

# Genesis 3:6–7, 21 — She Took of the Fruit Thereof, and Did Eat

*The Three Motivating Forces, Lust and the Sin It Conceives, Fig Leaves vs. Coats of Skins, and Adam's Federal Headship*

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**Scripture Reading: Genesis 3:6–7, 21; 1 John 2:15–17; James 1:13–15**

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*“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”*

*“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.” (1 John 2:16)*

*“Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.” (Genesis 3:21)*

## **The Three Motivating Forces: A Theme Running Through Scripture**

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It has long been observed that the three motivating forces of sin are laid out in this verse. First John 2:15–17 gives their moral character explicitly: all that is in the world — and that is a complete list, for the apostle means all that constitutes the world in its moral character, not every building and vehicle — is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. These are not of the Father but of the world. And the world passes away with its lust; only the one who does the will of God abides.

Genesis 3:6 presents all three in the same order. The tree was good for food — that is the lust of the flesh, the appetite for nourishment being a perfectly natural thing turned into an instrument of disobedience. It was pleasant to the eyes — that is the lust of the eyes; the eye wants to see, to gaze, to take pleasure in appearance, and here the desire of the eye becomes a lever. A tree to be desired to make one wise — that is the pride of life; wisdom confers status, distinction, superiority, and the desire for it is the desire to be somebody above others. Not only do the three things correspond between Genesis 3 and 1 John 2, but they correspond in the same order.

The same three lines of approach appear in the Lord's temptation in the wilderness. They appear in the three excuses offered by those who declined the invitation to the great supper in Luke 14. They appear in Solomon's fall in Ecclesiastes. This is not coincidence — it is the consistent anatomy of how the enemy approaches the soul, whether innocent or fallen, whether in a garden or in a wilderness. Every sinner has all three forces active within him, though preferences vary: one may be more dominated by the lust of the flesh, another by the pride of life. But all three are there, and the enemy probes for whichever opening is most available.

### **Lust Is Already Sin: James 1 and the Chain from Inside to Act**

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James 1:13–15 is often misread as drawing a clean line between lust (harmless, internal) and sin (culpable, external). Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God — God tempts no one. But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. The point is not that having lust inside is harmless as long as nothing external happens. The point is that underlying sinful acts is the working of lust within, and lust itself is sin at the root level — sin on the inside, sin where men cannot see it.

Eve's sequence illustrates this precisely. She looked, and found the tree good for food, pleasant, and desirable for wisdom. That inner motion was already contrary to the will of God. She should have had no such thoughts. She should have answered the serpent, God said not to eat of this tree, period, and that should have been the end of the matter. But she listened, considered, and something was conceived in her soul. That inner working was wrong from the beginning. Then it issued in the act of taking and eating. The Lord himself made this explicit: whoever looks at a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery in his heart. He has done nothing external. But he has sinned.

The question whether the Lord Jesus had lust settles this. He did not sin, all agree. But did he have lust that he restrained from becoming an act? No. He had no lust. His humanity was holy. Lust is sin — at the root level, before it flowers into an act. The act is sin expressing itself outwardly; the root is sin in the flesh that was acquired at the fall and that Eve was now experiencing for the first time as the enemy's words did their work upon her.

## **Adam Was Not Deceived: The Federal Head**

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Eve was deceived. First Timothy 2:14 states it plainly, and Eve herself says to God: the serpent beguiled me, and I ate. She was tricked, led step by step through the reasoning, until the hook was set and the act followed. But Adam was not deceived. He took the fruit with open eyes. His act was brazen in a way Eve's was not. He gave God up for a piece of fruit — and we should put it that way, not the other way around, not asking why God would separate man from himself over a piece of fruit, but asking why man would separate himself from God for a piece of fruit. It was a choice. It was made. He lost.

The consequence of Adam's being the one who acted with open eyes is that it is Adam, not Eve, who is the federal head of the fallen race. Romans 5:12 says by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin. Not by one woman. Hosea

6:7 says they like Adam have transgressed the covenant — the language is Adam, the male head, the one who broke what was given to him. We are in Adam, chargeable as the fallen head of the race, and it is from Adam that the transmission of sin passes to his offspring. The woman sinned first, but the race fell with its head.

First Timothy 2 does not mention Adam's transgression in that context because it is not relevant to the point the apostle is making there — which has to do with the teaching role and authority of women in the assembly. For that argument, the relevant facts are that Adam was first formed and that the woman was the one who was deceived. The silence about Adam's transgression in 1 Timothy is not a contradiction of Romans 5; it is a selection of what is germane to the subject at hand.

### **Fig Leaves and Coats of Skins: Dead Works vs. God's Provision**

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Their eyes were opened, and they knew they were naked. And their first response was to do something about it themselves. They sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons. Fig leaves have something connected with profession about them. The fig tree the Lord cursed in Matthew 21 had leaves but no fruit — it looked like something that it was not. That fig tree is the symbol of the Mosaic system as a whole: professing to bear fruit for God, bearing none. And here Adam and Eve invented the first human religion: using what was at hand to create a covering that was no covering at all.

Verse 8 tells us the result. In the middle of the verse: Adam and his wife hid themselves. Verse 10: I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself. All their inventiveness, all their needles and thread and aprons, added up to exactly nothing. They were still naked before God. This is man's fallen religious effort reproduced in every generation since: bringing the fruit of the cursed ground, like Cain, and presenting it to God. It does not cover. It cannot cover.

Verse 21 gives God's answer: unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them. An animal died. Blood was shed. The only way for the nakedness of the soul to be covered is by the death of a substitute, pointing forward to what Hebrews 9 says: without the shedding of blood there is no remission. The coats of skins did not have inherent efficacy; the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sin. But they pointed ahead to the one sacrifice, the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom it was said, He made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in him. That is the covering. God provided it; man could not.

### **The Carnal Mind Cannot Be Subject to God: Romans 8:7**

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It is sometimes said that God never commands what a person cannot do. This is theological fiction. Romans 8:7 is unambiguous: the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. The word cannot expresses inability. The carnal mind, generated in the fall, is constitutionally incapable of subjection to God. If God never commanded the impossible, he would never have given the law at all. He gave it precisely to demonstrate that fallen man cannot perform it — so that every mouth may be stopped and all the world become guilty before God. The law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. That purpose requires the law to reveal what man cannot do.

The fallen nature will never be improved. It was not improved in Luther's cell at Erfurt when he nearly killed himself trying to subdue it. Melancthon told him to stop trying and simply live by faith. That is when his eyes opened. The old nature is not to be reformed; it is to be reckoned dead with Christ, judged in the place it belongs, and the new nature fed and walked in. There is no victory by subduing the flesh; there is victory only in the death of Christ reckoned as our death, and in the life of Christ as the energy of the new nature within.

*Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.*