



## Discipleship 101 New Believer Lesson #2 Sin and the Fall

By Andy Madonio  
July 10, 2010



### Introduction:

*Anyone who has been in authority knows how a thing can be in accordance with your will in one way and not in another. . . You make a thing voluntary and then half the people do not do it. That is not what you willed, but your will has made it possible . . . God created things which had free will. That means creatures which can go either wrong or right. Some people think they can imagine a creature which was free but had no possibility of going wrong; I cannot. If a thing is free to be good, it is also free to be bad. And free will is what has made evil possible. Why, then, did God give them free will? Because free will, though it makes evil possible, is also the only thing that makes possible any love or goodness or joy worth having. . . The happiness which God designs for His higher creatures is the happiness of being freely, voluntarily united to Him and to each other. . . Of course God knew what would happen if they used their freedom the wrong way: apparently He thought it worth the risk. Perhaps we feel inclined to disagree with Him. But there is a difficulty about disagreeing with God. . . When you are arguing against Him you are arguing against the very power that makes you able to argue at all: it is like cutting off the branch you are sitting on. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*.*

### The Fall of Man & Sin:

As C. S. Lewis said, God gave us the freedom to make our own decisions. In fact, He was aware from the beginning that we would use this freedom to disobey Him and bring sin into the world. It is through this **“original sin”** (described below from the Genesis account in the Garden of Eden) that everyone born since, is born into a sinful nature – we can’t help it, but **we are responsible to do something about it.**

Mankind’s original sin is described in the following passages.

*The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die." ([Genesis 2:15-17](#) NIV)*

*Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'" "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. **Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked;** so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.*

*Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" The man said, "The woman you put here with me-- she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."*

*And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever." So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. ([Genesis 3:1-13, 22-23](#) NIV)*

The apostle Paul describes this in the new testament.

*Therefore, just as **sin entered the world through one man (Adam)**, and death through sin, and **in this way death came to all men, because all sinned** . . . death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come. ([Romans 5:12, 14](#) NIV)*



Can you think of times when you disobeyed someone that trusted you, and later understood the significance of your actions? What would you “do over” if it were possible to turn back time and try again?

---

---

---

---

Genesis chapter 3 is called the “fall of mankind” because from that point on, sin had entered the previously perfect world. That sin, the action of Adam and Eve disobeying God when tempted and deceived by the serpent, became part of the DNA of every human being. This DNA for sin is sometimes called the “sinful nature” of man (nature coming from ‘natural’, as opposed to spiritual which is super-natural).

In his book, *The Normal Christian Life*, Watchman Nee describes the choice that faced Adam as a choice between trusting in God or in himself. He also said the two trees of importance (the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life) were in the middle of the garden, a place of prominence, and therefore very significant to the narrative. At this point in history, Adam & Eve were innocent and sinless, possessing no knowledge of good or evil; they were morally neutral, neither sinful or holy. In short, they were undeveloped, so God brings them into the garden to allow them to exercise free choice.

Nee continues by saying that the knowledge of good and evil is not wrong in itself, for without it Adam cannot make moral decisions. Therefore, **he must rely on God for those**

**choices.** His life, without this knowledge, is totally dependent on God. The tree of life, however, represents God Himself, because God is life.

*Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. ([John 17:3](#) NIV)*

Nee concludes by saying that if Adam had taken fruit from the tree of life, he would have partaken of the life of God. He would have become a child of God in the sense of having in him a life that derived from God [Meditative study topic – the tree of life contains fruit that is a representation of Jesus Christ, whom we can partake of and gain eternal life – salvation. This is a good topic to talk to God about in your quiet time]. Instead, he chose fruit from the other tree, the tree of knowledge, a choice that would develop his own manhood along natural lines apart from God.



Tell of a decision you made based on solid facts and data, but not in prayer, seeking God’s personal council. How did it turn out?

---

---

---

---

### **Fighting Sin Daily:**

As a believer, because of the sin DNA automatically built in, you will begin to see a war that is at work in your body. It is a war between this sinful nature and the spiritual nature (sometimes called the flesh) that God has placed in you because of your decision to accept Jesus as the Lord of your life. That war is characterized by this watershed passage written by the Apostle Paul.

*I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do-- this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. So **I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.** What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God-- through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, **I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.** ([Romans 7:15-25](#) NIV)*



Can you feel a desire to do right things for God, yet see yourself often failing? What is it you want to do for God, and what do you find yourself doing instead?

---

---

---

This is the life of a believer. You must fight daily to walk according to Jesus' desires, while fending off the never-ending attacks of your "sinful nature." Adam's failure to obey God and failure to ask His advice has resulted in thousands of years of sin and its consequences. This is why we need to move on to the next steps of growing as a Christian. Is it difficult? Yes – anything of great value is difficult to acquire, but well worth the effort. In addition, God gives us the tools we need to win the daily battles, and survive the feelings of failure.

*Therefore, **there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus**, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit, **because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.** ([Romans 8:1-2](#) NIV)*

This is good news; you are not alone. Your new friendships in the church will be your lifelines that strengthen you every day in your fight against sin and the effects of the fall. Your prayer life, which we will discuss in a future lesson, will be the primary key to victory. In the meantime, talk to your mentor, or contact the writer (Andy) through the church offices or the web site if you have questions.

Please read the [Romans chapters 5 through 8](#) as part of this lesson assignment.

See you in Lesson #3!

[Note – This lesson can be downloaded in PDF format for printing or sharing]