

## The Lies of Eden

Pastor Kelly Sensenig

While visiting the ocean one day, a daddy was unable to persuade his little daughter to join him in the chilly water. So he built a fire, heated a teakettle of water, and with a great speed poured the steaming liquid into the ocean. Upon seeing this, the child ran gleefully into the water without further hesitation. This father's trick, while harmless, but it is an illustration of how Satan often works. He often mixes a small amount of truth into an ocean of falsehood, and people wade into it, not realizing how they are being deceived.

In the Garden of Eden, Satan brought various lies before Eve's mind. His intention was to lead her away from the absolute standard of truth. Satan's ways have never changed throughout the history of the human race.

Jesus said in John 8:44:

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

Jesus taught that Satan was the originator of lies in the Garden of Eden. The Bible reveals that Satan sought to deceive Eve through her mind (2 Cor. 11:3) by injecting lies into her thought process. This is exactly how Satan works with us. He attempts to deceive us in the realm of our thinking in order to corrupt our spiritual perspective on life and living.

There are three main lies that Satan uses to deceive us.

### **a. You have needs God cannot meet (Gen. 3:1-5).**

Satan created false needs in our minds and heart by getting us to think that we need other things that are outside of the parameters of God's revealed will and purpose for our lives.

There are two false needs that Satan creates in our minds.

1. You need to acquire more than you have.

Genesis 3:1

“Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?”

Satan created a false need in Eve’s heart that was totally contrary to God’s will. She needed to have the forbidden fruit that God was withholding from her. The number one desire of Satan is to slander God. Satan comes to us and says, “Is God really that good since He will not let you eat of “every tree” in the garden? Why hasn’t God given you permission to enjoy every tree? God must be holding out on you. He is keeping something from you that is really good for your life. In doing this, Satan wants us to think that we need more than we already have. He wants us to believe that God has shortchanged us in some way and that our needs are not being met.

Satan suggests to our minds that we need something outside the parameters of God’s will. He says, “God is holding back on you. God is a cosmic killjoy keeping something from you that He knows would benefit you and be good for you.” So what does Satan do? The Evil One gets us to focus on the only black jelly bean in the jar of multicolored jelly beans and it’s this one that God says we can’t have. Satan knows how to get our attention on the forbidden and forget about all the privileges and blessings we already have from God.

Genesis 3:3

“But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.”

Eve is talking at this point. We discover that Satan brought Eve to the place where she was talking and thinking about the one forbidden tree or fruit that God had commanded she could not eat. When this happens, a false need is created in our mind and we actually believe we need something that God has forbidden. Think of it; Eve could eat of every tree in the Garden of Eden, but there was only one tree that was forbidden. God was so good to her. He had already met all of her needs! And this is His promise to us!

Ephesians 3:20

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.”

James 1:17

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

Psalms 84:11

“For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.”

And yet, in spite of these wonderful promises, the devil questions God’s goodness and creates a false need in our heart, convincing us that we need something that God has not given to us. He is a master artist who draws this picture in our mind. To some, he comes along and says, “You need to have an affair outside your marriage commitment. You need something more in your midlife that many have already discovered.” To others he says, “You need to look at seductive pictures on the internet or on your cell phone. God made you this way, so enjoy a little bit of the normal sexual life that everyone else is taking part of these days.” “You need to keep using tobacco. So what if it controls your life. It keeps you thin. It calms your nerves.” “You need to listen to Rock or Contemporary Christian Music. After all, everyone is doing it and everyone can’t be wrong. Try it, you might like it.”

Satan is a liar! We never need anything outside the parameters of God’s will for our lives. God’s will is good and it’s always best for us. Romans 12:2 says “that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

But Satan does not give up easily. The devil comes along and says, “You deserve to live it up a little. You need some party life and good times to help you get through your difficulties. A little alcohol will help you get through your tough times, a few drugs to settle your nerves.” “You need to go back to some of the old music and old ways to balance out your life.” “You need to start a new job. It’s okay if takes you away from God’s House and you can no longer meet with God’s

people on a regular basis. Don't worry, it's okay, you need to do this for yourself and family."

Satan is a liar. Don't follow His seductive and deceptive lies.

2. You need to discover more than you know.

Genesis 3:5-6

"For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."

Here is the next false need that Satan sows in our mind. The focus is on the word "know" which suggests that Satan was deceiving Eve by getting her to believe that she could know, or discover something, which God had not revealed to her. Once again, Satan got Eve to think that she needed something more than what God, in His goodness, had already given to her and promised in His Word. Satan created another false need in Eve's heart that was totally contrary to God's will. In Genesis 3:5 Satan convinced Eve that she needed the forbidden fruit so she could be elevated to a godhood status. As a result, she could possess complete knowledge like God, who knows about everything in life, even the difference between good and evil.

Satan was suggesting to Eve that God was not letting her in on the whole story regarding what was truly good and evil. Somehow, God was not being fair in His evaluation and Eve needed to discover what was "good and evil" for herself. She needed to discover more than she already knew, so she could be wiser and smarter in her living.

Today, Satan suggests to our minds that we must know and discover new things that are outside the parameters of God's will. There is knowledge, new discoveries, and new insights that we have been missing out on, which God has not told us about. Therefore, we must take the risk to discover these new adventures in life, so we don't miss out on the good life. If this means to step outside the forbidden zone, we must take the risk.

Satan always wants people to think that there are new adventures that must be sought. He wants us to believe there is something about life that we have been missing and neglecting; therefore, we must launch out and discover a different and new way of life. We must write our own ticket in life and discover or know what is best for us.

Satan, the slithering and deceptive serpent, comes along and says, "Don't be so conservative, separated, squeaky clean, a goody-to-shoes type of person in your living. There are new discoveries out in the real world and new ways to live that God has not shown you. Get into the 21<sup>st</sup> century." "You need to discover more than you already know" by stepping outside the narrow and conservative borders that God has given to you. Get with the new scene and new way of doing things."

Please note that after these false needs have been erected in our minds (I need more than I have and I can discover more than I know), it's then that Satan is ready to take us down the primrose path of lust and pride. After creating these false needs in our minds, Satan is ready to set the hook by appealing to our sight and senses.

Genesis 3:6

"And when the woman saw (lust of the eyes) that the tree was good for food (lust of the flesh), and that it was pleasant to the eyes (lust of the eyes), and a tree to be desired to make one wise (pride of life), she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."

Of course, Eve had the potential for sin in her heart before she ever took the fruit. She tasted the fruit in her mind before it ever reached her taste buds. Satan's tactics of temptation have not changed. The New Testament epistles clearly reveal this.

1 John 2:16

"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." This verse speaks about the devil's same temptation tricks when referring to "the lust of the eyes" (sins that appeal to us through unlawful perception - vision). Today, we live in a world of ever-

increasing visual effects that are created to appeal to us through the eye gate. If we don't control the visual effects that are streaming before our eyes, they can overtake us and cause us to sin.

John also talks about "the lust of the flesh" (sins that appeal to us through unlawful passions – indulgence). The devil comes along and says, "You deserve a break today." He says, "It can't be wrong if it feels so right." Again, the devil is a liar and He seeks to fuel these evil passions from within our heart.

There is also "the pride of life" (sins that appeal to us through unlawful position - status). Pride is what defeated the devil (1 Tim. 3:6) and it's no wonder that he wants others to take the same fall that he did. These same expressions of sin overtook Eve's mind and heart. She "saw that the tree was good for food ... and pleasant to the eyes" (lust of the eyes). The Bible then says it was "a tree to be desired" (lust of the flesh). Finally, it was "to make one wise" and which would allow them "to be as gods" (pride of life).

Satan has never changed the way ye tempts people. He tries to sow a false need in our heart and then gets us to follow the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and pride of life routine. He tempted Jesus in the same way.

Matthew 4:3

"And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."

The devil wanted the bread to appeal to Jesus during His time of fasting, so it would create evil passion in his heart and cause Christ to abandon the Father's purpose for His life. Thus, the bread symbolizes the lust of the flesh.

Matthew 4:8

"Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them."

When the devil "showeth" Christ all the kingdoms of the world he was seeking to allure Christ through the lust of the eyes. This is exactly what he sought to do to Eve and how he tries to tempt us today. He

knows the eyes are a primary way to get to our souls. When Satan showed Jesus "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them" he was attempting to get Jesus to express pride over ruling everything in the world. Therefore, this is Satan's old plan to elicit pride in our hearts (pride of life).

Satan's system has not changed. Satan sows a false need in our heart and then gets us to follow it through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. We should be aware of the Serpent's tactics (Eph. 6:11) and schemes that he uses to take us down. Satan's methods really have not changed.

Dwight Moody used to speak of a miserly farmer recently converted, to whom a neighbor in distress appealed for help. The miser decided to prove the genuineness of his conversion by giving him a ham. On his way to get it the tempter whispered, "Give him the smallest one you have." A struggle ensued and finally the miser took down the largest ham he had. "You are a fool," the devil said. And the farmer replied, "Devil, if you don't keep still, I'll give him every ham in the smokehouse!"

It's important to see in the Genesis account that Satan wanted Eve to create a *false need* in her heart that God and His Word could not conceivably meet. Afterward, Satan tempted Eve to fulfill this false need. Eve eventually came to the place where she said, "I have a need (this fruit) that God does not intend to meet. I have a need to discover new truth that God has not revealed."

She then reasoned, "I must take matters into my own hands. I must eat this fruit and become wise, as a god, in order to try and meet these felt-needs." Of course, Eve did not need the fruit, nor did she need to discover anything new, which God had not already revealed to her. However, Satan got Eve to think she needed these unlawful things by doubting the goodness and motives of God. The devil then used the fruit to appeal to her sight and the knowledge trick to appeal to her sense or reasoning.

The serpent does the same thing to us today. He wants us to think that God is not meeting some specific need in our lives and that He does not intend to meet it. Of course, this is not a true need, but an

imaginary “straw man” need, which has been created in our mind by not trusting in God’s goodness, plan, and provision for our lives. But we allow Satan to convince us that we have a need that cannot be satisfied unless we take action and try to meet that need on our own terms.

At this point, Satan is ready to show us the forbidden fruit and we take the bait and are “drawn away” by our own lust (James 1:14). For you, the fruit may be choosing a wrong path, or plan for your life (Prov. 4:14). It may be making wrong choices in relationship to attending questionable places (1 Cor. 10:20), moving in to forbidden positions (Prov. 16:18), developing relationships or friendships with worldly people (1 Cor. 15:33), or seeking out your own particular solution (Prov. 14:12) for a problem that you are facing in life. It may involve imbibing or absorbing the culture in some way (Rom. 12:2).

The point is this; many have fallen into the trap of illusionary felt needs. When we erect false needs in our hearts and lives we make decisions that are contrary to God’s revealed will and purpose for our lives. Let us never forget that Satan is the master of confusing wants and needs. He is an expert at confusing God’s people so that they cannot distinguish between their *greed’s* and *needs* or between a *false* need and a *true* need.

Satan gets God’s people to focus on themselves by saying, “I feel empty and I am in need of something.” As a result of this satanic reasoning, we become convinced that we need something more, or something else that God has failed to provide, or told us about in His spoken Word. At one point, our needs become more important than God’s truth and goodness. So, we reach out for the forbidden fruit and enter the forbidden zone, all because we have erected a false need, and have tried to meet this need on our own terms.

Philippians 4:19 gives us this wonderful promise:  
“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

Dear friend, let us remember that God is all we need! God’s person, promises, and providence will keep us satisfied and sustained in life, so we won’t have to step out of His will. The Lord is truly all we need



in life (Psalm 46:1-2). Satan wants us to think that we need something else in order to find fulfillment and blessing in life but this is one of his major lies. The songwriter wrote:

“You’re all I need! You’re the Lord of everything.  
All I need. This is why I humbly sing.  
Your strength is sustaining  
And your grace has made me free.  
You’re my heart’s lone desire, You’re all I need.  
More than enough, You’re all I need.  
You are all I will ever need.”

### **B. You can sin and get away with it.**

This is the second lie that the Evil One told to Eve. Satan said, “Ye shall not surely die” (Gen. 3:4). This was the lie of the ages and it’s still Satan’s number one lie today. It’s the lie behind reincarnation. The Bible says, “The wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23) and yet Satan says, “Death is not the result of sin. A better way is the result of sin.” The devil wants us to believe that sin has no consequences. But God has clearly stated that sin always has consequences (Gen. 2:17 – “thou shalt surely die”).

Numbers 32:23 declares: “be sure your sin will find you out.” The New Testament counterpart is Galatians 6:7 which says, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” We never get away with anything! The devil may convince us otherwise, but God says that our sins always affect us in an adverse way.

Satan wants us to believe that God takes sin lightly, God won’t follow through on His Word, and God won’t judge sin, even if He said He would. This is a critical point in the strategy of Satan. Before he leads us into sin, he wants to diminish or dismiss the consequences of sin in our lives. Satan denies one of the basic facts of life: God punishes sin! Satan wants to redefine God as a God who does not judge sin, and when the devil can effectively do this, people will take his bait. Many today, even Christians, believe that God is too loving to judge us for going against His will. God is defined with only those attributes that make people feel comfortable.

One writer has said:

“How often do you hear sermons about God’s judgment these days? Instead, sermons just overflow with sentimental ideas about God’s love. God has been recast as Santa Claus – an updated Santa Claus who never leaves coal in a naughty boy’s stocking.”

We live in a “no-fault” and “guilt-free” society that has redefined God to make Him fit into our own mold of living. This is becoming increasingly true in the arena of the Church. God is almost viewed as *accommodating* a life of sin and as someone who *understands* that we all make mistakes in life. God knows that deep down we mean well. Furthermore, God exists to help us *feel better* and *accepts* us the way we are in spite of our shortcomings.

Satan tries to downplay the serious nature of sin by claiming that God *understands* about our sin and we need to *accept* ourselves as we are and *improve* our self-worth and self-concept. Today, Christians are told to understand about sin instead of hate sin. But God hates sin (Prov. 6:16-19). We don’t want to deal with sin today but sin is what wrecks our lives, our families, and is something God despises with a holy hatred (Hab. 1:13; Isa. 59:2).

Sin does have consequences! Sin is a barrier to fellowshiping with God and enjoying His presence and power in our life. Sin brings God’s chastisement upon our lives (Heb. 12:6-7). Satan gets us to sin but the bill is sent later! Sin always costs us something – broken fellowship with God, heartaches, emptiness, lost opportunities, or personal problems related to our disobedience.

The “struggle theologians” of today are saying that all Christians (our born-again buddies) struggle with sin. Therefore, we should not be too hard on sin. We need to look at sin as a part of the everyday struggle of life and realize that we all blow it in life. We don’t want other Christians to think that we are better than others (“holier than thou”) when we emphasize sin. Christians aren’t perfect. We all have our weaknesses. Don’t be so hard on yourself. If you sin, all you have to do is confess to God, and everything will be all right again. Other people do things worse than you. God expects us to fail now and then.

Somebody captured the modern way that man views sin and placed it alongside the way God views sin. There is a vast difference between man's view and God's view of sin.

“Man calls it an accident; God calls it an abomination.  
Man calls it a blunder; God calls it blindness.  
Man calls it a defect; God calls it a disease.  
Man calls it a chance; God calls it a choice.  
Man calls it an error; God calls it an enmity.  
Man calls it a fascination; God calls it a fatality.  
Man calls it an infirmity; God calls it an iniquity.  
Man calls it a luxury; God calls it a leprosy.  
Man calls it a liberty; God calls it lawlessness.  
Man calls it a trifle; God calls it a tragedy.  
Man calls it a mistake; God calls it a madness.  
Man calls it a weakness; God calls it willfulness.”

Satan does not want us to see the true nature and consequences of sin today, so he can lead God's people into the pleasures of sin for a season (Heb. 11:25). Satan downplays the severity of sin and keeps Christians from seeing that sin always has a price tag attached to it.

Hebrews 12:5-6

“And ye have forgotten the exhortation ... My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord ... For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.”

Don't believe Satan's lie that sin does not have any consequences. If you start talking, drinking, dancing, thinking, and living like the world, there will be consequences. For many today sin is no longer a disgusting transgression in God's sight (Ps. 51:1-5) but a disease caused by poor self-esteem, genetic deficiencies, and outside environmental influences. Sin is softened and downplayed today in every way. We are accountable to God for our sin and we can be sure that it will catch up with us.

The late Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman used to tell of a Methodist preacher who often spoke on the subject of sin. He minced no words, but defined sin as “that abominable thing that God hates.” A leader in his congregation came to him on one occasion and urged him to cease

using the ugly word. The man said: “Preacher, we wish you would not speak so plainly about sin. Our young people, hearing you, will be more likely to indulge in sin. Call it something else, as “inhibition,” or “error” or a “mistake,” or even “a twist in our nature”.”

“I understand what you mean,” the preacher remarked and going to his desk brought out a little bottle. “This bottle,” he said, “contains strychnine. You will see that the red label here reads ‘Poison.’ Would you suggest that I change the label, and paste one on that says, ‘Wintergreen?’” The man got the preacher’s point.

We must be ready to call sin for what it is. We must see it as an ugly monster that wrecks our lives and something which God hates. God despises everything that is not godly and right and so should we as His followers (“Hate the evil” – Amos 5:15).

Sin always has consequences attached to it. The Bible says that God’s people do not prosper when they cover their sin (Prov. 28:13). Sin always has a certain amount of judgment and heartache linked to it (Ps. 32:10; Prov. 6:32-33; 1 Tim. 6:10; Heb. 12:16-17). God does not sweep sin under the carpet. But Satan effectively sells the lie that sin does not have any consequences - “Ye shall not surely die” (Gen. 3:4).

Genesis 3:7 records:

“And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.”

Both Adam and Eve discovered the consequence of their sin after eating the forbidden fruit. They were immediately aware of their physical nakedness. Their sin caused them to be ashamed of their nakedness. In fact, their physical nakedness became a constant reminder of their transgression before God. All sin does have consequences and this is why we need to face sin today and deal with it in our lives. We don’t need to candy-coat it; we need to condemn it. We don’t need to understand it; we need to forsake it.

Isaiah 55:7

“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”

Billy Sunday wrote:

“I’m against sin,” he said. “I’ll kick it as long as I’ve got a foot, and I’ll fight it as long as I’ve got a fist. I’ll butt it as long as I’ve got a head. I’ll bite it as long as I’ve got a tooth. When I’m old and fistless and footless and toothless, I’ll gum it till I go home to Glory and it goes home to perdition.”

### **C. You can govern your own life without God.**

Genesis 3:5

“For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.”

This is another key lie that Satan promoted under the disguise of “ye shall be as gods” (Gen. 3:5). In essence, Satan sold a bill of goods to Eve by saying, “You can discover what “good and evil” is on your own terms instead of God’s terms. You can decide what is right for you instead of God. You can write your own ticket in life and govern yourself. You can make your own rules and be just like God.” This is similar to the modern theory called “relativism” which basically says truth is flexible. There is no one standard for truth. Truth is what you make it out to be. Truth is what is right for you and what fits your life.

Satan told Eve that she could reach the same position as God and become the leader and governor of her own life. This is what Satan attempted to do when he fell from Heaven.

Isaiah 14:13-14

“For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.”

Satan wanted to be like God and govern his own life. It’s no wonder why he seeks to get others to follow this same path. Satan comes

along and says, "Take matters into your own hands." Satan wanted to remove Eve from the authority and control of God. He wanted Eve to be removed from the realm of God's authority.

But James 4:7 declares:

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

When we are tempted by Satan to remove ourselves from God's authority, we must make the instant decision to submit ourselves to God. The word "submit" is a military term which speaks of submission and subordination to God. It means to place ourselves under God's authority. When we are tempted to remove ourselves from God's authority, we must say, "I will follow God instead of Satan."

1 Samuel 15:23 is the age-old reminder that says:

"For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry..."

If we are going to have victory, we must be willing and ready to yield ourselves to God as our Master (Rom. 6:13) and place ourselves under His authority. *Living victoriously is an authority issue.* Either we will become the god and leader of our own life, or we will allow God to be our Leader, and the only authority figure in our life. It can't be God and you. It must only be God!

Is God the absolute ruler and undisputed leader of your life today? Maybe there are some things that Satan has been tempting you with and they are slowly taking you away from God's authority and control that He is to have over your life. Perhaps there are some things that are creating an independent, godhood spirit, in your own personal life. Have you been seeking to make yourself the authority? Have you been seeking to live your life independent of God's will?

There is an all-out-war going on today that centers on the issue of who is going to control your life – God or Satan. What is going to run you life, the new or the old nature (Gal. 5:17), sin or God (Rom. 6:12-13). Either sin will master you or God will master you. We know what Satan wants from our lives and what God wants from our lives. Now what do you want? You must choose who you are going to serve

“choose you this day whom ye will serve” – Josh. 24:15). You can't be neutral.

“All to Jesus I surrender,  
All to Him I freely give;  
I will ever love and trust Him,  
In His presence daily live.

All to Jesus I surrender,  
Humbly at His feet I bow;  
Worldly pleasures all forsaken,  
Take me, Jesus, take me now.

I surrender all,  
I surrender all;  
All to Thee, my blessed Savior,  
I surrender all.”

Anthony T. Evans wrote:

"I know a bit about wrestling because my brother, Arthur, was the Maryland state wrestling champion in his weight class. At his championship match my brother weighed in at about 230 pounds and was going up against the three-time Maryland state champion who outweighed him by 35 pounds. Before the match, a reporter asked, 'Who is the toughest wrestler in this room?'

"My brother, humble fellow that he is, said, 'You are looking at him!' The reporter looked at him and asked, 'What makes you think you are so tough? You are about to fight the man who has won the state championship three times in a row.' My brother replied with a very insightful comment, 'I know he is bigger and perhaps stronger than I am, but I know his methods.'"

We are in a similar fight against Satan. Just as this brother needed to learn his opponent's moves, so we must understand Satan's moves against us. We must be aware of the “wiles of the devil” (Eph. 6:11), his tricks and schemes, and not believe the age-old lies of Eden.