

Bible Studies for Life: January 22

*Discerning the Voice of God: Does it Agree with the Bible? •
Genesis 3:1-6*

By Becky Brown



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I will say that I have clearly understood what He wanted me to do about specific decisions or events in my life. He has made my choices plain through a study of His Word accompanied by prayer and an appropriately necessary time of waiting and trusting followed by a cautious, but certain, bold step of personal faith.

At times, I have sought counsel from trusted friends who have a deeply personal relationship with the Lord. God has used messages from pastors, song lyrics, even a reflective moment in God's beautiful creation to "speak" to my heart. Such times are deeply personal and comforting. The Lord wants us to know Him and His will and plan for our lives. He does not want to leave us in the dark. His first recorded words were, "Let there be light!"

The clearest, best, most certain "test" for truth and guidance

is found in the Bible. Jesus is called "The Word" of God. Scripture was written and preserved for us to be the very accessible "WORD" of God, a love letter addressed directly to the people on God's Earth. In order to "hear" God speak, we simply need to walk daily through the pages of His Word.

Our lesson text is taken from Genesis 3:1-6. Adam and Eve have been created by God and placed in a garden called Eden. They were made in the image of God. Their relationship with Him and with each other reeked with the beauty of intimacy and protection and complete provision. Work was pleasurable and joyful. One God. One man. One Woman. One command Genesis 2:16-17: "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die."

Genesis 3 introduces the tempter and the temptation to doubt or question the command of God. The serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. He approaches Eve with the full intention of offering her the opportunity to walk away from the truth. The actual fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is not revealed. The one thing we know for sure is that it was forbidden. The word for fruit in Hebrew is "peri" which sounds like "pear." The real problem was not the fruit on the tree, it was the PAIR of people on the ground. The choice they made would literally be felt and heard 'round the world.

At that point in history, the word of God was unwritten, but it had been spoken clearly. Just as it was revealed to them, they were to obey it. The serpent was determined to draw them away from their Creator. That is still his determined task. In order to combat his attacks and advances, we must remember and hold dear and follow the word as it has been revealed to us.

Hebrews 6 tells us that it is impossible for God to lie. We are encouraged to take refuge in Him and find hope. This hope

is an anchor for our souls, steadfast and sure. Eve fell for the word of the deceiver and abandoned the word of her Creator. Then she offered the fruit to Adam and he partook (no wonder men hate leftovers to this very day!).

The sin of pride and the desire to be the "god" of their own lives made that forbidden fruit look delightful. They basically ignored the command of God to their own hurt. Since that moment, every person that has seen the light of day at birth possesses a sinful nature. The writer of Romans declares that the wages of sin is death. At the murder of Abel by his brother Cain, Adam and Eve would understand the gravity of sin and death.

God has spoken: we must read, heed and obey.

Brown is minister of missions at First Church, Richland.