



READ: Selections from Genesis 2-3 (NIV)

The Lord God had planted a garden in the east in Eden. He put in the garden the man he had formed. The Lord God gave the man a command. He said, "You may eat fruit from any tree in the garden. But you must not eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you do, you will certainly die."

(Genesis 2:8, 16-17)

The serpent was more clever than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. The serpent said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat fruit 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 the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden. Do not even touch it. If you do, you will die.'" "You will certainly not die," the serpent said to the woman. "God knows that when you eat fruit from that tree, you will know things you have never known before. Like God, you will be able to tell the difference between good and evil." The woman saw that the tree's fruit was good to eat and pleasing to look at. She also saw that it would make a person wise. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her. And he ate it. Then both of them knew things they had never known before. They realized they were naked. So they sewed together fig leaves and made clothes for themselves. *(Genesis 3:1-7)*

*Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What have you done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me. That's why I ate the fruit." So the Lord God spoke to the serpent. He said, "Because you have done this, 'You are set apart from all livestock and all wild animals. I am putting a curse on you. You will crawl on your belly. You will eat dust all the days of your life. I will make you and the woman hate each other. Your children and her children will be enemies. Her son will crush your head. And you will bite his heel.'" *(Genesis 3:13-15)**

ENTER THE STORY:

It might be hard for us to imagine, but there was a time when sin and death did not exist and nothing bad ever happened! God's world was "good" and the first two people, Adam and Eve, lived in a wonderful garden. God put them in charge of the garden and told them to work the land and take care of it. There were trees all over the beautiful garden, and they could eat from ALL of them, except one specific tree in the middle of the garden, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Adam and Eve loved being with God because they could walk and talk with him whenever they wanted.

Sadly, Adam and Eve did NOT live happily ever after because they chose to listen to the voice of God's enemy, the devil, and they disobeyed God.

It feels like our story just started, and already everything is falling apart. Sin is nasty and once it gets into God's good world, it spreads like a sickness. It seems impossible to get rid of it, but we need to know that God was NOT surprised when Adam and Eve disobeyed. God knows EVERYTHING, so he knew they would disobey him, and it was all part of his plan *(remember when we told you that the story of Christmas actually started in Genesis?)*

There is always a punishment for sin, whether we can see it or not, and the bad news for Adam and Eve was that their disobedience caused them to have to leave the perfect garden and be separated from God's presence, but in the midst of their pain, God gave them a glimmer of hope.

- In Genesis 3:15, God said that one day a special someone from Eve's family line far, far, into the future would come and
- crush the head of the serpent and defeat him forever. Our hope rests completely on the actions of this special person –
- this "Serpent Crusher."

- *Do you know who this special someone might be? It's Jesus!*

- Through Adam and Eve, sin and death entered the world and ruined everything, but the hope of Christmas is that the
- Serpent Crusher – Jesus Christ, would be born as a human, so that he could die to pay the price for our sins.

■ **PRAY:** *Jesus, we are amazed at how much you love us. You love us so much that you left heaven to enter our world as a tiny baby. Even though we are the ones who disobey you and don't follow after you, we know that you are the one who willingly takes our punishment to bring us back to the Father. Thank you, Jesus, for giving up everything for us. May your good news never grow old to us. Amen.*