

THE FIRST TEMPTATION AND SIN: MAN'S FALL FROM PERFECTION — MAN AND WOMAN'S FIRST STEPS INTO SIN GENESIS 03:01–06

Introduction

The world is full of lawlessness, crime, immorality, adultery, drugs, drunkenness, lying, stealing, cheating, greed, covetousness, extravagance, indulgence, murder, assaults, war — all kinds of sin and evil. But this has not always been true. There was a time when the world was perfect, a time when there was not a single act of violence or evil upon earth. In fact, an evil deed had never been committed. The earth was perfect; both man and woman were sinless. They knew only harmony and peace, satisfaction and fulfilment, love, joy and peace — all the fullness of life prevailed. Perfection ruled and reigned.

What happened? What destroyed the perfection and caused such devastation and lawlessness upon earth? What corrupted the heart of man?

This is the discussion of this Scripture, a passage that reveals the naked truth about temptation and sin. This is, *The First Temptation and Sin: Man's Fall from Perfection — Man and Woman's First Steps into Sin*.

- I. The serpent (v. 1).
- II. Step 1: being confronted with suggestive, enticing and tempting thoughts (v. 1).
- III. Step 2: entertaining, harbouring and discussing the suggestive thoughts (v. 2).
- IV. Step 3: doubting the consequences of God's Word (v. 3).
- V. Step 4: thinking that one will be more fulfilled, that one will gain and benefit more (vv. 4-5).
- VI. Step 5: looking and desiring — lusting (v. 6).
- VII. Step 6: committing the sin: taking and eating the forbidden fruit (v. 6).
- VIII. Step 7: leading others to sin: being a stumbling-block (v. 6).

I. *Genesis 03:01 Satan, The Serpent*

This event of the serpent tempting the woman is a shocking scene, a drastic turn of events. God — had just created the universe and it was all good. Scripture is pointedly clear about this: God was well pleased — perfectly satisfied — with His creation, for it was perfect. It had to be perfect, for He is God, the Sovereign LORD and Majesty of the universe, and God cannot create anything imperfect. God had also created the Garden of Eden for man, the most perfect place imaginable for man to live. Everything was ideal and perfect: man was in utopia, in paradise. Man could want nothing more.

But then it happened. Out of nowhere, something terrible happened: evil appeared in the form of an evil creature. Where in the world did the creature come from? Was not man in the Garden of Eden, in paradise itself?

“Yes!” The answer to these questions is, “Yes. God did create all things good, and He did give man paradise in which to live.”

But, if this is so, who is this evil creature and where did he come from? How did he get upon earth and into the Garden of Eden, the paradise of earth? Other passages of Scripture tell us. Note seven points.

1. Scripture tells us that the devil, Satan himself, is called the serpent.

Rev 12:9 *The great dragon was hurled down — that ancient serpent called the devil or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.* (See vv. 14-15; 20:2).

Does this mean that Satan possessed or energized a real living serpent and spoke through the creature? Some outstanding commentators hold to this position. (H.C. Leupold. *Genesis*, Vol. 1, p. 142; Derek Kidner. *Genesis*. “Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries.” (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1979), pp. 67, 70). Or does it mean that Satan actually transformed himself into a serpent (NIV)? Or does it mean that the serpent is only a reference to Satan, whose very name is “that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan” (Rev 12:9)? That is, could this just be a picture of Satan himself? Some outstanding scholars hold this position. (W.H. Griffith Thomas. *Genesis, a Devotional Commentary*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1946). p. 47). Is it possible to know which is meant? Is Scripture clear about how Satan tempted man? Some very dear commentators hold that Scripture allows for either interpretation. (*Mathew Henry's Commentary*, p. 21). (See note, Gen 3:14.)

In determining just who or what the serpent was, these facts need to be noted about the Scripture.

- a. The serpent — when first created — apparently walked upright and was a most magnificent creature (Gen 3:14). This is either symbolic language referring to Satan (note that v. 15 is definitely symbolic, for it definitely refers to Satan) or it is literal language referring to an actual serpent. If it is literal, then v. 15 switches to symbolic language.
- b. The craftiness of the serpent is compared to the craftiness of the beast of the field. Scripture says the serpent was more *subtle* (crafty, clever, shrewd) than any of the animals upon earth (Gen 3:1). This is either a comparison of Satan's craftiness to the craftiness of the animals, or of the craftiness of one animal to the craftiness of the other animals.
- c. Scripture gives examples where Satan had the power to use people as his tools and speak through them.

=> Peter (Mat 16:22-23).

=> Demon-possessed people (Mat 8:28-34; Acts 16:16-18).

d. All creation was created perfect by God, even the serpent. If we say that the serpent was a literal serpent used as an evil tool by Satan, then we have a problem explaining how creation was perfect: how could an animal be used as an evil tool in a world of perfect animals? This is the reason some interpreters say that Satan actually transformed or clothed himself as a serpent. (*NIV Study Bible*, Gen. 3:1).

2. Jesus Christ Himself tells us that Satan was behind the tragic fall of man.

John 8:44 *You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*

3. Paul also says that Satan was behind the fall of man.

2 Cor 11:3, 14 *But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ... And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.*

Rom 16:20 *The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.*

(See Gen 3:15 for the specific event to which Paul refers).

4. Scripture says that Satan had been the most exalted angel ever created by God, that God had created him to rule as the highest of all created beings. His particular reign and rule for God was over the earth and the universe, over the *physical and material world* and dimension of being. But Satan did the same thing that all men have done: he sinned and fell. He began to look at himself, and he began to want to live like he wanted instead of like God wanted. He wanted...

- to rule and reign over the universe like he wanted
- to rule without answering to God
- to possess the ultimate authority over the world
- to be the supreme ruler of the earth and physical universe

Satan wanted the very same thing that human nature has wanted down through history: to be one's own person; to do one's own thing; to control one's own life.

Satan wanted what so many power-hungry men have wanted down through history: to be the sovereign ruler over nations and over the lives of people. This is what Scripture means when it reveals what Satan said in Isa 14:13-14:

- "You said in your heart...
- "I will ascend into heaven [God's position, rule, and authority over the universe]...
- "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God...
- "I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation [be honoured, praised, adored, worshipped by the congregation of others]...

- “I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High [God Himself]” (Isa 14:13-14).

Simply stated, Satan rebelled against God. Consequently, God had no choice but to cast Satan down from his exalted position in heaven. Originally, when Satan ruled as the highest of all created beings...

- his name was Lucifer, which means *star of the morning*.
- he was the anointed cherub who covered the very throne of God Himself. He was the angel in charge of the glory of God's very own throne throughout the physical and material universe.

Note how the following Scriptures have a double reference referring both to an earthly king and to Satan himself.

Isa 14:12-15 *How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, “I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.” But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit.*

Ezek 28:11-19 *The word of the LORD came to me: “Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: “‘You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendour. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings. By your many sins and dishonest trade you have desecrated your sanctuaries. So I made a fire come out from you, and it consumed you, and I reduced you to ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching. All the nations who knew you are appalled at you; you have come to a horrible end and will be no more.’”*

Note one other significant fact: Jesus Christ Himself said that the Isaiah passage was speaking about Satan. He quoted Isa 14:12 in referring to Satan in Luke 10:18.

=> Note Isaiah 14:12.

Isa 14:12 *How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations!*

=> Note Luke 10:18.

Luke 10:18 *He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven."*

5. The Bible teaches that Satan has some control over the earth. He has access to influence the world and man. History, the destruction and devastation of nature and the terrible evil of men — all this — show that the domain of Satan includes the earth and the universe, that is, the physical and material world or dimension of being.

The question arises, when did Satan get access and control of the earth and universe? God certainly did not create the universe and put Satan and his evil forces in charge of it. The only living and true God — the Supreme LORD and Majesty of the universe who is the God of perfection and love — could never create evil nor put evil in charge of His perfect creation. This would be totally against God's nature. This is discussed in the next point, point six. For now, the fact to see is the control and authority of Satan in the world. Scripture says this:

=> Scripture calls Satan the god of this world.

2 Cor 4:3-4 *And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."*

=> Scripture calls Satan the prince of this world..

John 12:31 *"Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out."*

John 14:30 *"I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me."*

John 16:11 *"And in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned."*

=> Scripture calls Satan the prince of the power of the air.

Eph 2:2 *In which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.*

=> Scripture calls Satan the ruler of the darkness of this world.

Eph 6:12 *For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*

=> Satan is the king, of a kingdom.

Mat 12:26 *“If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand?”*

Mat 4:8-9 *Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”*

⇒ Satan has his grip upon the whole world.

1 John 5:19 *We know that we are the children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.*

6. The Bible teaches that Satan struggles and fights against God and His will. Satan's purpose in fighting against God is twofold.

a. Satan's purpose is power and worship, to receive as much of the power and worship of the universe as possible (Isa 14:12-17; Eze 28:11-17). He goes about this in at least three ways.

⇒ He opposes and disturbs God's work in the world (Isa 14:12-17; Eze 28:11-17; Job 1:6; 2:1-6; Mat 4:10; Mark 1:13; Luke 4:8; Rev 12:7-9).

⇒ He discourages believers through various strategies (see notes, Luke 22:31; Eph 6:10-12).

⇒ He arouses God's justice against people by leading people to sin and to deny and rebel against God. And when they do, God's justice has to act and judge people to the fate of their choice: that of living with Satan eternally (see note, John 13:31-33).

b. Satan's purpose is to hurt and cut the heart of God. Why? Because God has judged and condemned him for rebelling against God. Therefore, Satan does all he can to get back at God. The best way he can do this is to turn the hearts of people away from God and lead them to sin and to follow the way of evil. (See notes, pt. 3, Rev 12:3-4; pt. 2, Rev 12:7-9; pt. 2, Rev 12:10-11.)

The point is this: when did evil enter the world? How did Satan get access to and control of the world? This much can be said: God would certainly not create the universe and then put Satan in charge of it. This would be totally contrary to the nature of the Sovereign LORD and Majesty of the universe, the Sovereign LORD whose very nature is love and perfection. Satan's history must, therefore, precede man. Satan's creation and fall happened before man was ever created. In the eons of past history when Satan was created as the highest of angelic beings, he must have been placed in charge of the earth, even as man was later to be. But...

- just as man was to sin and fall, so Satan sinned and fell
 - just as God has not yet utterly destroyed man, so God did not utterly destroy Satan — not yet
 - just as God still has a purpose for man, so God still had a purpose for Satan
- Satan was to be used by God to test man, to give man the opportunity to choose God, to exercise his free will to obey and follow God instead of disobeying and rejecting

God (see notes, Gen 2:16-17; 3:1). Remember that we as sinful human beings still have the right to roam about the universe. So Satan, as a sinful spiritual being, still has the right to roam about the earth and universe. God's purpose for creation will not be stopped, neither by man nor by Satan and his evil spirits, not until God's purpose is completed and fulfilled. God is going to have a race of people with free wills, a race of people who will choose to love and follow Him supremely.

The point is this: the best explanation as to where Satan and evil entered the world is that of the Scripture, that of the Holy Bible — not the conjectures of men — as covered in the above points.

7. Man had to be tempted in order to exercise his free will *for God*. God had to create a situation whereby man could exercise his will and choose to obey and follow God. As already seen, there was no better way than to demand that man not eat from one of the trees in the Garden (see note 5, Gen 2:9). But remember this: man was created perfect, perfectly sinless and innocent. Man had no idea what temptation and sin were. Man had perfect access and fellowship with God. In his perfect state of innocence and sinlessness, there was no way man was going to act against God. Thus, for man to exercise his free will, something other than God telling Adam not to eat from a single tree was needed. Temptation was needed: the arousal of a suggestive thought.

This is the reason God allowed Satan to tempt Eve. Satan's temptation was needed for man to exercise his will for God, needed so that man could reject his own desire and choose to obey and follow God. But note this: Satan had the right to tempt Eve, but he did not have the power to make Eve sin. Eve was sinless and innocent: she chose to sin. She exercised her own free will by choosing to follow Satan and his evil lusts. The temptation was from Satan arousing lust within her, but the sin was of her own free will and choice.

II. *Genesis 03:01 Being Confronted with Suggestive, Enticing and Tempting Thoughts*

The first step in temptation and sin involves the thoughts: suggestive, enticing and tempting thoughts. Several striking things are immediately noticed about Eve and the temptation that attacked her.

- => Eve was alone. She had gone off without her husband, Adam.
- => Eve was where she did not belong. She was standing by the forbidden tree.
- => Eve was apparently thinking about the tree and its delicious looking fruit.
- => Eve was not keeping a watchful eye against temptation.

What makes us say this — that Eve was thinking about the delicious fruit? Note what Satan said to Eve, “Yea — indeed — has God said, ‘you must not eat from every tree of the garden’?” The very first words, “Yea — indeed,” strongly suggest that Eve was thinking about the tree. At that very moment, while she was thinking about it, Satan

attacked and just continued her thoughts: “Yea — indeed [how good it looks] — has God said; ‘You must not eat from every tree of the garden?’”

Note that Satan misquoted God's Word. God had said that man *could eat from every tree* in the garden except one. God was good, extremely good. Man had everything he could ever want: all the fruit except one tree. All the trees would benefit man, but the forbidden tree would destroy him. But note what Satan did: he questioned Eve, “Yea — indeed — has God said, ‘*You must not eat from every tree*?’” The thought was planted in Eve's mind, the suggestive thought...

- that she was missing out on something
- that the most delicious fruit was the very thing being forbidden
- that something good was being withheld and kept from her
- that she must not miss what looked good and would probably feel and taste good

This is the first step in temptation, the step that involves our thoughts, the thoughts of suggestion. The suggested thought is...

- that we are missing something that looks good, feels good and tastes good
- that perhaps God's Word is causing us to miss something that is delicious

Thought 1. Too many of us get alone or away from loved ones and go places we should not. Tragically, even some husbands and wives do this.

Rom 12:1-2 *Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

2 Cor 6:17-18 *“Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters,” says the Lord Almighty.*

III. Genesis 03:02 Entertaining, Harboursing and Discussing the Suggestive Thoughts

The second step in temptation and sin involves discussing our thoughts: actually entertaining, harboursing and discussing the suggestive thoughts. We may discuss the thoughts within our own minds or verbally with someone else. Very practically, what happens with a suggestive thought that begins to tempt us is this: the suggestive thought flies across our minds. At that point it should be rejected and not entertained or harboured and discussed. A tempting thought — a thought that suggests we sin, that we disobey God's Word — should never be harboured or entertained. As we move about in a sinful world — whether sitting, walking, standing or riding...

- we cannot always keep from being tempted, but we can always flee the temptation

- we cannot always keep the appealing thing from crossing our eyes, but we can keep from looking
- we cannot help the first look, but we can control the second look
- we cannot always keep the thoughts from crossing our minds, but we can keep them from roosting there
- we cannot always keep the first suggestive thought of temptation from entering our minds, but we can push the thought out. We can turn our thoughts and mind to something else, in particular to quoting Scripture

But note: this is not what Eve did. Eve did three things.

1. Eve entertained, harboured and discussed the suggestive thought. It was at this point that Eve began to sin, for she turned away from the great goodness of God. Note that she omits the word “every” or “all” from “every tree” (Gen 2:16). She simply says, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees.” God’s glorious goodness in giving *all the trees* to her is being dimmed in her mind. Her thoughts have slipped from God’s goodness: she is no longer focused upon all that God has done for her. She has turned her thoughts away from God and His goodness and is now harbouring and discussing the suggestive thoughts. Sin actually begins when the suggestive thoughts are harboured and thought about. It is then that God and His goodness are being rejected, ignored, neglected and pushed aside.
2. Eve began to feel that God’s command was too strict and restrictive. This is seen in her words, “Neither shall you touch it.” God never said this (Gen 2:17). God simply said, “You shall not [must not] eat of it.” Eve was not completely trusting God at this point. She was thinking — rationalizing — that touching the tree would be all right. Perhaps she should not eat of it, but touching it could not hurt anything. Eve’s thoughts were running back and forth discussing God’s Word, just what He had said. She was entertaining and harbouring the tempting thought; she was rationalizing and justifying her intentions. She was thinking how restrictive God’s Word was, doubting God’s goodness, that God had not provided the very best for her. Eve was right in the midst of sinning, sinning by questioning and doubting the great goodness of God.
3. Eve began to think about the consequence of the sin. She lightened the consequences some when she said, “lest you die” or “you will die.” This is not what God had said. God had pulled no punches: He had said that man would “surely die” (Gen 2:17). Again, Eve was rationalizing; a chain of thoughts was running through her mind about God’s Word. She was wavering: wondering and questioning exactly what God had said. She should have fled the first suggestive and tempting thought. Instead, she was entertaining, harbouring and discussing the suggestive thought. She had forgotten the great goodness of God. She was no longer thinking about God and all that He had done for her. She was slipping further and further away from God, rationalizing her behaviour more and more.

IV. Genesis 03:03 *Doubting the Consequences of God's Word*

The third step in temptation and sin involves doubt: doubting the consequences of God's Word. The suggestive and tempting thought was roosting in Eve's mind. She had allowed her mind to hesitate, stop and embrace the suggestive thought. She was now dallying with the temptation, harbouring and rationalizing her behaviour. She was wondering and questioning if she could get away with it, wondering if she should experiment with the fruit. Then suddenly, unbelievably, Satan thrust the lie into her mind: "You shall not surely die" (v. 4). Eve doubted that the consequences would ever happen to her.

Such thoughts as these often attack us and no doubt they attacked Eve:

- => "The warning was given to Adam, not to me — not directly. The judgment — if I am to be judged — is bound to be less than death."
- => "Certainly, God would not condemn me and leave Adam alone, without a wife, without a companion and helper to help him."
- => "God is so good, He'll forgive me. I'll just taste the fruit this time, then ask God to forgive me."
- => "God surely would not condemn me for doing it just one time."
- => "I'll make it up to God. I can go ahead and do it, and then serve God as never before, and He will forgive and accept me."
- => "Surely God would not let me die; there is still so much to do and accomplish in life and for God."
- => "In the final analysis — when everything is said and done — God just would never reject me, not permanently, not to everlasting death."

But Eve was wrong. We shall see in the next outline that God's Word stood. Adam and Eve were condemned to die, and they died. Satan lied, suggested a downright lie to Eve. As we shall see in the next note, Eve accepted the lie: she doubted God's Word. She rationalized and felt that the warning of God's Word would not apply to her, not completely — not fully — not in the full weight of its judgment.

Thought 1. God's warning about sin and its consequences stand. There is no escape from the judgment upon sin.

Rom 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

2 Th 1:7-9 *And give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power.*

2 Pet 2:20-21 *If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse*

off at the end than they were at the beginning. It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them.

Eccl 2:26 *To the man who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.*

Ezek 18:4 *For every living soul belongs to me, the father as well as the son — both alike belong to me. The soul who sins is the one who will die.*

Thought 2. The declaration of God's Word and of God's Son is clear: the choice is ours.

John 8:24 *"I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins."*

V. **Genesis 03:04–05 Thinking That One will Be More Fulfilled, that One will Gain and Benefit More**

The fourth step in temptation and sin involves personal fulfilment: thinking that one will be more fulfilled, that one will gain and benefit more if one eats of the *forbidden fruit* (v. 5). This is the final step in temptation. When we have allowed our minds to get this far with suggestive and enticing thoughts, it is difficult — if not impossible — to turn back from sin.

1. There is the thought that we have *needs that cannot be met any other way*, the thought that the temptation will meet our needs more than what God has given us.

This is exactly what Satan said to Eve: "God knows that when you eat of this tree, your needs are going to be met far more than if you don't eat of it. God has not provided the best for you, not in the most fulfilling way."

2. There is the thought that our *eyes will be opened*, that we will never know if we don't experience it. This is what Satan said to Eve: "If you eat of the tree — do this thing — you will know more about it, how good it feels and tastes. You must do it to know. You cannot know whether it is good or bad until you actually experience it."
3. There is the thought of position, power, strength, self-sufficiency, independence and individuality, of being one's own person and determining one's own destiny and fate. The raw thought — the underlying basis to the thought — is what Satan promised Eve: "You shall be as gods. If you do this thing, you will be your own person — independent, individualistic — you will gain position and power. Do it: do your own thing; do what you want when you want. It is worth it."

⇒ "Being your own person brings fulfilment and satisfaction, strong ego and self-image. It brings excitement, stimulation and pleasure.

⇒ "Being your own person makes you as god: you can determine your own life and destiny."

4. There is the thought that we can know good and evil, that we can determine what is good and evil for ourselves. Satan told Eve...
- that she could determine what she should and should not do herself
 - that she could discern good and evil apart from God's Word
 - that she needed to go ahead and do what she wanted, and by doing her own thing, she would learn (gain the power) to govern and direct her life more and more
 - that the only way she could ever learn to choose the fullest of lives — discern good and evil — would be if she went ahead and did what she wanted
 - that she did not need God to tell her what to do, but she could gain the knowledge herself by doing what she wanted

Thought 1. We must understand the attack of Satan through temptation.

1) Satan has all kinds of strategies to attack us.

Eph 6:11 *Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.* (See 6:10-18)

2) Satan uses all kinds of devices or schemes to get an advantage over us.

2 Cor 2:11 *In order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.*

3) Satan is cunning; he seeks to deceive us just as he did Eve.

2 Cor 11:3 *But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.*

4) Satan is as a roaring lion. He goes about seeking to devour all who will follow him.

1 Pet 5:8 *Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.*

5) Satan will tempt us when we have great need and are most susceptible to fall into sin.

Mat 4:1-4 *Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"*

6) Satan will take a person who does not understand the Word and snatch the Word out of the person's heart. (This shows the critical importance of studying and learning God's Word.)

Mat 13:19 *"When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path."*

VI. *Genesis 03:06 Looking and Desiring – Lusting*

The fifth step in temptation and sin is looking and desiring and lusting. Scripture clearly says:

1 John 2:16 For everything in the world — the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does — comes not from the Father but from the world.

A simple chart shows what happened to Eve.

<i>The Statement of Scripture</i>	<i>What Happened to Eve</i>
The lust of the flesh	Eve saw that the tree was <i>good for food</i>
The lust of the eyes	Eve saw that the tree was pleasant, pleasing and <i>attractive to the eyes</i>
The pride of life	Eve saw that the tree was desirable for gaining <i>knowledge, experience and wisdom</i>

(See notes, pt. 2, 1 John 2:15-16 for detailed discussion of these sins of worldliness.)

1. Eve's flesh lusted after the tree. She saw that the tree was good for food. She should have stayed away from the tree and controlled her eyes, never looking at it. But she went out alone and went to the tree, a place she should have never gone. She gave the tempter an open door, a wide open chance to tempt her. As soon as he tempted her, she should have fled the temptation. But as has been seen, she thought about the temptation, harboured and discussed the thoughts of the sin. Now she was looking at the forbidden fruit and her flesh was lusting, craving and desiring it. She wanted it.

Gal 5:19-21 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

2. Eve's eyes lusted after the tree. Eve saw that the tree was pleasant, pleasing and attractive. The fruit — forbidden fruit — appealed to her. She was apparently so attracted that she experienced what we sometimes experience: a lustful craving, a hungering, an unstoppable urge to reach out and take the forbidden fruit.

Thought 1. What are the sins most often committed by the lust of the eyes? Scripture mentions these:

=> There is the lust of the eyes for sex.

Mat 5:28 "But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

Rom 1:26-28 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another.

Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.

2 Pet 2:14 *With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable; they are experts in greed — an accursed brood!*

Job 31:1 *“I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman.”*

=> There is the lust of the eyes after all kinds of evil.

Mat 6:23 *“But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!”*

=> There is the lust of the eyes after the things of other people.

Psa 10:8 *He lies in wait near the villages; from ambush he murders the innocent. His eyes watch in secret for his victims.*

Luke 12:15 *Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”*

=> There is the lust of the eyes after all the pleasures and possessions of the world.

Eccl 2:10 *I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my labour, and this was the reward for all my toil.*

=> There is the lust of the eyes after wine, drugs and alcoholic drinks.

Prov 23:29-31 *“Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaints? Who has needless wounds? Who has bloodshot eyes? Those who linger over wine, who goes to sample bowls of mixed wine. Do not gaze at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly.”*

=> There is the lust of the eyes after other gods.

Lev 26:1 *Do not make idols or set up an image or a sacred stone for yourselves, and do not place a carved stone in your land to bow down before it. I am the LORD your God.*

3. Eve lusted after the pride of life. She saw that the tree was desirable for gaining knowledge, experience and wisdom. Eve wanted to determine what was good for her and what was bad (evil). She wanted the full knowledge, experience and wisdom — the fullness of life — apart from God. Life — the wisdom and fullness of life — apart from God is impossible, absolutely impossible. But Eve was deceived. She had given herself over to the grip of temptation and sin. Eve wanted knowledge, experience, wisdom, authority, power, position, independence, self-sufficiency — all apart from God. She was lusting after the pride of life.

Job 33:9 *‘I am pure and without sin; I am clean and free from guilt.’*

Prov 11:2 *When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.*

Prov 16:18 *Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.*

Prov 21:4 *Haughty eyes and a proud heart, the lamp of the wicked, are sin!*

Prov 28:25 *A greedy man stirs up dissension, but he who trusts in the LORD will prosper.*

John 9:41 *Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains."*

Phil 2:3-4 *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

Thought 1. We must not exalt ourselves: we must not seek recognition, position, authority, power, money, wealth, possessions, knowledge, wisdom, experience — anything apart from God. We must not act self-sufficient and independent, exalting ourselves above others. We must not live as though we do not need God.

1) God warns us against pride and conceit.

Rom 12:16 *Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.*

1 Cor 8:2 *The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know.*

Prov 3:7 *Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil.*

Prov 11:2 *When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.*

Prov 16:18 *Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.*

Prov 21:4 *Haughty eyes and a proud heart, the lamp of the wicked, are sin!*

Isa 5:21 *Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight.*

2) God warns against self-sufficiency and self-exaltation.

Mat 23:12 *"For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted."*

Luke 12:19-20 *"And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.' But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you.' Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?"*

1 Cor 10:12 *So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!*

Oba 1:4 *Though you soar like the eagle and make your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down," declares the LORD.*

Prov 28:26 *He who trusts in himself is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom is kept safe.*

3) God warns us against spiritual pride.

Luke 18:11 *The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men — robbers, evildoers, adulterers — or even like this tax collector.'*

John 9:41 Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains."

Job 33:9 'I am pure and without sin; I am clean and free from guilt.'

VII. Genesis 03:06 Committing the Sin: Taking and Eating the Forbidden Fruit

The sixth step in temptation and sin is committing the sin, actually taking and eating the forbidden fruit. Remember: sin had already taken place in Eve's heart.

=> Eve had already been thinking and harbouring the thoughts of the forbidden fruit (see note 6, pt. 1, Gen 3:6).

=> Eve had already questioned and forgotten God and His goodness.

=> Eve had already looked, desired and lusted after the forbidden fruit.

The point is this: Eve had already sinned inwardly, within her thoughts. Now she was to sin outwardly; she was to actually commit the act. We cannot always tell when a person is sinning inwardly, within his heart. The silent sins — the sins of the mind and heart — are often not seen. Eve's sin until now could not be seen by man's eye. But now, the sin of her heart — her lustful cravings — is ready to break out into the open. Eve reached up and took the forbidden fruit and ate it. Eve...

- disobeyed God's Word
- rebelled against God's Word
- ignored God's Word
- rejected God's Word
- opposed God's Word
- acted against God's Word
- took a stand against God's Word

Eve sinned. Note what sin was: disobedience, disobeying the Word of God. God had said, you must not eat this fruit, for it will bring death — sure death — to you. But Eve turned away from God; she refused to listen to God. She rejected His warning and disobeyed His Word. She went ahead and did the forbidden thing.

Thought 1. It is difficult, very, very difficult, to turn away from temptation and sin...

- when we go to worldly places where temptation and sin swirl about
- when we allow suggestive thoughts to enter our minds
- when we think and think about the enticing fruit
- when we harbour the tempting thoughts

If we put ourselves in the presence of sinful fruit, there is no way to keep from thinking about the sinful fruit, and if the sinful fruit is available — right there before us, being offered to us — we cannot stop ourselves. We will sin and fall. Putting ourselves in the presence of sinful fruit is *always* — without exception — playing with fire.

Temptation has to be defeated when it first strikes. We must stay away from worldly places and people and things — as much as possible — and we must reject any and

all suggestive thoughts that fly across our minds. This was Eve's failure, and it is always our failure when we sin. We must always — without a single exception — *flee temptation*.

1 Cor 6:18 Flee from sexual immorality.

1 Cor 10:14 Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry.

1 Tim 6:11 But you, man of God, flee from all this.

2 Tim 2:22 Flee the evil desires of youth.

VIII. Genesis 03:06 Leading Others to Sin: Being a Stumbling-block

The seventh step in temptation and sin is leading others to sin. Note the simplicity and brevity of Scripture as it now states what happened: Eve gave the fruit to her husband *who had joined her*, and he also ate the forbidden fruit. Why does Scripture not spell out Adam's experience of temptation? Because Adam's temptation was the same as Eve's. The steps to temptation and sin are the same for all of us. Eve used the same arguments with Adam that Satan had used with her.

=> Eve presented the suggestive, enticing and tempting thought to Adam.

=> Adam entertained, harboured and discussed the thought.

=> Adam then began to doubt the consequence of God's Word. And note, Eve was standing before him the same as always: the penalty of death had not fallen upon her. What God had said had not happened to her.

=> Eve tempted Adam by sharing that he could experience more and be more fulfilled by eating the forbidden fruit.

=> Adam looked, desired and lusted after the forbidden fruit.

=> Adam ate of the fruit.

Note two significant points.

First, Eve was a stumbling-block to Adam. She was supposed to be a helper to him, but she was his temptress, a stumbling-block to his doing the will of God.

Second, Adam was not deceived in his sin: he knew exactly what he was doing. Adam willingly and deliberately sinned. This was not true with Eve: she was deceived. But Adam deliberately and knowingly...

- disobeyed God's Word
- rejected God's Word
- rebelled against God

Consequently, Adam stood in the greater wrong. A person who knows and deliberately does wrong is always more guilty than the person who is deceived and does wrong. Both do wrong, but the deliberate and willing sinner is far more guilty of wrongdoing. This is exactly what Scripture says:

1 Tim 2:14 *And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.*

This is the reason Scripture can say that sin entered the world through the man, Adam. He was the one who knowingly and deliberately brought sin into the world.

Rom 5:12 *Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.*

Thought 1. This is one of the most serious sins ever committed by a person. Scripture warns us — severely warns us — we must not be a stumbling-block to others.

Luke 17:1-2 *Jesus said to his disciples: “Things that cause people to sin are bound to come, but woe to that person through whom they come. It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin.”*

Rom 14:13 *Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way.*

Rom 14:15 *If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died.*

Rom 14:21 *It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall.*

1 Cor 10:32 *Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God.*

2 Cor 6:3 *We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited.*

Thought 2. We desperately need to heed what God teaches us in this experience of Adam and Eve. We must observe and learn the seven steps involved in temptation and sin. Learning the steps will help us greatly in combating temptation and sin. Knowing the steps — having them in mind ready for recall — will enable us to stop any tempting thoughts that attack us. The steps will make us more aware of temptation and sin, about how temptation and sin attack us.

- 1) We must reject every suggestive, enticing and tempting thought.
- 2) We must not entertain, harbour or discuss any suggestive thought.
- 3) We must not doubt the consequences of God's Word. What God has said cannot be broken; His Word will be fulfilled. God has no favourites. He shows no partiality, no matter who we are.
- 4) We must never think that forbidden fruit will give us more fulfilment, that we will gain and benefit more by doing the forbidden thing.
- 5) We must never look and desire, never lust after the forbidden fruit, no matter how attractive and appealing it may be.

- 6) We must never commit sin, never take and eat the forbidden fruit.
- 7) We must never lead others to sin, never be a stumbling-block to others.
- 8) We must never doubt God's Word and goodness. We must know — always trust — that God will meet our needs in the most beneficial way possible.

Rom 6:13 *Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.*

1 Cor 10:13 *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

James 1:12 *Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.*

2 Pet 2:9 *If this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.*

2 Pet 3:17 *Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. ■*