

Unbelief Was the Root of the Fall



Faith (Part 10)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as we draw near to the close of another week. All through this week I've been sharing on the rich and exciting theme of faith. In my last three talks I've dealt with the three great musts of faith: faith must be confessed, faith must act, faith must be tested. In my closing talk today, I'm going to return once more to the opposite of faith; that is, unbelief. I'm going to show you how unbelief was the root of man's fall.

We need to see the situation in which Adam and Eve were placed at creation. God had prepared a beautiful place for them, a place of delightful provision, great joy. The place was called the Garden of Eden. And from time to time, God came to the Garden and fellowshipped with His creatures, with Adam and Eve. But God did not remain permanently present in the Garden as a person. When He was not there in person, He was still represented to Adam and Eve by the word that He had left with them. This is important that we see God's permanent representative in the lives of Adam and Eve right from the beginning was His word. That represented Him, that conveyed His mind to them, that represented His authority to them. And we shall see in due course, that their attitude toward the word was the same as their attitude toward God.

Let's look at the word that God left with them. It was a simple, it was not a long message. It's stated in Genesis 2:16–17:

> "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, '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.'" (NAS)

This word that God left with Adam had three parts or sections to it: the first was permission, "from any tree you may eat"; the second was prohibition, "but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat"; the third section was a warning, "in the day that you eat, you shall surely die." So, it was a word with three parts: permission, prohibition, and warning.

Now, as long as Adam and Eve believed and obeyed God's word, they were totally secure, no evil could come to them, no harm of any kind. Every need was fully and abundantly met and guaranteed. So the enemy of their soul, Satan, had to plan his approach in such a way that ultimately he alienated them from obedience to God's word, and he went about it in a very subtle way. The Scripture states that he was the subtlest or the craftiest of all the creatures.

We notice three points about Satan's approach. His craftiness. First of all, he didn't go to Adam but he went to Eve. The Scripture calls the woman "the weaker vessel." Secondly, he sought to undermine the authority and the credibility of God's word. Thirdly, to do this he began merely by questioning, not immediately denying the word of God.

Now I'm going to read the passage in Genesis 3:1–6 and I want you to pick out these points as I read:

> Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Indeed, has God said, `You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?' [You notice the question, and I don't believe he was asking because he didn't know the answer.] And the woman said to the serpent, 'From he fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, lest you die.' And the serpent said to the woman, 'You surely shall not die! 'For God knows that in the day 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 tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.'"

Now I want you to notice the following point. As soon as Eve entertained Satan's question, she was in no condition to reject the denial that followed. And I believe the same is true for you and me. We cannot afford to entertain Satan's questions of the Word of God. God's Word in our lives represents God and we can no more entertain the question of God's Word than we can entertain a question of God Himself. As soon as Eve entertained the question, Satan followed it by a direct denial. God had said, "You shall surely die;" Satan said, "You surely shall not die!"

Thirdly, I want you to notice how he alienated Adam and Eve from their personal relationship with God and he did it in a very subtle way. He suggested, without actually saying it, that God was a kind of arbitrary despot who kept Adam and Eve imprisoned in this beautiful garden and did not allow them real liberty or did not permit them to gain full development of their own potential as persons. He did it this way, he said, "God knows that in the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." The implication is that, "God doesn't want you to be equal to Him, He doesn't trust you to know good and evil, He wants to keep you in a condition of inferiority. But people so intelligent and so outstanding as yourselves really shouldn't endure this situation of inferiority in which this arbitrary despot seeks to keep you. And there's a way out of it. Just listen to me." So you see that really the implication Satan was impugning the goodness of God. He was suggesting that God was unfair and arbitrary, a kind of despot who really couldn't be trusted.

I pointed out right at the beginning of this series of talks that primarily faith is in God and His goodness, and once we lose faith in God and His goodness, sooner or later we're going to lose faith in His word. So, that was how the devil went about it.

Now, I want to go back to Genesis 2:6. I want to pick out a particular point in that verse which is really tremendously significant.

> "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate..." (NAS)

We don't need to read further. The key word there is "saw," "When the woman saw..." Earlier in this series I quoted to you Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 5:7:

> "For we walk by faith, not by sight..." (NAS)

Faith and sight are opposites. Up to that moment, Adam and Eve had walked by faith. Faith in the word of God that they could not see, that they could not apprehend with their senses. But their faith in God's invisible word had protected them from Satan. But at that particular, decisive moment, Eve descended from one level to another. She came down from the faith level, in the invisible Word of God; she came down to the sense level and she believed what her senses showed her.

"When the woman saw..." That word "saw" there is so critical. It indicates the changeover from living by faith to living by sight. The tree had certain specific appeals for her senses

once she was open to them. By coming down from the faith realm, it appealed to three things in Eve: it was good for food, it was a delight to the eyes, and desirable to make one wise. Now these are the three basic forms of temptation that recur all through human experience. They are referred to in 1 John 2:15–16, where John says this:

> "Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If any one loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world." (NAS)

Notice the three dominant influences of this world: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life. Those were the three elements of that tree that appealed to Eve. It was good for food, that was the lust of the flesh; it was a delight to the eyes, that was the lust of the eyes; and it was desirable to make one wise, that's the boastful pride of life.

You see, the ultimate motivation which Satan injected into Adam and Eve was the desire to be independent of God and that's the basic motivation of sin. Wherever the desire to achieve independence of God make itself prevalent and comes into operation, the result will be sin and rebellion against God. It can be very subtle. Outwardly, there was nothing wrong in the temptation, "You shall be like God." What could be better than to be like God? But in essence, it appealed to the desire in them not to have to depend on God any longer but to be independent, to be autocratic, to handle their own lives, and that's the very essence of sin.

Now, faith is the antidote because faith bring us back into dependence on God, true faith. Faith reaffirms God's goodness and faith reaffirms the reliability of God's Word above our senses. The three things that the fall brought about are rectified by faith. Faith brings us back into dependence on God, faith reaffirms God's goodness and faith reaffirms the reliability of God's word above our senses. That is why faith is the antidote to the fall. What was lost through the fall is recovered when we return to God in faith. Faith is the only basis for righteous living.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again next week at this same time, Monday through Friday. Next week I'll be moving on to another exciting theme. Stay tuned now for some important announcements. In particular, how you may obtain my book Faith to Live By. This book explains what faith is, how it comes, what it will do for you. It will open the door for you into new realms of Christian living. The announcement that follows will tell you now you may obtain this book.

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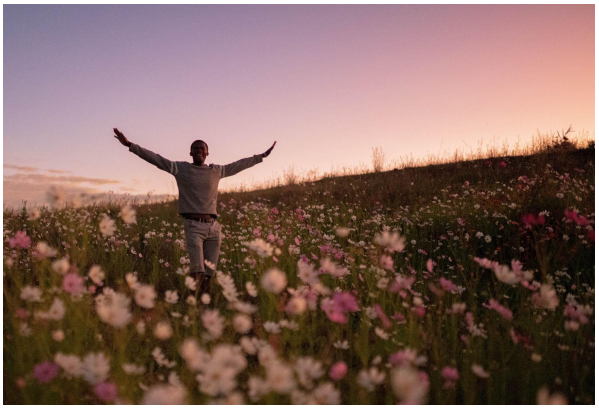

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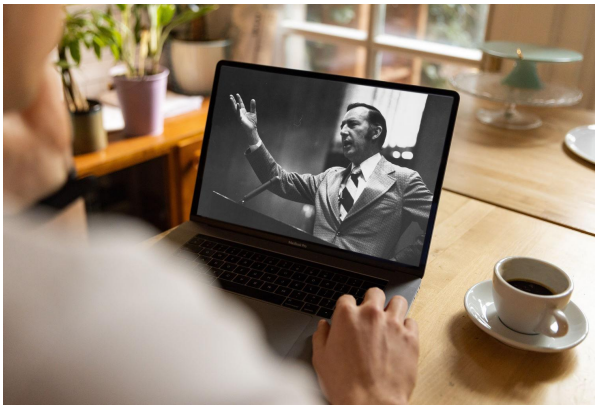

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