



LC STUDY GUIDE

Done in Sync with the "Rediscovering Jesus" Series

The Passage: Genesis 3:1-24

For Life Community usage the week of 10/5/15

Intro: Dear LC Leader, welcome to our year of "Rediscovering Jesus." We're grateful that you can be part of this in growing, in teaching, in sharing, and in all things community.

Origin stories are always challenging and can get intense quickly. Ironically, there are so many different starting points in understanding the beginning of all things. Though conversation, curiosity, speculation, wonder are welcomed and encouraged, our objective is to find a hope of God's redemption by the end of our time together.

Intro question: When you think of the story of Adam and Eve eating the fruit in Genesis 3, what comes to mind?

Today's Big Idea: Even in the fall and the darkest moment in humanity, God has a plan of redemption.

Genesis 3:1-24

1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, **3** but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

4 "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. **5** "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some 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 realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. **9** But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?"

10 He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

11 And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

12 The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

13 Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

14 So the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this,

"Cursed are you above all livestock
and all wild animals!

You will crawl on your belly
and you will eat dust
all the days of your life.

15 And I will put enmity
between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will crush your head,
and you will strike his heel."

16 To the woman he said,

"I will make your pains in childbearing very severe;
with painful labor you will give birth to children.
Your desire will be for your husband,
and he will rule over you."

17 To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,'

"Cursed is the ground because of you;
through painful toil you will eat food from it
all the days of your life.

18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you,
and you will eat the plants of the field.

19 By the sweat of your brow
you will eat your food
until you return to the ground,
since from it you were taken;
for dust you are
and to dust you will return."

20 Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.

21 The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. **22** And the Lord God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever."

23 So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. **24** After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

O – This is certainly one of the most difficult passages to read personally and to discuss together. Which aspect of the chapter alarms or upsets you the most and why?

(Note: there's an entire question on the curses given below. Perhaps spend some time on the other potentially disturbing features of the story.)

O – Some imagine the serpent with legs, walking around upright in the garden. Others speculate that he was crawling and the curse was that he would now have to crawl without legs or slither in the dust (and eat dust, as that is a symbol of humiliation). Whether one takes this story historically literally or with an element of allegory, what do you imagine about the serpent (whether he speaks and has conscience or not)? The animal kingdom? The Garden of Eden?

I – The serpent is described as crafty. Why do you think he wants to undermine God and tempt Adam and Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit? (Is the serpent an enemy of God? Is he jealous of humanity?)

(With God-given inquisitiveness and wonder, is the potential dark side of these gifts mischief and morbid curiosity?)

A – While our temptations today do not happen through talking snakes, we are often lured by similar temptations as Adam and Eve – "Do you not want to know more, have more power, have more control, have more ____?" What can we learn from this story and about the nature of temptation in our everyday lives?

I – Upon eating the fruit, verse 7 tells us that Adam and Eve's eyes "were opened" and they realized they were naked. Why does God want their eyes to remain closed? Does this imply that God desires for humanity to live in ignorance? If not, what do you think this means? *(Consider it more of an awareness of their reality, and now new-found reality. The eating of that fruit moved them across a threshold – a new reality. The nakedness is not ignorance; it is an innocence given by God in their created order. Imagine God saying, "Who told you that you were no longer innocent?" Their sudden awareness to the idea of nakedness is their realization of the loss of that innocence.)*

I – God is clearly disappointed in Adam and Eve's decision and is looking for them. But He is not looking for the instigator. Why doesn't God question the snake? *(God has no plans to bring redemption to the snake. However, His plan for humanity does include a path of redemption. The first step is for humanity to recognize their fallen nature [the need for redemption].)*

O – It is painful to read the curses God gives. Which one bothers you the most?

I – Sadly, the beauty of creation and all aspects of life carry an element of pain, such as women giving birth. Why does God find it necessary to give/explain these curses? *(It may be helpful to note that God is not cursing humanity as much as He is articulating the new sin-filled, broken reality humanity has entered into. All that was once good and whole is*

now broken and subject to evil. Because of the fall, nothing that is good and beautiful in all of creation is exempt from pain.)

O – List and offer some description of all the qualities of God you see in this passage.

A – In verse 15, God is giving the curses to Adam and Eve and also points to the serpent and says, you will strike his heel and he will crush your head. The Christian church has historically had a Christo-centric understanding of this being a foreshadowing of Jesus defeating sin, death, and evil – a path to redemption. How does living in the promise of redemption change the despair brought upon a cursed and broken world? How does the death and resurrection of Jesus change your understanding of evil, sin, and death?

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- a. Please note that not all these questions are to be asked in a single meeting. Take some time to prayerfully discern what will serve your LC the best. Select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your Life Community group.
 - b. Complement these questions with "process questions" (what else? what more? what do others think?)
 - c. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don't rush people but encourage their participation. And avoid answering your own questions!
 - d. Application: Pace the study to conclude with difference-making application.
 - e. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into "teaching" rather than facilitating. It can cause people to feel distracted or de-powered.