

# 🍏 GARDEN OF EDEN 🍏

## God Calls Us to Intentionally Trust

...but daily we fail

SEPTEMBER 23, 2007

**Q: Who or what is your god? A: That in which you ultimately trust.** Luther designed his Small Catechism to help everyday folks teach their families the core of the Bible. He started by teaching what God desires from us, first and foremost: that we trust God wholly and only. As Luther said, we all have a god, even if we don't believe in "God"; what we set our heart on and put our trust in is properly our god. When we don't trust God 1<sup>st</sup> in our lives, all else we try to do fails.

Genesis 2 teaches that God desired Adam and Eve to put their full trust in God, above all temptation. God provided them with a test by giving them everything in the garden except one tree, and Adam and Eve's answer was to convince themselves God kept the best away from them, denying them what others enjoyed. After all, why would God keep the knowledge of good and evil away from humans? Isn't that what we should know – what is right and what is wrong?

Adam and Eve chose to trust their own minds – which were focused only on what they wanted – over God's rules for their safety and life. This is known as Original Sin – putting God second to our own understandings, and we are as bound to this sin as Adam and Eve were in Eden.

Adam and Eve's story is our story: no matter what God gives us we always want what God have someone else. We cannot trust that God provides all we need and asks in turn for complete faith; and we look to our own logic for answers. When we convince ourselves we know better than God we fall under God's Eden Clause: the "prize" we win is a broken relationship with God and expulsion into the cruel world.

But, God also gave us a New Testament; God's new clause. While we will only trust God with all our heart, soul, and mind, and our neighbor as our self after life, Jesus did so during life. Jesus fought Satan's temptations in the wilderness, was nailed to the cross by our sins, and paid our full punishment as sinners with his own death, in order that God could see those who trust the promise to be like Christ after life. For Luther this was the Happy Exchange: Christ changing places with humanity, gifting us with life with God while taking on our death for our sins.

### Advanced MEMORY VERSES

**Old Testament:  
Gen 3:1-8 (NRSV)**

1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, "You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?" 2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; 3 but God said, "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die." 4 But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; 5 for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

*(Bonus: Gen 3:6-8)*

6 So 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 to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves. 8 They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

**New Testament:  
Matthew 22:37-40 (NRSV)**

" 37 [Jesus] said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 This is the greatest and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

*(Bonus: add Matthew 22:34-36 1<sup>st</sup>)*

34 When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, 35 and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. 36 "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?"

**Luther's Small Catechism:**  
The First Commandment: You must not have other gods.  
Q. What does this mean? A. We must fear, love, and trust God more than anything else.

### Basic MEMORY VERSES

**Old Testament:**

**Gen 2:16-17a (NRSV-modfd)**

16 [God said], "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; 17 but [not] of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil..."

**New Testament:**

**Matthew 22:37,39b (NRSV)**

"[Jesus said] Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind...and your neighbor as your self"

**Luther's Small Catechism:**

The First Commandment: You must not have other gods.  
Q. What does this mean? A. We must fear, love, and trust God more than anything else.

## Thoughts to grow on

It's easy to trust when life is going as planned, but hard when everything feels like chaos.

Read Matthew 14:22-33, about Peter walking on water. Can you relate to Peter's reactions? He is confident that Christ could make him to walk on water, but once out in the choppy water Peter looks around, completely freaks, and down he sinks.

Are we not the same? We think trusting God's promises and following Christ is simple, but real trusting is staying the course when life goes to pot. Luckily, we read in Acts 2 that God never gave up on Peter. From a bumbling fisherman God created an amazing preacher by giving Peter God's Holy Spirit.

By God's power, you too can possess great faith and do great things, and because you will always be human, still expect to freak when chaos takes over life. Praise God that God will loves us, even when we panic and misplace our trust, and already has a plan to use even our bumbling lives in miraculous ways!

## Suggested Activities & Questions to Ponder

*The activities suggested below are listed from younger to older. Parents, it is hoped you will use some or all of these suggestions as faith activities at home, or conversation in the car, to help reinforce the week's lesson, and to create a space and time when family faith dialogue can develop and flourish during the week.*

- + Draw a line down the center of a piece of paper. Label one side "Good For Me" and the other side "Bad For Me." Under each label write you have been told belongs in each box. Consider things like pizza, ice cream, broccoli, water, soda pop, oranges, asparagus, lentils or beans, cup cakes, ice cream sundaes, taking a walk, watching TV, playing computer / TV games, playing sports. On which side of the page did you put what you really like? Why?
- + There are many people we trust to take care of us each day, such as parents, fire fighters, nurses, doctors, utility providers, repair people, police, presidents – just to name a few. But to do so they need to give us rules to keep us safe. Create an art piece (drawing, poem, song, story, dance, etc) showing them taking care of you by setting rules.
- + What would happen if everyone decided their own rules rule? This week, each night talk with your family about the rules you didn't like that day. Who were the rules protecting? Why didn't you like them? What would you like the rule to be changed to? Why? Who does your new rule protect the most?
- + In Baptism God gives us faith to trust that Jesus died on the cross for our sins, and promises to count our trust that Jesus died for us as full forgiveness for our sins, and to give to us eternal life after death. Talk about when it is easiest for you to trust that God will follow through with those promises, and when it is the hardest. What do we have to rely on that teaches us God keeps God's promises?
- + Older kids & adults – read "Lord of the Flies": what happens when we don't have boundaries?

## Our Ministry Project for 2007 2008

*I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' Matthew 25: 35-36 (NIV)*

This year we are sponsoring a child through Compassion International, as a means of teaching intentional ministry and relationships. The minimum donation is \$1 per child per week. Please prayerfully consider your ability to support this ministry, trusting God's promise that God will provide for all of your needs as you use God's resources to help others. If you have not yet done so, please fill out a confidential covenant form indicating what you can support weekly, monthly, and/or annually.

## A PRAYER for This Week

God, Creator of me and of all that I see – thank you for loving me so much that you gave me rules to live safely by. Help me to trust you, and trust that you know what is best for my life. Thank you for sending Jesus, who perfectly trusted you when we cannot, and thank you for the faith you gave me in baptism by your Holy Spirit. Today, renew my faith to trust in your promise that through my baptism into Jesus' death and resurrection I will never be parted from you. In Christ's name and by your Holy Spirit I pray, Amen.

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WHERE WAS THAT BILLBOARD TEN MINUTES AGO?

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