

Gardening / The Fall

Storyteller: “Mama, mama, come and look!” Nigel took his mother by the hand and pulled her out the door and into the garden. “Look mama, there – some little green shoots are growing right where I planted the seeds.” Nigel was excited. He had planted the dried beans a couple of weeks before. Every day he had gone out to his little garden patch to see if anything was growing. There had not been much rain so he’d put some water on the soil and watched it soak in. And the sun had shone on his little garden... and here, today were the first little shoots. “Maybe you could put a stick next to each little shoot,” his mother suggested, “so that as your beans grow they will have something to climb up.” Nigel went running off to find some sticks...

Tammy: It’s so amazing how plants grow, isn’t it?
I’m Tammy, and it’s good to be back with you today on *Women of Hope*. Hi Carol!

Carol: Hi Tammy – yes it *is* good to be back. It’s such fun when you plant something yourself and see it grow and bear fruit... or it has leaves you can eat... or flowers you can enjoy.

Tammy: Yes it is – I love my garden. Let’s share some ideas about gardens today. I wonder whether you have a garden. You may have a very big garden that you work in along with others in your village. Maybe you only have a little bit of soil, or maybe you don’t have any... You may be able to find a box or pot or an old saucepan that has a hole in the bottom to let some of the water drain out. Fill it with some soil, and put it where it can get as much light and air as possible. Ask your friends what are the best plants to grow, and when you should plant them for the best results.

Carol: You may have a friend who could start you off with a few seeds. Big ones like beans are the easiest if you haven’t grown things before. I wonder what kind of beans Nigel planted? There are many different kinds aren’t there... lima beans, navy beans, adzuki beans and lots of other beans that you cook when they’re dry.

Then there are green beans – of all shapes and sizes...and you cook and eat the whole long bean pod. They are all very nutritious...and taste so good!

You will be rewarded for the effort you put into growing your garden. Your children will love watching the little shoots growing more each day, just like Nigel. And they will then enjoy eating the vegetables... and be healthier because of it.

Tammy: Many plants like some manure in the soil. Just dig it under the surface, not too close to the roots if it’s fresh. If your plant is a climber, you will need to support it with string or wire or sticks. And don’t forget to water your plants. You will soon get to know how much water they need. Not too much, or the roots may rot. Not too little, or they will wither and die.

Carol: You and your children won’t be the only ones who like eating your plants. Insects and birds will want to have their share! One person we know planted a crop that became ripe earlier than all of the others around the district. All the birds and insects came to enjoy it! You may need to protect your

precious plants. Keep a close watch to see if there are signs of damage. Try to think of ways you can keep the pests away. Some people tie plastic bags or shiny bits of metal like aluminum with strings to frighten the birds away.

Tammy: You may need to protect your little garden from too much heat, or from strong winds or frost. If your plants are too close together they may not have enough air, and they may be attacked by mould. You may need to cut out some of the leaves or branches.

Carol: The effort you put into your garden will normally be rewarded. But if something goes wrong and your plants don't grow too well this time, don't give up. Try again, and again, maybe with some different plants, until you find the ones you can succeed with. You may need to get some different soil, or perhaps the weather was just not good for these plants this time. Don't give up. Something will grow!

Tammy: When your fruit does come you will want to pick it at the right time. With beans and peas, and many other plants, it is helpful for the plant if you pick it, because they may then produce more. You can try picking the fruit at different stages and see how you and your family like it. If you have too much for your family to eat, you could give some away to other people who need food. That will make them, and you, very happy!

Carol: People are a little bit like plants, aren't we? We need care and protection, especially when we are little. We need food and water - not too much, not too little. We need light and air. We may need protection from the heat and cold. And enemies may like to attack us in different ways like the birds and insects and mould do. We need to be on guard so that our minds are not attacked and led away into wrong thinking. Wrong thinking often leads to wrong actions. We may need to cut off some of the things we do because they are not good for us.

Tammy: And life may not be easy. Sometimes things may not go well for us, even if we try to *be* good and to *do* good. We can't control everything or everyone around us. But never give up. Never, never give up.

Carol: Like the plants, we may need *new soil* if we can't survive in the place we are in. We may need to move somewhere else if it's possible. Or maybe we can just *try again* where we are, with some different amounts of light and air. Maybe we can find new friends who will be helpful to us and whom we can help. Often we find our problems become smaller if we can help others, and like the plants, we grow better and produce more fruit if we give away some of what we have.

So, go and produce fruit, in your garden... and in your life!

Tammy: You're listening to *Women of Hope*...and we've been talking about gardens. There's nothing quite like walking in a garden is there? It may be a garden with grass and trees – or beds of flowers. It's good to make time if we can to enjoy a garden. And then there are gardens we work in – like we've been talking about – a vegetable garden.

We have a guest with us today who has come to tell us about a special garden – God's garden.

Carol: Judy, it's good to have you here today...

Judy: Thanks – it's good to be here Carol. Hi Tammy.

When I was a child, my dad had a vegetable garden. I looked forward to when we could pick fresh tomatoes, green beans and corn. I would help my dad prepare the soil for planting and then plant the seeds. There were times when there was little rain so we had to water the plants. It takes patience and much work to grow healthy vegetables. But what a pleasure when you take that first bite of a fresh vegetable that you have grown yourself.

Today, though, I haven't come to tell you about our garden at home, but about *God's* Garden and what happened in it. It's a story from the first book of the Bible, and it helps us understand why the world is not the perfect place God created.

God prepared this garden after he created the world and all things in it. God's true Word, the Bible, tells us that when he finished his creation, 'he looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!' (Genesis 1:31 NLT)

After God created the man, whom he called Adam, and the woman called Eve, he planted a garden in a place called Eden. Let me tell you about this garden...

This is the story from the Word of God:

(Genesis 2:8-17 NLT) 'God made all sorts of trees grow up from the ground – trees that were beautiful and that produced delicious fruit. In the middle of the garden he placed two special trees; the tree of life... and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

God placed the people he had created in the Garden of Eden to look after it. God told them, "You may eat any of the fruit from every tree in the garden". But he warned them "don't eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die."

So let's stop and imagine Adam and Eve living happily in the beautiful, fertile garden God had planted for them. There was no sin or evil - they only knew good. They were '...both naked, but they felt no shame' (Genesis 2:25 NLT).

But something terrible was going to happen that would change human history for ever. We know from the Bible that Adam and Eve were not alone in the Garden. There was another creature, the evil one, who came to them as a snake.

Let's go on with the story from God's word:

(Genesis 3:1-22) 'The snake was the most cunning of all the animals that God had made. One day he asked the woman, "Did God *really* say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?"

"Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden," said the woman. "It's only the fruit from the tree in the *middle* of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, 'You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.'"

“You won’t die!” said the snake. “God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good *and* evil.”

The woman *listened* to the snake. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit... and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. At that moment they understood about good and evil, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed large fig leaves together to cover themselves.’

Let’s stop for a moment and think about this... What had Adam and Eve done? And how would this change things?

Well...let me tell you what happened next...

(Genesis 3:8-22 NLT) ‘When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard God walking about in the garden. So they hid among the trees. Then God called to the man, “Where are you?”

Adam replied, “I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked.”

“Who told you that you were naked?” God asked. “Have you eaten fruit from the tree – the one that I told you not to touch?”

“Yes” Adam admitted, “but it was the woman you gave me who brought me the fruit, and I ate it.”

Then God asked the woman, “How could you do such a thing?”

“The snake tricked me,” she replied. “That’s why I ate it.”

Then God put a curse on the snake and said that there would always be fear and hatred between snakes and people. God foretold something remarkable: that the descendant of the woman would crush the head of the snake, while the snake would strike his heel.

God also foretold what would happen to the world because Adam and Eve had disobeyed him. From then on, he said, women would have pain in having children, and they would be ruled by their husbands. The earth would produce weeds and thorns, and men would have to struggle and work hard to grow food, until the time they died and returned to the ground from which they were made.

Then God made clothes for them from skins, so they would not be naked, and he sent them out of the beautiful garden for ever.

This is the end of the story from God’s word, of what Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden.

Let’s get the story clear... What did God say at first?

Tammy: He said they could eat anything except the fruit of one tree.

Judy: Yes - and the name of the tree...?

Tammy: The tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. And he said they would die if they ate it.

Judy: That’s right. You would think that would be enough warning! But what did the snake say?...

Tammy: It said that wasn't true. And somehow, the people believed the snake instead of God. How strange!

Judy: So Adam and Eve acted as though God was a liar, or as though he didn't know what was best for them. They disobeyed God. There were serious consequences for what Adam and Eve did. What were some of those consequences? ...Yes, people ever since have suffered pain...power struggles...hardship...and death. The earth itself was damaged...God said it would grow weeds and thorns... I'm sure you know from experience that this is true!

Tammy: So, what they did affected all people.

Judy: That's right Tammy. All through history people have acted the same way. We all have disobeyed God at times - done wrong things... thought we knew better. The Bible calls this 'sin', and it says we all have this sinful nature (Rom 3:23). Do you agree that you have done wrong things? Do you have wrong thoughts in your mind?... I do! We are just like the couple in this ancient story. And we still suffer every day because of sin.

But remember the strange thing God said to the woman – that her descendant would crush the snake's head, and it would strike at his heel? Many generations later, a man born of a woman *would* fight - and *defeat* - the evil one. His name was...

Tammy: Jesus!

Judy: The Bible tells us about Jesus, God's Son, who came to free his people from sin and death. God didn't leave Adam and Eve's descendants in their sad condition. He provided a way for people to be saved through his Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus took the punishment for our sins when he died on the cross. This broke the power of the evil one over our lives. Have you put your trust in him?

Carol: A listener wrote to us to tell us how the power of the evil one was broken in *her* life. Would you like me to read it to you?

'I was a devil worshiper. One day I was not happy with the command given from the devil and I refused to do what he told me... Since that time I became paralyzed. I could not walk and spent six years on my bed. When it was time for my daughter to marry, she asked her father to carry me to the city to one of the hospitals. There while my family was preparing a satanic sermon I got tired and slept. As I slept, I had a vision of Jesus. He told me to go to a certain church. Later I managed to reach the church and was saved from my sickness. I came to know Jesus and my life is changed.

Tammy: Another listener from a different country wrote and told how her life had been changed when she asked Jesus to take her sins away...

'By listening to your program, my life has been changed. One day, after a fight with my husband who had an affair with another lady, I had decided to commit suicide. Being a village health worker, I knew what to do and therefore powdered a medicine to take- when 'coincidentally' your program was on air. The message focused on a "mother's role". I was touched to the core of my heart and realized that I was doing wrong in trying to end my life. I confessed my sins to Jesus...and my life is changed. I remember having prayed for a Women's Radio program a long time back and now realize its benefit in my own life. Please pray for me.

Carol: And do you think it was coincidence that she turned on her radio and heard that message? I don't think so...I think God had it planned... We will pray for you. And we're going to pray now before we finish our time with you. I would like to pray with *you* that your life would be changed too. Would you like to pray with me?

Father God, who made the world and who made me... thank you for sending Jesus to die on the cross to take away my sin... Thank you for making a way for me to come back to you and to be your child... Please help me to trust you and to follow you... Help me to understand what you want me to do in my life. Help me to see the consequences of the decisions I make and the actions I take. Thank you for answering my prayer... In the name of Jesus, your son, Amen.

Tammy: Thank you for praying with us. If you would like to know more about Jesus, please write to us at TWRWomenofHope@twr.org You can also visit our website at TWRWomenofHope.org. Or you can visit our Facebook page.

Carol: And remember let's enjoy our gardens – and our lives. If we take care of our garden the plants will grow and bear fruit. If we take care of our lives we will grow... and produce *good* fruit.

Until next time, take care, and God bless you.

Tammy: Goodbye

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