

“What Went Wrong” // Genesis 3:1–19 // The Whole Story #3

Announcement/Go Now

Wow. What a story! I want to take a just a minute to speak to the over 1500 college students that we have worshipping with us this weekend.

Derrick's story is just **one of 100s** that I could share of college students that have joined our Go Now Initiative.

The "Go Now Initiative" includes both the Summit's summer AND 2YR missions opportunities for college students.

- **As Derrick said, he began with 1 of the summer initiatives called City Project: a 2-Month, intensive discipleship & missional experience where students serve locally, nationally, and internationally.**
- **It includes 1 week in NYC, 5 weeks in Durham, and 2 weeks overseas. A pretty incredible experience.**

Whether you're an underclassman or a graduating senior, majoring in pre-med, engineering or STILL UNDECLARED, one of these projects is for you.

They're **not just for people called to full-time ministry**. In fact, we encourage ALL of our college students to use at least one summer for something like City Project, and the first two years after graduation to engage in one of our 2-Year initiatives.

I did something like this when I was in college, and it was life-changing, **so I want personally to invite you** to put your “yes” on the table, and consider being a part of one of these summer or 2-year initiatives.

The **deadline for applications** is February 1st. You can find out more information at summitrdu.com

For the rest of you who are feeling a bit left out, let me share that over the next few weeks you're going to have the opportunity to put your 'yes' on the table through multiple opportunities- signing up for a short term mission trip, sponsoring a child through Compassion International, or engaging with one of our local ministry partners. So stay tuned

Introduction

This is **week 3 of our series** where we are working our way through the whole Bible, and we're in Genesis 3, if you have Bible and a notebook... encourage you to get those out.

This is one of the most important passages of Scripture in the Bible: *the story of the fall of the human race.*

I'd like to begin this weekend with what we all know. Whether you embrace Christian faith or not, most of us know that something is not right with the world.

It's easy to see it in other people; there are a lot of really dangerous people *out there*. And maybe you think those problems are the result of a lack of education; or poverty;

- if you are on the left you might be convinced that the **problem is the ideologies** of the right, or visa versa.
- Or maybe you see the world's problems as a **breakdown of the family** structure;
- or maybe you see **religion itself** as the primary problem.

But, in **our more reflective moments**, we have to acknowledge that there is a problem in our hearts, too.

- Do you ever have one of those moments where something slips out of you that totally embarrasses you... Maybe it is an outburst of anger, or you say **something about someone** or to someone, or

you **state some desire** you have... and **later you feel bad** about it and so you go back to whomever you said it to and say, “I’m sorry. I didn’t mean that. That’s not really me.”

- **Really, though?** In the moment you meant it. And if it’s not really you, then where did it come from?
- Maybe a **better explanation** is that as we get older, we just better at filtering what is in our hearts—we know when to keep our mouths shut. (UNTIL WE GET REALLY OLD...)
- *But just because we don’t say it doesn’t mean it isn’t inside of us.*
- In fact, maybe **what snuck out of your mouth** in that moment is the best reflection of what’s actually in your heart? It’s the **real, unfiltered** you. *Maybe it’s not the **exception**, but a **reflection** of what’s really going on down there.*

When you were **dating, did you ever play that game**, “*What are you thinking now?*” **You learn not to play that after you get married.**

Because when you’re infatuated it is totally safe. *What are you thinking about now?* “How beautiful you are; how adorable that little snort is when you giggle.” But after you’ve been married for a while, they might ask it when you’re thinking: “*How am I possibly going to make it another 20 years?*”

How would you like it if there were someone who, whenever they wanted, could just read out whatever you were thinking? How awful would that be?

- **Recently, I was on a trip and I had to rent a car**, and they gave me a **Jeep Cherokee**—and it had this new GPS feature on it where every time you went over the speed limit this **pleasant little voice**, in a slightly alarmed tone, would come on and say, “The Speed Limit *is* 55.” **It was embarrassing.** I’d be driving down the road talking to whomever was in the car when this little **self-righteous voice** would come on announcing my sin to everyone in the car. **But it made me think about how uncomfortable** it would be if a little voice did that every time I sinned in my heart. **When you are in a restaurant looking at the dessert menu**, a little voice announces, “You are already 12 lbs. overweight.” If you are

walking through the mall and see a pretty girl, the little voice says “*Your wife’s name is....*”

You have to acknowledge that there is a lot of stuff going on down there that is just not good.

Or think about this: **Andy Stanley** points out that we like to call dumb decisions that we make “mistakes.”

- “I made some *mistakes* in my previous marriage.”
- “I made some *mistakes* at my former job.”
- Or when a politician or celebrity is discovered to have been involved in a multi-year affair, he refers to those recurring rendezvous as “poor choices” or “mistakes.”

But does *mistake* really capture the magnitude of an affair? The offended spouse usually doesn’t think so. Your kids don’t see it that way. A **mistake is what happens when you forget to carry the 1** in a math problem. Offended spouses feel something different: they feel betrayed.

Or think about this. Stanley says, “Sometimes we **make *mistakes* on purpose**. Don’t we? Don’t *you*? Sometimes we plan our mistakes. You are probably guilty of some premeditated *mistakes* in your life!”

- S “What do you call a *mistake* that you make on purpose? What’s the best term to describe a *mistake* you make on a recurring basis? What do you call a person who plans and carries out the same mistakes over and over and then lies about it to everyone? A serial *mistaker*?”¹

We have to have a better word, folks, and that’s where the Bible offers, I believe, a better explanation. It says there is a disease that has corrupted all of us, and that disease breaks out in Genesis 3.

¹ Andy Stanley, *It Came from Within* and *Starting Point (Investigative Bible Study) Curriculum*

Genesis 3: God created us perfect, but that lasts about 10 seconds... Adam and Eve appear to have the moral attention span of a **2-year-old hyped up on Pixy Sticks**, and just a few verses later this whole thing unravels.

Gen 3:1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’”² And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden,³ but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” (Technically, that is adding to what God said... God never said, “Neither shall you touch it.”

- I don’t know if this is the beginning of a resentment toward God, “He’s so unreasonable he won’t even let us touch it,” or if she’s just ignorant.
- **Either way, distortion of God’s words** is dangerous.
- **If she had been in our AWANA program**, we would never have let her get away with that.)

⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die.”⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

- ****This is a terrible verse, btw, for men.** “*who was with her*,” means, in Hebrew, that they were right there together, elbow to elbow. **He was not off somewhere doing man things**—killin’ and grillin’—while she stayed home and planted flowers.
- He was standing right there, like an idiot, waiting to see if she would drop dead when she ate it.
- **1 Tim 2 says he wasn’t deceived:** He knew exactly what God had said, and what God said would happen if they did it.

⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

In this story we see FOUR THINGS: 1. *The nature of our sin*; 2. *Our instinctive response to our sin*; 3. *The devastating consequences of our sin*; and, then, 4. *The only cure for our sin*.

1. The nature of our sin

Several components make up this temptation. *The first is...*

A. Unbelief

- The serpent launches his offensive with the words, “*Did God really say?*”
 - “*Are you sure?... “Maybe they just told you that in Sunday school but it’s not really true.”*”
- Then he **assails the character of God:**
 - *You know, “God doesn’t have your **best interests** at heart. He doesn’t really love you.”*
 - *You can’t really **trust him**.*
 - *You know, Eve, you’d make a better lord of your life. Nobody knows you like you know you; only you can decide what is best for you.”²*
 - Up until this moment, you see, **God had been the one** who told them what was *good*.
 - The whole creation story is, “God saw it,” and “God declared it was good.”
 - **Now, they take it upon themselves** to decide what is good. “I know what’s best for me.” It was a terrible trade.
- Next, he tells her, “You will not surely die.”
 - *There will be no judgment.*
- Every time you are tempted these are the core components of the lie:
 - God doesn’t love you or he’s not trustworthy

² Joby Martin, What’s Wrong with Me? Gen 3.

- You know better than God
- Don't worry about judgment...
 - "Surely there's not an afterlife where some people are punished forever for their sins."
 - Or maybe you just don't really think about it. Most people don't, even though they believe in it...
 - Pascal: Life is like a man in a stagecoach barreling toward a cliff.
 - Insanity! Heb 9:27

(B. Idolatry)

- **Right after unbelief** comes idolatry.
- I **won't spend long** on this one, but Paul in Romans 1 says about this scene that we gave to one of God's creations the glory that belongs to God.
 - **Glory in Hebrew is "weight."** It is something we elevate in importance to God's level.
 - **Can't live without: money, romance, respect, family, comfort...**
- In this story the idol has 3 components.
 - Lust of the flesh: "she saw it was good for food"
 - Lust of the eyes: "I need more than what God has given to me." "He's holding out on me." I can't trust him and be satisfied with what he provides.
 - The pride of life: I can be like God. I'd be best in making the rules; sitting on the throne.

This culminates in **C. Rebellion**. In the words of Frank Sinatra, who sings the anthem of hell, "I'll do it *my way*."

Every sin, every disobedience, every time, follows this pattern:
Unbelief, idolatry, rebellion.

- These lies **bubble up from your heart**; they are **everywhere in our culture**... almost assumed dogma.

- I tried to explain this to my kids recently... ***The Little Mermaid: Disney vs. Hans Christian Anderson's original.*** In Disney's it's about her yearning to be out of the ocean to be "part of that other world." In the real one... The point of the Disney movie is, "if you follow your heart and stay true to it, eventually you'll be happy." The point of the real one is, "Listen to your dad!" That's what we do for devotions at my house.
- "You know best, there's no judgment..."

Where are you believing these lies? I'll tell you... In whatever part of your life you are not 100% sold out to God is an area in which you have believed these lies.

- **For example:** I know **unmarried couples** who come to our church who are living together... Clearly, you want God to be a part of your life; that's why you are here, but in this area you think, "*My way is better...*" This is an area where you can't trust him...
- Or, I meet a lot of people who say, "**I plan to get into church one day...**" but this is a time when I've got to really prioritize my career I work on Sunday. Or, I have to keep my kids involved in all these things so they can have a bright future and that's why we can't come to church." Basically, you are saying, "God, in these areas—my career and kids, I don't really trust you; I've got to take care of me first."

If you're not fully surrendered to God right now, it's what is controlling your heart.

2. Our instinctive response to our sin

⁸ And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" ¹⁰ And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." ¹¹ He said, "Who told you that

you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?"

What did we feel?

- **Don't want to belabor this**, since I explain it so often... **NAKEDNESS**. What do you do when you feel naked? Seek cover.
- That is a picture of the human race. It **manifests itself as insecurity**:
 - **Playwright Arthur Miller said** that he quit believing in God in large part because he couldn't accept the doctrines about guilt and judgment. He thought that by freeing himself from God he would find freedom from guilt. But what he found instead, by his own admission, was that the feeling remained, and that he lived or died based on the audience's approval. Inside his soul he needed to hear "well done." All he had done was switched out God with other people.³
 - **Or a nagging sense of guilt**. I've quoted Jean Paul Sartre, one of my favorite atheists, the last few weeks, so I'll do it again. Sartre said inside every human heart, whether they believe God or not, is a voice that whispers "**not acceptable**." "Condemned."
 - **It hinders our relationships**, he said, because we have this feeling that if people knew me—all of me—they wouldn't like me and would reject me. We always keep people at arms length.

³ "I see now, there was a presumption. That one moved . . . on an upward path toward some elevation where—God knows what—I would be justified, or even condemned. A verdict anyway. I think now that my disaster really began when I looked up one day—and the bench was empty. No judge in sight. And all that remained was the endless argument with oneself—this pointless litigation of existence before an empty bench." Arthur Miller, "After the Fall," in *The Portable Arthur Miller* (Ed. Christopher Bigsby; New York: Penguin, 2003), 262.

So what did we do with that feeling of nakedness? **We hid**. In several ways:

- **First, Adam hid behind the trees**, which has to be one of the dumbest scenes of the Bible. "He'll never find us in the trees! I know he spoke all this into existence with a word, but if we hide in the trees, he won't be able to see us. **TO THE TREES!**"
 - It reminds me of when I used to play hide and seek with my kids and I'd go in the bedroom and my 2 year old would have their head under the bed, their whole body sticking out. And I'd say, "Ryah, are you in here?" and she'd say, "No"...
 - Folks, that is no more ridiculous than thinking God doesn't see it all.
- **How do we hide from God?** **A. By never being honest about our sin**. By rationalizing it. By saying, "But yeah, on the whole I'm a good person... compared to others."
- **Or maybe you just put your head under the bed and refuse to think about it**, and that's **B. By refusing to think about judgment**
 - You are like the man in the stagecoach...
 - You know death and judgment are coming... and you refuse to think about it.
- **Here's another way we do it:**¹² The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate."¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." **They are all standing there with arms pointed this way.**
 - **C. By blame-shifting.**
 - "I was in impossible circumstances."
 - "They did me wrong first."
 - "I ran with the wrong crowd."
 - "It was a **difficult time**. Think of all the **stress I was under**." "My **wife was impossible** to live with."
- **D. Through religion**
 - They made for themselves fig leaves. *Fig leaves are the 1st religion*

- “I’ll make up for guilt by going through religious observances.”
 - “I’ll be good and go to church or synagogue or mosque and donate money.”
 - This is like the **man who buys his wife flowers** in an attempt to make up for an affair.
- The #1 substitute for a true relationship with God is religion.
 - Atheism will never play well with the human race.
 - The human race instinctively believes in God. But that doesn’t mean we are honest before God or fully surrendered to him...
 - What we do is come up with a revised version of God that we can pay off and control.
 - **Religious zealots are often the furthest from God** because they are **using zeal in religion** to cover up for real problems in their heart; fervency in religions keeps them from dealing with the pride, insecurity and hate that is deep down in there.
 - **Sometimes they can use religion...**
- Folks, this is your story! This is not about Adam and Eve; it’s about each of you, and me!
 - *You, and I, have **rebelled against God**; we have spent our lives **prioritizing the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life above God.***
 - *You and I have **given more weight to others’ opinions than we did God’s**;*
 - ***Put more stock in our wisdom than his.***
 - *You have always thought that you know best. When your will conflicted with his, you chose yours.*
 - *When **others threatened what you wanted**, you trampled them, or gossiped about them and were jealous of them and hated them.*
 - *You’ve been willing to **bend the rules and cheat the system** if it would help you get ahead a little.*

- *And then **to make up for it** you tried to compare yourself to others, and at times put in a little extra religion to satisfy God...*
 - Isn’t this your STORY?
 - **You have the disease. You are sick.**
 - You don’t need a better version of you. You need a new you.

3. The devastating consequences of our sin

¹⁶ To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”

- **Amplification of pain**
 - He mentions childbirth here, but I think this is about more than just that, although ladies, having seen 4 childbirths, mad respect...
 - **Life became painful**
- **Relational conflict**
 - **Again, here, he talks about the woman’s difficulty** in relating to the man, but I think this also is symptomatic of bigger things.
 - **In the very next chapter**, Cain is going to get jealous of his brother Abel and kill him.
 - **The fruit of idolatry is constant unhappiness, which leads to hatred and conflict.** Augustine said that hatred and conflict are like smoke from the fires of idolatry.
 - For example, **if you are someone who believes romance is necessary** to make you happy, or get your worth from it, then you despair when you don't have it... and when someone finds it and you don't, like a sister or best friend, **you can't not hate them.**
 - **You show me an area of hate, worry, despair, unforgiveness or bitterness, and I'll show you an idol.** SMOKE

¹⁷ And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; ¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹ By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

- **Futility**

- *The world is cursed against us...* The ground is no longer our friend!
- *Natural disasters*
- Our lives began to be filled with heartbreak, and dissatisfaction, and pain. It all seems pointless.

- **Death**

- “From dust we come, to dust we return.” This had been God’s promise. “*The day you eat of it you will surely die.*”
- *They didn’t drop dead when they ate it; they began to die. Like a watch that began to lose its glow: light source was cut off, and the glow began to fade.*
- Our bodies and the earth began to decay...
- **Even worse, our hearts got all out of order. We rage against God** and his wisdom and his ways.
- We began to love the wrong things.
 - Best descriptions of sin, Dorothy Sayers: “Disordered loves.” When a friend confides a secret to me and I blab it to another friend later, I have elevated my love of popularity over my love of loyalty in friendship, and we know that is bad.⁴ This is how we are now.
 - That’s what sin sickness is: disordered loves.
- **We use people rather than love them.**
- **We throw people under the bus when it’s helpful for us.**

- *Sin is a willingness to throw anybody under the bus to help ourselves. Or doing anything at the expense of others to enhance our own lives.*
- We oppress; we prey on the weak; we are vengeful and selfish.

- Jesus gave us a picture of what it looks like to be healthy and alive...
 - So **surrendered to the Father’s will that...** when God told him to a cross, even though he didn’t deserve it.
 - **So loving that...** *Father forgive them.*
 - So **pure** that... never entertained a hateful thought.
 - So **humble** that when the disciples’ feet were dirty, he instinctively picked up a towel to wash them...
- *This is how we were supposed to be...*
- And he said, “unless you are perfect as I am perfect, you’ll never enter my kingdom.”

²³ ...and the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden... ²⁴ and a the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

By far, the worst: **E. Eternal loss of the presence of God**

- We lost the presence of God with no way back in. To see him again would be our death.
- This was **the greatest of all tragedies:** We lost relationship to our Father; our Companion; our Best Friend; our Shepherd; our lily of the valley; our bright and morning star. The one who made life complete...
- Nothing would **ever be complete** again; nothing would ever **make sense** again; we could **never attain true and abiding** happiness.

Sin’s consequences were unspeakable and unbearable, but we brought them on ourselves, and we continue to, eagerly, to this day.

⁴ David Brooks, writer for NYT, podcast on TGC.

In every other story, this would have been the end. But, as Sally Lloyd Jones says in JSB, not in this story.⁵

4. The only cure for our sin

- **The turning point of the whole Bible**, a scene so shocking that the Peter said the angels looked with bewilderment on it: **vs. 9, God came looking for man**. Adam, “Where are you?” What they expected was for him to destroy. But instead, he came searching for his lost son.
- And when God finds him he makes a promise. To the serpent, he said, ¹⁵ **I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”** This is **the 1st promise of Christ!**
 - The woman’s offspring is Jesus, and God points to a cosmic battle that will take place where the serpent will bite Jesus’ heel, but Jesus will crush his head.
 - The **1st prophecy**... every story in the Bible would flow out of this promise...
- Jesus would come, Romans 5:14 tells us, as a **2nd version of Adam, a truer and better Adam**, who did what Adam and Eve should have, withstood the temptation of Satan, even though the **stakes were higher and the temptation was stronger**.
 - **Like Adam**, Jesus is tempted by Satan.
 - But **unlike Adam**, Jesus is in the wilderness, having fasted for forty days. (Adam, we recall, was in Paradise!)
 - Also **unlike Adam**, Jesus receives **three temptations**—not just one. And he resists each time.
 - How does he resist? By doing what Adam failed to do—focusing on **what God had said**.
 - **Unlike Adam**, Jesus actually felt the attack of Satan.
 - In Genesis, **after tempting** Adam and Eve, the serpent slithers away.
 - But when **Jesus withstands his temptation**, the serpent **bites**. Yet in that moment (on the cross),

⁵ Sally Lloyd Jones, *The Jesus Story Book Bible*, chapter 2.

when it appeared that the serpent had won, God was actually crushing his head.⁶

- **Adam and Eve disobeyed God** and ate from a tree and died; Jesus will obey God and climb up on a tree willingly to die and bring life. He’ll climb up on the tree to take the curse so we could be released from it.
- He will take the **flaming sword of justice** that guarded the entrance to the presence of God, so that we could go back into the presence of God.
- That’s why the scene ends in vs. 21: God takes an animal and kills it and uses the skin to cover their nakedness.
 - This points toward the death of Jesus, where his death clothed us in righteousness...
- **Richard Sibbes: “Thank God there is more mercy in Christ than there is sin in us.”**

*On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,
The emblem of suffering and shame;
And I love that old cross where the Dearest and Best
For a world of lost sinners was slain.*

The requirement: repentance and faith

Repentance means you **come out from hiding** and stop blame shifting

- It **wasn’t the woman that God gave** me or **the circumstances** he put me in. It wasn’t my spouse or my boss. I **wasn’t just hanging out** with the wrong crowd; **I was the wrong crowd, which is why** got a long so well with the wrong crowd and chose to make them my friends.
- In the words of Led Zeppelin, **“Nobody’s fault but mine...”** Own your sin.
 - I wanted to be God...

⁶ Sidney Griedanus, *Preaching Christ from Genesis*.

- **SHARK OUTFIT AND BATH.** “If you are going to get clean, you have to get naked.”
 - I want you to get naked, figuratively speaking. Take off the clothes of hiding; of self-justification; of excuses.
ACKNOWLEDGE IT: *My sin.*
- The rule of the gospel: *If you expose your sin, Jesus will cover it. If you cover you sin, Jesus will expose it.*

Invitation:

Gen 3 is YOUR STORY.

- Does this **explain** what is going on in your heart?
- **Can you admit** you are a dark-hearted sinner who does more than “make mistakes?”
- Have you **realized that God is looking** for you—just like he was Adam and Eve?
 - Have you **sensed that** in your heart? His **Spirit chasing** you; his **voice beckoning** to you...
 - *The angels can't believe the opportunity you have!*
- **God sent his son Jesus on a rescue mission for YOU.**
 - I am **not talking about the person sitting next** to you. For YOU.
 - **When Jesus died** on the cross, it was for you.
 - **John 3:16:** your name

Some of you have learned a lot about Jesus, but you've never known him personally as your Lord & Savior.

MY QUESTION FOR YOU: Have you ever received him personally?

*Come, ye sinners, poor and needy, weak and wounded, sick and sore;
Jesus ready stands to save you, full of pity, love and power.
I will arise and go to Jesus; he will embrace me in his arms;
in the arms of my dear Savior, O there are ten thousand charms.*