have not come to faith in Christ to consider embracing His gift of salvation through Christ. Emphasize that His blood covers all our sins, unlike the animal that was sacrificed to provide clothing for Adam and Eve.
- PRAY:** Close in prayer, thanking God for His gift of grace—especially when we sin.

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## After the Session

Reinforce the session by emailing group members and encouraging them to renew and restore their relationship with God. Challenge them to be mindful of any sin that is marring their own relationship with God. Also, remind them to look for opportunities to tell others what Jesus has done for them.

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