

Eve's Big Moment: If God Knows Everything....

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It's a question I hear often in many different forms: "If God knows everything..."

"...why should I pray?"

"...why does he give me choices?"

"...why does He have expectations of me?"

I believe Adam and Eve are good case studies in God's omniscience and human choice. To some, their story is just that—a fairytale with a grumpy ogre who makes up arbitrary rules just to trap the unwary protagonists. As with many biblical narratives, the description is short and to the point:

omniscient (äm-'ni-shənt) –
God's attribute of being all-
knowing and unbounded in
knowledge.

And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (Genesis 2: 8-9)

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 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)

What's up with the trees and rules? Couldn't we have a few more details? Obviously, the scenario involves much more than God simply having the chance to say "Gotcha!" The moments in which Eve deliberately disobeyed God and Adam chose to follow, had widespread, everlasting consequences. We are left with many "whys" and "what ifs." Would the unbounded Creator of all that exists stoop to teasing or playing games?

It's easy to forget that God is a *personal* God. He is *loving*. The three Persons of the Trinity have been immersed in a loving relationship from eternity! And even harder to comprehend, God desires a relationship with *us*! He loves me! He is more concerned with what I *am* rather than what I *do*. However, the fact is, love and relationships are invisible except through some type of *doing*. The nature and depth of love can be known only through physical actions.

The Bible tells us that Adam and Eve communed with God. The Creator of the universe literally walked with them in the garden.¹ He was their *friend*. Imagine being with God every day in a perfect place and in the state of perfect innocence! Why would God “spoil” things by giving the strange rule about trees? I could never guess all the unrevealed intentions of God, but I can speculate...

As already mentioned, a crucial part of any relationship is in the outworking of the relationship. Much of the joy of relationship is in its “testing”—not in a negative sense, but in the revealing of the unseen feelings through real, physical actions. Adam and Eve could have experienced an unmarred relationship with the Creator for millions of years and would have never known the true extent or depth of it. With an environment of perfection, how could they have understood such things as respect, obedience, and commitment?

Stories with alleged “love potions” have always bothered me. How could someone be happy knowing their significant other loved them only because of an involuntary magic spell? God did not want robots. He is glorified when He is loved freely and uncoerced. Obviously, God knew the couple’s actions from all eternity. He needed no test for Himself. Could it be that one purpose in His forbidding the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil” was to show them their own hearts?

I have to do a treadmill stress test every year. I hate it with a passion. They tell me if anything is about to go wrong with my heart, this should make it happen! Free choice allows for bad choices. When faced with the choice of obeying God or gaining new, forbidden information, Adam’s and Eve’s heart defects were revealed. The two humans now knew what God already knew. Moreover, their rebellion changed them *and* the created universe. What a tragic lesson on what it’s like to be separated from God.

But God wasn’t finished with their schooling. Some of His attributes were now revealed in a way Adam and Eve could never comprehend before. God is not only LOVING, He is FORGIVING, JUST, RIGHTEOUS, and MERCIFUL. In addition, we and all other created beings now see these attributes on display as a result of their sin.

Just as I could never guess all of God’s purposes in Eden, I often don’t understand His workings in my life. Why does His Spirit lead me in particular ways when He already knows my choices and actions? Why does He reveal His will, knowing that I’ll rebel and run the other way? Incredibly, God sovereignly uses even our bad choices (which He knows beforehand) in accomplishing His will. I lack many answers, but I have learned that my Lord is trustworthy and loving. I know that He values our relationship and wants me to learn even more about Him. I can’t understand His omniscience completely, but I believe I’ll spend eternity learning more and more about it. For now, though, I can rest in His goodness and still have questions!

Some verses that tell of God’s omniscience...

Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite. (Psalm 147:5)

¹ Likely the pre-incarnate Christ.

Known to God from eternity are all His works. (Acts 15:18)

Do you know the balance of the clouds, those wondrous works of Him who is perfect in knowledge. (Job 37:16)