

# (Gaining God's Approval) 3. the Testing of Adam and Eve

by Zac Poonen

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*God tests our faith through obedience to His commands, and faith is essential for living a life pleasing to God.*

**Scripture:** Genesis 2:16

**Topics:** "Trusting God's Wisdom", "Faith and Obedience"

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## Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes that God's testing of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden was essential for fulfilling His divine plans for them. Their failure stemmed from a lack of faith, as Eve allowed doubt in God's wisdom and love to lead her into disobedience. Poonen highlights that true faith requires confidence in God's commands, even when they seem unreasonable, and that obedience must stem from faith rather than intellect. He draws parallels between Eve's temptation and the challenges Christians face today, urging believers to trust in God's perfect love and power amidst trials. Ultimately, Poonen calls for a return to living by faith and adhering to God's commandments as a testament to His wisdom and love.

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## Transcript

God had great plans in mind for Adam and Eve, when He created them. But these plans could not be fulfilled apart from their being tested. And so He placed in Eden an attractive tree with luscious fruit called the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And He forbade Adam and Eve from eating of it.

The failure of Adam and Eve in Eden was primarily a failure of faith. Faith is the total leaning of the human personality on God, in total confidence in His perfect wisdom, love and power. Eve failed to have such a confidence in God and was thus lured by Satan into disobeying God's command.

Confidence in God's Wisdom

Satan suggested to Eve that there was a flaw in God's wisdom in not allowing them to eat of that tree.

God had not given Adam any reason why the tree was forbidden. Faith never needs to have a reason for obeying God. It is our intellect that demands to know the reason first. Obedience to God must always be the obedience of faith, not the obedience of reason.

Paul said that he had been called "to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles" (Rom.1:5). He also said that the "preaching of Jesus Christ had been made known to all the nations, leading to the

obedience of faith."(Rom.16:25,26)

Our intellect is the enemy of faith, as is clear from Proverbs 3:5 : "Trust in the Lord with all your heart (not `head') and do not depend on your own intellect."

The wisdom of God is hidden from the clever and the intelligent and revealed by the Spirit to those who simply believe like little babes. Jesus said, "I praise Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and intelligent and didst reveal them to babes."(Mt.11:25).

The intellect is a good servant but a bad master; and so its proper God appointed place is as the servant of the spirit in man - the spirit itself being subject to the Holy Spirit.

God gave Adam no reason as to why he could not eat of the forbidden tree, because He wanted to develop Adam's faith in Him. And this is the first area where God tests us too. Can we obey Him even when we cannot understand why He calls us to do something? What about when God calls us to do something that our reason tells us is unnecessary?

When Jesus asked Peter to step out of the boat and to walk on the water, that command was contrary to everything that Peter's reason told him. But if he had followed reason, he would never have experienced that miracle.

One could quote many such instances from the Scriptures. And here lies the reason for the powerlessness of many Christians and why many believers never experience the supernatural workings of God in their lives. They live by reason and not by faith.

#### Confidence in God's Love

Faith is also a total confidence in God's love. Satan suggested to Eve that God did not love them sufficiently and that this was why He had kept that lovely fruit out of bounds for them.

If Eve had been living by faith and not by reason, she would have replied, "Well, Satan, I don't understand why God has told us not to eat of that tree. But I am certain of one thing - that God loves us intensely; and so I am sure that He will never withhold any good thing from us. So, if he has forbidden this fruit, there must be a very good reason for it, that has our good in view."

That would have been the answer of faith. But instead she fell for the Devil's lie.

It is only the shield of faith in God's perfect love for us that "can extinguish every flaming missile of the Evil One." (Eph.6:16).

All discouragement and depression are the result of living by reason and not by faith. All anxiety and fear also have their roots in the same cause. God allows us to be tested - to be tempted to doubt His love, when He withdraws from us the `feelings' of His manifest presence with us - so that we can be strong in faith and thus come to the place of maturity where He can fulfill His purposes through us.

God made that tree of knowledge of good and evil attractive because it was only thus that Adam and Eve could be tested. Would they reject something so attractive, in favour of God? Or would they reject God and choose what pleased themselves?

This is the choice that faces us too in the moments of temptation. And that's why God has permitted temptation to be so attractive. It is only when we reject some forbidden thing that is really attractive, and to which we feel tremendously drawn and which we know can give us pleasure, that we prove that we love God wholeheartedly.

It is also thus that we prove our faith in God's perfect love - believing that what God has forbidden He has done in perfect love for our very best. Thus every temptation to sin and to disobey God becomes a trial of our faith. To live by faith is to believe that every commandment of God has come from a heart of perfect love that desires the very best for us.

When God gave the Israelites the ten commandments, Moses told them, "God has come to test you" (Exod.20:20). It says in Deuteronomy 33:2,3, "At God's right hand there was a fiery Law for them. Indeed (this proves that) He loves the people."

Would they believe that this fiery law was a proof of God's love for them? That was the test.

Where Eve failed to trust God, the Israelites also failed and they too disobeyed the commandments.

But it is just here that Jesus overcame. He lived by faith. Every temptation that Satan brought to Him in the wilderness was refuted by the simple reply, "It is written.....". Jesus lived in obedience to every word of God.

God's Word was given in perfect love for man and Jesus obeyed it in faith. Thus He has become a Forerunner for us. If we are to serve God's people effectively, it is essential that we too live by faith - and manifest our faith by total obedience to God's commandments. Thus alone can we be examples to others.

#### Confidence in God's Power

Faith is also a total confidence in God's power. If Eve had felt the pull of temptation to be irresistible, she could have cried out for help from the Lord; and she would have received it. God's power is sufficient to overcome the pull of every temptation.

Jesus cried out for this power, in the days of His flesh, and received it. That was why He never sinned.

We are told concerning Jesus that "in the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to Him Who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear". We are also told that "although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered." (Heb.5:7,8).

Now we are commanded to come with confidence to the throne of grace and to ask for grace to help us in our time of need.

"Let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace", we are exhorted, "that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need." (Heb.4:16).

God is looking for witnesses on earth - true witnesses to His perfect wisdom, love and power.

When Christians modify the commands of the New Testament they are testifying to their unbelief in God's wisdom. They imply thereby that God's omniscience was not sufficient to take into consideration the peculiar pressures of life in the 20th century!!

Jesus said, "Whoever annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." (Mt.5:16).

God tests our obedience and our faith through our attitude to the LESSER commands of His Word. The major commands, such as, "You shall not commit murder or adultery etc.," are kept by most Christians - and even by many non-Christians, for that matter. But whether we are going to be approved by God or not, is determined by our attitude to the lesser commands.

Jesus said, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her" (Mk.10:11). The outright disobedience of this command and the lax, worldly attitude to divorce and remarriage in Christian circles nowadays (particularly in Western countries) is just one indication of Satan's success in getting many Christians to modify Jesus' commands to suit man's convenience and pleasure.

The Word of God says, "Every woman who has her head uncovered while praying disgraces her head.....If a woman does not cover her head, let her also have her hair cut off." (1 Cor.11:5,6). This is a small matter. But the disappearance of the 'head-covering' among women in many 'Westernised' churches is another indication of the lack of reverence for God's Word among today's Christians.

Even water-baptism, which Jesus and the apostles insisted on, is no longer preached in 'inter-denominational' Christian circles, to avoid giving offense to anyone. Today's Christians do not mind displeasing God, so long as men are pleased!

"Has God really said.....?" was Satan's question to Eve. And it is the same question with which he introduces disobedience to God's clear commands in Christendom today.

God tested Adam and Eve and they failed.

Today, you and I are being tested.

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