

Mind

Two Trees

GENESIS 3:1-21

SESSION 7.23



Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Encourage your group to listen to the podcast for this session (Share the link via email or social media)

Familiar Choices

Give a list of things to choose between and let the group quickly express choices (stand on one side of room or the other)

Say: I'm going to offer you a series of choices. For each choice you must choose one. If you choose the first option, stand on this side of the room, if you choose the second option, stand on this side (or have them stand if they choose the first, and sit if they choose the second).

- Breakfast or dinner
- Dogs or cats
- Hot weather or cold weather
- Conversation or silence
- Adventure or safety
- Busy or still
- Travel or stay home

(feel free to edit the options to better work for your group)

After working through the choices, ask questions like these:

- Were these hard or easy choices? Why?
- Did it take long to make each choice? Why or why not?
- Do you like to make choices, or would you prefer others make them for you? Why?
- How does God feel about us as decision-makers?

☐ *Choosing a Fresh Hearing*

This passage is very familiar. We may have heard sermons and lessons on the text across many years. Sometimes interpretations lead us to believe ideas are in the text that actually do not appear. Some popular interpretations of this passage would lead us to expect to hear about “the Fall”, “the devil or satan”, or “Afterlife”, or “apple”. But these words do not appear anywhere in this text.

Part of the power of Scripture is that it can speak fresh to us. But first, it is helpful to set aside our preconceived notions of what the text says and hear it again fresh... as if for the first time.

Try to hear this text again, as if it is your first reading of it.

Read Genesis 3:1-21.

View the Bible Background Video.

☐ *Tempting Choices*

Say: "The Serpent encourages Eve to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Then lead a discussion using questions like these:

- What might Eve's thought processes have been in making this decision?
- Was the tree in the middle tempting? Do you think it was a good tree? Why or why not?
- Do humans seek the knowledge of good and evil? Do we prefer innocence? Explain.

☐ *God's Choices*

Shift the conversation to focus on God's choices, using questions like these:

- Why do you think God set up the garden in this way?
- Why was the serpent present?
- Why did God place both trees in the garden if they were not to eat from one of them?
- How do you make sense of the two trees? Why would eating from both be a problem? (Why would God forbid it?)
- Why do you think God seemed surprised by their choice? Were Adam and Eve really able to hide from God?
- In the Podcast, it is suggested that God is behaving much like a good parent... expected young ones to grow up... provided clothing and passage into the larger world.
- How do Adam and Eve behave as children, and how does God respond as a loving parent? What are your reactions to the perspective of God as a loving parent?

☐ *Our Choices*

Shift the conversation to focus on our choices, using questions like these:

- Do we face similar choices between staying innocent and growing in knowledge? How does God expect us to handle knowledge — especially the knowledge of good and evil?
- If you were in Adam or Eve's place, would you choose to reach for the knowledge of good and evil or continue to avoid it? Why or why not?
- How did eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil change Adam and Eve (and the human race)? Are you pleased they made the choice? Why or why not?

☐ *Choosing to Grow*

Regardless of how we view the choices in the garden, being faithful to God requires choices.

- Do modern Christians face a choice between two trees? How would you describe that choice?
- Does the church face a choice between two trees? How would you describe that choice?
- What are the dangers inherent in God allowing us the freedom to choose? Where can things go wrong?
- How do our choices affect how we mature and grow in faith? Do we grow more by making certain kinds of choices?

Close with a prayer thanking God for the freedom to choose, and asking for humility and wisdom as we seek to make wise choices that are pleasing to God.