

## Weekly Study of Sunday's Message

July 5, 2026 *"The first stories. What can the first stories in Genesis tell us about God and ourselves?" "Adam and Eve"*

### I Intro.

Happy Independence Day. We had an abbreviated worship service because of a church-wide fellowship celebrating our diversity. Our schedule will slow down a bit, but there are still things happening. You'll want to keep up with everything that's happening at NCC. Stay connected through our social media to keep up with everything that's going on. This is our companion devotional to Sunday's message. It's just a part of all we have to offer to you. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing. We hope you find this tool helpful on your spiritual journey. We don't want you to miss out on anything. We consider you part of our community. We have many ways you can plug into life at NCC. You can find all those through our website, app, and social media sites. Our app is the best way to livestream our services, but you can also livestream on FaceBook and YouTube. You can revisit past services, sign up for events and even give. We're encouraged by your presence when you gather with us. New and familiar faces join us every Sunday. If you join us online, we appreciate your presence. We are fully committed to our virtual attenders. We are your church family. If there is anything you need, prayer, or anything else, please let us know.

### II Sunday.

We're starting a new series today. We're hitting the first four stories in Genesis. Because of the church-wide fellowship today this will be a very quick overview of the story of Adam and Eve. It's a complicated story that we're often led to ask bigger questions about. The Genesis 1 and 2 accounts of creation and Adam and Eve are different. If you mash them together, you have to do all sorts of gymnastics to make that work. It's like mashing two foods together. They work separately. You appreciate the uniqueness of each. But they don't work when you force them together. Both accounts tell an important story and contain important truths. But we have to read them separately.

So, I want to avoid the questions; **Is this really true? If so, how did it actually happen?** These just aren't interesting questions. And will distract us from the real purpose of scripture. Engaging those questions won't call us to live a specific way. We're going to approach this series so as not to get bogged down in the historicity of them. We can hit some of the details, because those are important in revealing truths. But we're going to ask: **What do these stories teach us about the nature of God? Who he is.** And especially; **What call do these stories make on how we live our lives?**

We're going to go through today's entire passage first. And then unpack what it says about the nature of God, and what that means in our relationship with him.

**Genesis 3:1-11. Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'" "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them**

*were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"*

Let's pull out some specific truths from this account.

**Having questions/doubts about our beliefs about God is not the same as doubting God.** This story is not NEVER having questions or doubts about what you believe about God. We will have things happen that cause us to question what we believe. Know this: Your beliefs about God are not God. I know that might be a shocker to hear. God's existence or nature is not dependent upon your ability to understand or even explain him. Our beliefs about God are simply the words we've gathered, assigned value and meaning to, that help explain experiences or understandings we have about God. We start at the place of admitting our words, our understanding of God, are a very human (limited and finite) attempt to explain something that is indescribable. Try this; put into words your strongest feelings for someone you love. The best trip you ever took. The most incredible thing you've ever experienced. For me it was experiencing a total solar eclipse. We can't! We begin this journey through the first part of Genesis, accepting ANY attempt to describe or fully contain God in mere words, is so limited. Be okay with that. Nobody wants a God small enough to fit into a description. Especially our words.

**But we need to know. Doubting God will create some distance from God.** I don't want to shame you here. We all have moments in the journey of our lives, something happens that knocks us off course. And it makes us question our understanding of who God is. But we also need to honestly face what happens when we do doubt who God is. We can't water down this truth. Doubting God will create distance between us and God. This isn't only a spiritual truth. It's just how life works. Want to kill or damage a relationship. Doubt the sincerity or integrity of that person. But that distance is always us from God...not God from us. Doubt, the struggle to trust, to place our faith in ANYTHING, especially our faith and trust in God, will create distance with that person, and also God. **"WHY?"** Because if we don't trust God, we will resort to other sources, people, things, to help us with the important decisions, and direction of our life. We simply have to own that.

**The fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.** Because it's important, but I don't have the time to dig into it, I want to hit it very quickly. The temptation isn't just eating some fruit, from a singled out tree. The temptation is the desire to have something we shouldn't have, and can't handle. What do we call things we KNOW we shouldn't have? *"Forbidden fruit"*. God didn't want us to have this knowledge, because we're not good at judgment. Adam and Eve called being naked wrong after eating the fruit, even though God never stated that being naked was. They made it up. Because they believed they knew what was good and what was evil. We're just not good at deciding what is good and what is evil. This is the point of the famous parable of the Tares and Wheat in Matthew 13. We learned in the June series that Both/And can exist at the same time. And we're not always good at making the actual distinction. That's not the primary point of this tree, but I felt we needed to hit it. **DON'T EAT FROM THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL!!**

### III Challenge.

**So, what points do we need to hit?** Choosing to make ourselves the center of good and evil, right and wrong will cause a few things to happen. And they are connected. These truths will guide our walk through the other stories we hit in Genesis.

**1. We will hide from God.** This is the perceived distance we create between us and God. Hiding is the natural reaction to disobedience. But it is also the default reaction of creating your own understanding of good and evil. We hide from God, 'feel' shame, even when we haven't done anything worthy of feeling that. There's an entire world out there that feels like all is lost, because they've done so many wrong things, why bother actually seeking God. This should grow compassion and kindness within us for others. 'Hiding' can take a variety of forms. Either literally hiding from God. Or we'll hide in our work, perfectionism, performance, achievement, substances, and more. Or for many of us, we hide from God in our spirituality. We're doing all the things, practicing all the practices. Doing the religious things. But we're not meeting, encountering God in those practices. So, the question for us: **When you're hiding from God, where do you hide?**

**2. But God will always come searching for us.** To reconcile us back to him. To restore the broken relationship. **"Where are you?" "Who told you...?" "Who told you?"** is not a scolding. It's not shaming. "Who told you?" is a reminder we will hear a lot of voices. And we have to be wise and diligent enough to know which voices to listen to. Adam and Eve allowed themselves to fall victim to "you are not worthy" untruths. "Who told you...?" is us doubting God, and naming things good or bad that really aren't. Nowhere did God tell Adam and Eve that being naked was wrong, or to hide. This kind of shame, feeling like you have to hide, is not of God. This is the world telling us what is good, right, and what isn't. Even worse...it's often religion.

Question here: **Deep down...can you feel God asking: Where are you?**

**3. Live into your humanness.** You will have doubts, questions, and listen to other voices. You will make poor choices. You will call good things evil, and bad things good. It's just what it means to be human, and ALL that comes with that. I want to encourage you; **JUST STOP HIDING**...even if it's at church. Just know God is always seeking you out in the cool of the morning. Not to judge, shame, punish you. But to restore you as his own.

Final question: **How will you respond to God calling out to you?**

Next week we're back to a full service and we hit the story of Cain and Abel. fun huh?