

LEARNING THROUGH OUR EXPERIENCE

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In our own human experience, we have a natural condition to question, and the answer to our question comes from experience. We see examples of this in Eve and Julie--they both doubted the love and support of their elders, and through their experience learned a very valuable lesson. The women had two choices--to believe that they weren't supported and go against authority, or stay and trust in their protection.

Both women questioned. Eve began to question as soon as the serpent spoke to her. Genesis 3:1 says, "Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animals that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "did God say you shall not eat from any tree in the garden?" She began to question the sincere honesty and love that God had for her. She thought--will I really die if I just try it? How much greater will my life be if my eyes can be opened and I will be able to see like God? And the serpent responds to her, "You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Julie also questioned. She questioned the love and support her parents had for her. She believed that she would be rejected because of her pregnancy. "It had been impossible to go home, or even think too much about home, where her father (she was sure) would simply throw her out (Lessing 20)." Instead of trusting in her parent's love for her, she also fled.

It was their nature to question. Both women were presented with a

temptation--a lifestyle that was better than where they were. Self-control was the temptation presented to them. In Eve's case, her tempter was the serpent. He said to her in Genesis 3:4, "You will not die, for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God knowing good and evil." Eve is presented with the temptation to "know all." She also wanted to be wise. Genesis 3:6 says, "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." Being made wise would give her the self-control that she desired.

Julie also desired this "control," and while she knew that it wouldn't be available to her at home, it was there for her at Debbie's. Debbie was Julie's temptation: a place different/better than the alternative--home. It was place where she could get what she wanted without a price (Lessing 19-20).

As the serpent tested Eve, Debbie tested Julie. The serpent had interest in Eve at first, as Debbie did with Julie, but in the girls' time of trial, the serpent and Debbie weren't there. Eve ate of the fruit and then shared it with Adam, "and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate." Their eyes were definitely opened, to the fact that they were naked and now sinful, unlike God (Genesis 3:7). After this, the serpent is not mentioned, except when Eve refers to him as being her tempter (Genesis 3:13). Although he showed interest in her earlier when he tempted her, he was not there when she partook of the fruit, fell into sin, or when she felt ashamed.

When the time came for Julie to give birth, where was Debbie? She had left Julie all alone and afraid. "All those months Debbie had said, 'Don't

worry about anything, when the time comes I'll see everything's all right" (Lessing 21). She had told Julie that she would be her support, but then she left her. "Oh, Debbie, Debbie, why did you leave me?" (Lessing 21) After Eve and Julie made the decision to doubt, they had to face the consequences their choice over trusting in those who had protected them in the past.

Eve had to face God, and receive her punishment because she did not trust in him. Because of her decision, she was thrown out of the garden along with Adam (Genesis 3:23). But God did not abandon them. When they were naked he clothed them. He stayed with them and protected their children. Eve learned that she didn't need the fruit to give her a "better life." God was in control--she didn't need to be.

Julie learned that she too went astray, but learned a lesson. Her parents would not have rejected her, but loved and supported her all the way (Lessing 33-34). She didn't have to look for outside support, it was there the whole time--she just didn't see it.

Eve and Julie both went out looking and searching. However, without the experience, Eve wouldn't have known the good and evil side of life and God's love for her, and Julie wouldn't have known about the support her parents would have given her. The lessons they learned showed them that they were loved and supported.

This applies to every one, not just Eve and Julie. We all have at one time or another learned a lesson from distrusting the authority that is meant to protect us. What drives us to these actions is a question sparked in our minds from our human nature; we find the answer through trial and error.