

Why Did They Do That?

Q. Did our first parents remain as they were created?

A. Left to the freedom of their own wills, our first parents sinned against God and fell from their original condition.

(Westminster Shorter Catechism Q&A #13)

“Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

(Genesis 3:4-5)

As a parent of a toddler I’ve become very accustomed to hearing three little words that often proceed from my son’s lips. They are the words that any parent or grandparent has been told literally hundreds of times by their children, “*I don’t know!*”. When you walk into the kitchen and you see that all of the food has been taken out of the refrigerator and tossed all over the floor you ask your child, “*Why did you do that?*” and the response is always the same: “*I don’t know!*”. Or when you catch your young toddler in the act of using permanent marker to draw all over the walls of your church office (*unfortunately that’s a true story!*) and you ask, “*Son, why did you do that?*” the answer is always the same: “*I don’t know!*”. And that answer doesn’t simply cease after our children grow out of being toddlers does it? Even teenagers, when asked why they’ve done something foolish or dangerous, still respond by saying “*I don’t know!*”. The answer to “*why*” a toddler or teenager does what they do is a perennial mystery that may never be solved!

A few days ago we took a look at God’s wonderful work of creation. We saw how God created the Heavens, the Earth and all that is in them out of nothing (*ex nihilo*) by His powerful word. We saw that God planned and designed absolutely everything in the cosmos with wonderful purpose, meaning and significance. We read the refrain of Genesis, where after God had created everything He declared that “*it was good*”. And we studied about how God breathed life into man and woman, setting them apart from everything else in the created order, as those made in the image of God. On top of that, God graciously condescended and stooped to our lowly estate in order to enter in to a covenant with man. God graciously entered into a Covenant of Works with Adam, promising him eternal life and blessedness as long as Adam obeyed one simple command. In Genesis 2 we read, “*Of every tree of the garden you*

may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” (Genesis 2:16-17).

Unfortunately, you and I know how this story goes. You know how things turn out. Adam and Eve did not fulfill the terms of the Covenant of Works, but instead willingly chose to sin against the infinite God of the universe, doing the one thing that God had commanded them not to do. Which leads us to ask the question, *“Why did Adam and Eve do that? How could they be so careless? Why would they break the covenant of works?”* Well, unlike the mystery of why a toddler or teenager engages in certain behaviors, the Bible gives us more of an answer than simply, *“I don’t know!”*. In Genesis 3:1,4 Satan tempts Adam and Eve with these words, *“Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden’? You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”*.

What was the temptation that was so enticing that Adam and Eve would sacrifice everything by breaking the Covenant of Works? It was those five tempting words spoken by Satan to our first parents, *“you will be like God”*. Adam and Eve were tempted in the garden to commit the sin of idolatry. They were tempted to usurp God’s position as Lord and King. Adam and Eve broke the Covenant of Works in order to commit an act of cosmic insurrection. An insurrection that, as we will see in future studies, brought about eternal consequences. Each of us are still tempted daily to commit this same sin. Each of us are faced daily with the choice to follow our own path or God’s path. Choose this day whom you will serve. Will you choose to serve yourself today? Or will you choose to obey the commands of God which He has revealed in His Word?

Dig Even Deeper into God’s Word!

Deuteronomy 30:19

2 Corinthians 11:3

Genesis 3:6-8,13