

On August 23, 1973... Jan Erik Olsson... out on parole from prison... attempted to hold up a bank in Stockholm, Sweden. ... When the police showed up... Olsson took four people as hostages. ... A stand-off between Olsson and the police lasted six days. ... At one point during the standoff... Olsson called Sweden's Prime Minister to say that he would kill the hostages. ... He put one of the hostages... (Kristin Enmark)... on the phone. ... She said to the prime minister... *"I am very disappointed in you I think you are sitting here playing with our lives."*

Despite Olsson's threats to kill her... Enmark had decided she felt **safer** with the bad guy - than the police. ... In fact... she wasn't the only one. Other hostages actually resisted rescue attempts... and later refused to testify against their captor. ... Some even raised money for his defense!

Today... whenever you hear news of a hostage... who identifies more with their captors... than their rescuers... their condition is referred to as "*the Stockholm syndrome.*"

Many years after the incident in Stockholm... Kristen Enmark summed up what had happened: *"It's some kind of a context you get into when all your values, the morals you have, change in some way."* It's amazing how people can get so psychologically turned around... that they can no longer tell the difference between the good guys and the bad guys.

Ephesians 5:3 warns us that this can happen to Christians. We can actually forget which side we're on. Paul writes: *"But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people."*

This morning... we will study how Adam and Eve... in their perfect Garden of Eden environment... could get so twisted and turned around... that they would actually follow Satan... rather than obey God... It is one of the most confusing moments of all Scripture. The confusion is experienced... because no one would begin to think of himself or herself... (if they were in Adam and Eve's place)... as being this vulnerable. It doesn't make sense. ... "*How could they...?*" ... Yet... it is precisely what we ... ourselves do..

We need to understand that we are just as vulnerable... to be so twisted and turned around... and how we fall... time... and time again... just like they did. This is true... even though Satan's tactics haven't changed much (if at all.)

The Apostle Paul... (in 2 Corinthians 2:11)... advocates that believers are not to be ignorant of Satan's designs. ... So this will be our primary focus this morning... as we study how mankind fell from such a pinnacle of innocence and intimacy with God... to such a low state of miserable guilt and shame. The story of Adam and Eve is real history... and it describes what has happened countless times down through the ages. It is universal. And wise people will listen well.

Before we get started... I'd like to point out a secondary reason... as to why our study this morning is so important. Our primary reason is that we would not be ignorant of the process... by which we get twisted into thinking Satan has a better way. (Why is it... that... even as believers... we do the very things that we know we shouldn't... and we don't do the things that we know we should...?) ... Understanding this... will be foremost. The secondary reason... is that our passage this morning refutes some

popular philosophies and socio- political strategies of our day. (Let me just say a word or two here about the world's thinking... that this passage confronts.)

Our passage contradicts the idea which says we started at the bottom and are working our way to the top (a favorite concept of evolutionists). ... We did not start at the bottom of the moral ladder... and are now slowly... but surely... climbing heavenwards. No. ... mankind began at the top and fell to the bottom. This is an unequivocal denial of the Darwinian hypothesis of evolution.

Furthermore... our passage today emphatically eliminates the possibility of today's modern theory about "Heredity and Environment." ... (You see)... during the last 150 years... philosophy (and socialism... in particular)... have taught... that all the ills to which man is exposed... are solely attributable to "heredity and environment." ... This concept is an attempt to deny that man is a fallen creature and... at heart... is desperately wicked. We are told that if society will only make possible a more "perfect environment"... (where no person has more than another)... then man will finally be able to realize his ideals... and all of mankind will be purified.

But today's passage doesn't just contradict this premise of socialism. A major thrust in American and European politics today... believes that people who behave badly... simply need a better house and neighborhood... in order to act better. So... Urban renewal is presented as the remedy for **crime**.

But... as we will see... man has already been tested under the most favorable conditions... (much better any socialist ideal... or urban renewal) and yet... man was found wanting. With no evil heredity behind them... our first parents were placed in the most favorable environment that anyone can imagine... (an environment which God Himself pronounced "very good.") ... Only a single restriction was placed upon their liberty... but they failed and fell.

The trouble with man is NOT external - but internal. ... Philosophy and politics do not provide the answer. ... This chapter says we need a better heart... not a better house. ... We need a new birth. ... There is nothing wrong with wanting an ideal environment... but that is no substitute for Christ's solution for sin. The best that politics or philosophy can give – does not solve mankind's problems. Only Christ does. Christ addresses the problem of sin... which today's passage presents as entering the world. ... So let's turn our attention to that now...

Genesis 2:25

What does "naked and not ashamed" mean...? ... (Please don't google it. ... You're likely to get Satan's answer... I'll tell you.) ... It means: "*all that they were... was simply there... for the other to see and love.*"

The picture that we get before we open chapter three in Genesis... is that Adam and Eve have listened only to God. The sinless pair ride the pinnacle of innocence and openness. They were *spiritually* naked before God. ... God came first in their love and in their thoughts. ... There was no need for

disciplined devotion. ... All of life was devotion. ... Loving God was as natural as breathing... and as effortless!

Domestically... they were naked with one another. They were living in unparalleled splendor... amidst the crystal waters and green forests of Eden... in delightful concert with each other... and with the animals God had placed in the garden.

Clothing had never occurred to them. There was nothing to hide or protect. The gravitational pull of self... did not exist. ... Neither one was the center of his or her own life. ... God and each other were their centers. ... They were... in today's jargon... "other-directed." ... They were naked and not ashamed – (all that they were was simply there for the other to see and love.)

Genesis 3:1

Genesis 3:1 is a 3-D picture of Satan's attention-getting methodology... that he used on Eve... and he still uses today... on us. The three D's are... "deceit"... "doubt"... and "discontent". He lures us away from God... and toward sin... by employing these 3 D's on us.

#1. Is deceit.

Satan isn't an originator; he's a clever imitator who disguises his true character. If necessary... he can even masquerade as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14). When he came into the Garden... Satan used the body of a serpent... one of God's creatures that He had pronounced "good" (Gen. 1:31). Eve didn't seem disturbed by the serpent's presence or its speech... so we assume that she saw nothing threatening about the encounter.

Perhaps Eve hadn't been introduced to this species and concluded that it had the ability to speak.

The New Testament identifies this serpent as the devil...

Revelation 12:9 (ESV)

And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

Revelation 20:2 (ESV)

And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years,

Satan still uses deceit today. To get his message across... he sometimes masquerades as a trustworthy preacher... church leader... expert or scholar on the History Channel... or an author from a trusted book publisher or magazine.

Part of the Satan's deceit was also to carefully **avoid** the use of God's more personal name "Lord"... or "Yahweh." Instead the crafty snake took on a **distant** tone... and used a more **aloof** name for God – "Elohim."

You see... in Genesis chapter **one**... when God was creating the heavens and the earth... "Elohim" (Creator God) is used. But once God started to personally **interact** with His creation... (in chapter 2)... the more personal name is used ("Yahweh.") Everywhere from chapter two forward...

"Yahweh" is used... except for **this deadly dialogue** in Genesis 3:1-7. ... But **after** this dialogue... it is right back to "Yahweh."

Part of Satan's subtle deceit... was to make God appear remote... far-off... and inaccessible. He still tries to get us to think that way today. "*Why would God be interested in your little problem... He has much bigger concerns that what you are dealing with...*"

Satan's incredulous tone... and conscious disuse of God's personal name... set up his crafty distortion of God's word. ... We saw in Genesis 2:16... that the Lord God had generously commanded, "*You may surely eat of every tree of the garden,*" Satan now asks, "*Did God [Elohim] actually **say**, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?*" (emphasis added).

Satan's approach was so subtle that Eve did not suspect that God's word was being attacked. It was just an "innocent question." But a seed of doubt about God's word had been planted in Eve's heart... and it would bear immediate fruit. ... So now we come to the 2nd D... of this 3-D picture of Satan's methodology.

#2. Is doubt.

One of Satan's favorites tactics is to cast doubt on the Word of God. If you do not have confidence in the Word... it will not be your guide. And Satan wants something other than the Word guiding your life. ... So he gets the Word of God removed from our schools and government... and gets churches to de-emphasize the Word in their programs.

Doubt brings fear... uncertainty... and hesitancy in obeying and believing God. ... When we doubt or question God... we have a tendency to take matters into our own hands and then really mess things up. ... Many Christians do not read and study God's Word... because of their doubts and lack of confidence in the Word of God. ... Defeated believers claim that Bible principles don't really work or apply to their lives.

If this attitude describes you... Satan is winning a victory in your life. The result is you will become unstable and waver back and forth in your spiritual life... and become ineffective in making your life count for Christ.

#3. Is discontent

God's generosity was perverted by Satan's question... which suggested divine stinginess! ...

Satan focuses on the negative... (on the restrictions.) ... Notice that he does not focus on the positives... (on the privileges). He focuses on the burdens... not the blessings. ... He would make you and I discontent with our God-appointed situation.

Defeat of Satan here... requires us to be constantly thanking God for His blessings. ... We need to focus on our triumphs - not our trials... our delights - not our disappointments. The "slough of discontentment" is where Satan parks and babbles against God.

"Do you really mean that you can't eat from every tree?" ... "If God really loved you... He would be much more generous. He's holding out on you!"
Satan wanted Eve to forget that God had told Adam (who had told her) that they could eat freely of the trees of the Garden. ... Once we begin to think that there is something better for us... that what God has given... sin is crouching at our door... and ready to pounce.

Satan's distorted question employed deceit... doubt... and discontent against Eve. ... Eve's best hope would have been to **properly** employ God's Word (As Jesus did... when Satan tempted Him in the desert.) ...

But she didn't. She improperly employed it. In verses 2-3... we see her diminish God's word... then add to God's word... and finally soften it's tone.

Genesis 3:2-3

God had said in 2:16: "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden"... but now Eve leaves out the "every"... simply saying... "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden." ... Thus she minimized the provision of the Lord. Her inexact... unenthusiastic rendition of God's word... discounted God's generosity. ... Something bad was happening in her heart.

Eve's subtle shift in heart was further revealed... in her adding to God's word (which comes out in verse 3): "But *Elohim* said..." (she also used the more distant name for God)... "Elohim said 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it". God never said, "neither shall you touch it"! Eve magnified God's strictness—"Just touch the tree, and zap!—you're dead!"

At first... I didn't see too much (if anything) is wrong with such an addition. In fact... it sounds like a good thing. ... 'If I do not touch it, I will not eat it.' ... I assumed that she was only trying to make things easier... for her to obey the Lord... by adding an extra layer of protection... (an even tougher restriction.)

But after thinking about it a little longer... in the context of Satan luring her... I think that Eve has begun take Satan's bait. ... I think that her point is... "*Elohim is so harsh... that even an inadvertent slip (simply touching the tree) will bring death.*"

This is so typical of what we sometimes do... A father says to his young daughter, "*You and your friend Donna have been too noisy—so Donna will have to go home.*" Then his daughter runs to her mother crying, "*Daddy says I can't ever have Donna over again!*" The boss calls in an employee who's been late several times and says, "*I think this is something you need to give attention to. It's important.*" The employee walks out of the office and says to his coworkers, "*You know what that stuffed shirt said? If I'm late again, I'm fired!*"

When we don't like a prohibition or a warning... we magnify its strictness. We purposely suggest that our restrainer is so unfair! "*Who could possibly blame me if I ignore such an unjust restraint or limitation...?*" And what we imagine... is that we have a morally superior way out.

I see Eve... here... as casting God in a light of being "too unreasonable." And doesn't this often enter into our thinking whenever we are tempted to sin... "*This restriction is so ridiculous! I can't be expected to obey it...*" Once we begin to think that God's word is "unreasonable" or "too demanding"... we are very close to losing our battle with temptation. ... We need to take a step back and a deep breath—and pray.

Eve had diminished God's word... then she added to God's word... and lastly... Eve softened God's word... by merely saying... "*lest you die.*" She toned it down a bit from what we saw in Genesis 2:17 where God actually said "surely you will die." ... The certitude of death was removed.

So with one single breath... Eve *diminished... added to... and softened* God's word.

This morning we are looking at the anatomy of temptation... (how we can become so twisted and turned around... that we defy God's clear instruction to us.) The descent we see in our passage is evident: Satan offers a question based on deceit... doubt... and discontent. The perversion of God's word took hold... and is evidenced by Eve's revisions of God's word (diminishing it... adding to it... and softening it.) ...

Now Satan is free... to brazenly declare God's word as wrong.

Genesis 3:4

This is an in-your-face to God. The Hebrew places the word *lo* ("not") in front of God's declaration: "**not**—*you shall surely die.*" ... "*Take that, God!*" It is the serpent's word versus God's word—an absurd comparison... of alternatives.

Note... too... that the doctrine of "divine judgment" is the very first doctrine to be denied. ... Satan attacked it from the beginning! ... The first overt lie is from Satan... and he attacks God's ability to carry out judgment. Satan says... "*You shall not surely die.*" ... Liberals today claim there is no Hell... or God won't send anyone to Hell. ... The opposite is true... however. There **is** a Hell... and people who die without Jesus Christ as their Savior will go there.

Genesis 3:5

God was cast in an ugly light. According to the serpent... God was repressive... and obviously jealous that they might ascend too high. ... What an incredible attack... in light of the fact that the thousand "goods" of

creation... not to mention the gift of each other... and their rulership of the earth. ... This all came from God. ... What a blatant slur on God's character! ... But Eve was believing it.

"*You will be like God*" is a promise that would get anybody's attention.

"*Glory to man in the highest!*" is a promise that still intoxicates.

There is the thought... that we have *needs which cannot be met any other way*. We think that (whatever is tempting us)... will meet our needs more than what God has given us. This is exactly what Satan said to Eve: "*God has not provided the best for you, not in the most fulfilling way. You need to take matters into your own hands.*"

There is the thought... that our *eyes will be opened*. We can never know if we don't experience it. This is what Satan said to Eve: "*If you eat of the tree—do this thing—you will know more about it, how good it feels and tastes. You must do it to know. You cannot know whether it is good or bad until you actually experience it.*"

There is the thought... of being one's own person and determining one's own destiny and fate. This is Satan promised Eve: "*You shall be as gods. If you do this thing, you will be your own person—independent, individualistic—you will gain position and power. Do it: do your own thing; do what you want when you want. It is worth it.*"

In Romans 1:25... the Apostle Paul discusses the fall of man... and he mentions that it happened because man chose to believe "the lie." ... What is "the lie" (singular) that has ruled civilization since the fall of man? ... It's the belief you can turn away from God... be your own god... *and not suffer any consequences.* The lie is that people can sin and get away with it.

Steve Farrar sums up well the terrible price of sin: "*Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you're willing to pay.*"

The next verse shows us that the prospect of God-like autonomy was drawing Eve irresistibly.

Genesis 3:6

The term "good" (*tôb*)... evokes in our memories (like a verbal echo) God's earlier evaluations about His creation. It seems as if Eve has usurped God's role in determining what is "good."

Here in verse 6... the serpent now departs from our view. We have only Eve's thoughts. She saw that "the tree was good for food"... and "a delight to the eyes"... and "to be desired to make one wise" (wisdom apart from God's word). She doesn't need God for these things... she can be free from God.

Eve turns from God... and trusts only in things that she can understand – her own passion. ... She knows the appetites of the flesh. She knows what appeals to the eye... and she knows that she likes to feel important.

When confusion reigns... one always turns inward. The truth no longer matters... one does what makes **self** feel good. It just seems right. ... The problem is that humans refer to it as 'thinking'. ... But in reality... it is only lusting. ... It is that which every human shares... and it is the lowest common denominator of human existence.

Why does the woman turn to the lust of the flesh... the lust of the eye... and the pride of life? It's easy to know... when one thinks about it. The serpent had gotten her mind so **rattled**... and her thinking so **muddled**... that the only thing that made sense to her... was her lusts.

This pattern can be seen consistently in the affairs of humankind. Whenever an issue becomes confused... we resort to the lowest common denominator. ... The marriage becomes complicated... an extramarital affair results. It feels right! ... The college life is tough... the studies are hard... relationships are complicated... so a drunken party... a wild night giving in to lusts is the answer. It feels right! ... The finances in life are bad... the times are tough... others are doing better financially... so taking what others have is the answer. It feels right!

With Eve's sin... the narrative quickens with a rapid sequence of verbs—*"she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate"* (v. 6b).

Here is a **shocker**. Adam was apparently present and listening to the conversation between Eve and the snake! The text says that he was "**with her**" (though that in itself does not prove he was with her **during the temptation**). ... However... what **is** decisive... is that during the temptation

in verses 1-5... Satan addressed Eve with the *plural* "you." (If Adam was not present... the *singular* "you" would have been used.) ... So... it would seem Adam **was** there. Adam passively watched everything. ... And then... Adam sinned willfully... eyes wide open... without hesitation. ... He did not protect his wife – and then he participated in the sin with her. ... Why? ... It could be that his desire to please the woman outweighed his desire to please God. ... (But this we know for sure) ... Adam abdicated his role to lead his wife.

Genesis 3:7

The Christian knows, but needs regular reminding, that sin promises great enlightenment but produces only horror.

As soon as the transgression is actually over... the sense of the wrongfulness of the act rushes on the mind. ... The displeasure of the great Being... Whose command has been disobeyed... the irretrievable loss which follows sin... the shame of being looked upon by the bystanders... as a guilty thing... now clouds the way they see everything.

All nature... (every single creature)... seems now a witness of their guilt and shame. Everywhere they lay their eyes... they see a condemning judge... an agent of the divine vengeance... so they shrink from the glance of every condemning eye. They endeavor to hide themselves... in light of their blush of shame.

Such is the knowledge of good and evil they have acquired by their fall from obedience. ... What a different scene... than what had presented

itself to them before they ate the fruit. They could not have anticipated such a disturbance to the tranquility of their pure minds.

Their eyes were opened to be sure... but everything they saw was spoiled. Adam and Eve were no longer at ease with each other. ... Mistrust and alienation in their relationship... was a result of sin... and they were now afraid in the garden... because they were alienated from God... and the rest of His creation.

Death had already immediately begun to work in them... because death is separation. Spiritual death is separation from God... and physical death is separation from life. ... Thus... we find that Adam and Eve were told the truth **by God**... that when they ate... they would surely die.

The *consequence* of sin is not pleasant. Sin advertises itself so deceitfully and never tells you the sequence or consequence which follows the act of sin. But Scripture does. ... *The pit!* Adam and Eve had fallen from the pinnacle of innocence and intimacy... into the pit of guilt and estrangement.

Here is the main take-away from today's message: **From Eve and Adam's sin we learn that sin takes hold when we begin to doubt God's word and God's goodness.**

(LISTEN!) Have you minimized Scripture's great promises with a less than enthusiastic "ho-hum"? ... Do you discount God's glorious promises? Has your study of His Word become blanched into a dull monochrome? ... Do you feel justified in ignoring God's Word by not getting into it on your own... or with others in a mid-week Bible Study...?

Moses... who gave us this account of Adam and Eve's temptation in the Garden of Eden... was ever so passionate about the necessity of God's people being people of God's word. In Deuteronomy... his fifth and final book of the Pentateuch... Moses eloquently called his people to put God's word at the center of their existence:

Deuteronomy 6:6-9 (ESV)

⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.

⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.