

Testing times

Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7

On the first Sunday in Lent, we read the account of the Fall in Genesis. Adam is placed in the Garden of Eden and commanded to care for it, but warned not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Later, the serpent deceives Eve into eating the forbidden fruit, shared with Adam; they both realise they are naked and cover themselves.

Half-truths and deceptions can be so convincing, making it easy for us to succumb to temptation without noticing. We live in a world where the media can share unchecked reports and AI can generate facts or images in an instant. This week, we explore how our trust in God must guide us to discern how to live with testing of wants and needs as well as truth and uncertainty.

Read this week's passage:



Grow

The words we say about ourselves and the truths we choose to believe are like seeds. February is a good time to sow seeds such as broad beans, lettuces and peas. Sow some seeds in pots and, as you do so, think of good seeds you can sow in your life that contain God's truth. Nurture these seeds and watch their strong roots keeping them going through all tests.

Learn



Jesus defeated temptation with Scripture. Challenge yourself to learn a new Bible verse and its reference this week that will encourage and support you. You can find examples online.

PERSIST

Set a Lent intention. Either choose something to give up or choose an action to perform more often. Write down your intention or decorate a sign to help you to persist in it.



Find more free Roots resources to reflect on this week's theme:

Living Scripture

'of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat'
Genesis 2:17

Why would God put a beautiful tree in the garden and tell Adam and Eve not to eat its fruit? The story of the Garden of Eden is sparse in detail yet deep in symbolism, giving us scope to meditate and wonder. Innocent humanity, their every need met, led astray by a fruit tree? But this test is harder than it appears.

For them to choose to love God, they must have the opportunity to not choose God – to disobey his one rule. Is it an arbitrary rule for the sake of choice, or does the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil have great significance?

It appears the test was to trust God, to learn wisdom from God, at the pace God set, rather than taking knowledge on our own terms. Sin is often this way: not always something overtly evil (the fruit itself was beautiful, tasty, and gave a sort of wisdom), but times when we choose too much, too soon, before we are ready, without concern for harming our relationships others.

Where do you feel tempted to rush ahead of God? In which areas of your life do you rely on wisdom you find on your own terms? Is God really good and worth trusting? What would it have been like if Adam and Eve had trusted God?

First impressions

- What happens when things get twisted?
- Why does the serpent/devil twist the truth and what is the result?
- How does Jesus' example help us when we face testing times?



Pray

Lord, help us when we face testing times, so that we can see your truth among questions, doubts, temptations and uncertainty. Give us eyes to see you, ears to hear you and mouths to praise your name. Amen.



LOOK

Gossip magazines used to circle 'issues' on people's bodies and shame them for having them. The way we look and view our bodies goes beyond those magazines, all the way back to Adam and Eve. If you find this a constant test in your life, spend some time looking in the mirror or at pictures of yourself. Mentally circle parts of your body you don't like – and begin removing this shame by speaking God's truth into them. What would God have to say about you, the miracle God created?