

When a Woman Lets Go of the Lies

Cheryl Brodersen



HARVEST HOUSE PUBLISHERS
EUGENE, OREGON

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WHEN A WOMAN LETS GO OF THE LIES

Copyright © 2012 by Cheryl Brodersen

Published by Harvest House Publishers

Eugene, Oregon 97402

www.harvesthousepublishers.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Brodersen, Cheryl, 1960-

When a woman lets go of the lies / Cheryl Brodersen.

p. cm.

ISBN 978-0-7369-4942-2 (pbk.)

ISBN 978-0-7369-4943-9 (eBook)

1. Christian women—Religious life. 2. Self-esteem in women—Religious aspects—Christianity. I. Title.

BV4527.B745 2012

248.8'43—dc23

2011046147

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Printed in the United States of America

12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 / BP-GLD / 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Once again I find myself indebted to Hope Lyda for her vision, patience, and expertise in transforming my earnest warnings into a readable format. She is simply amazing!

I have great appreciation for those at Harvest House who work with me throughout the publishing process. You people are the best!

My daughters, Kristyn and Kelsey, had a great hand in the inspiration behind this manuscript. They are more than conquerors through Christ Jesus!

I want to thank the girls at the Calvary Chapel Bible College in Murrieta, California, who were in my “All About Eve” class. Their honesty, testimonies, and attentive devotion served as the catalyst for writing on this subject. You girls are terrific!

Finally, I am devoted to my precious co-laborers and prayer partners—the Tuesday Girls! They prayed each chapter into a reality. Among these great women, I give special thanks to Kathy Gilbert for her diligence in reading each chapter and offering such great and profound insights. I am very blessed to have friends like you!

My husband, Brian, is always a great source of encouragement. When I think I have nothing to say, he loves to remind me of all I have said. He is truly one of the greatest gifts God has given me.

Finally, and most of all, I thank the Lord Jesus Christ, who is truth incarnate! I thank Him for giving us the Spirit of Truth to lead us into all truth. I thank the Lord Jesus for His continual love for and devotion to each one of us.

Contents

In the Beginning	7
----------------------------	---

Part One

Chapter 1	The Conception of Deception	17
Chapter 2	When We Face the Lies	33

Part Two

Chapter 3	Lie: God's Word Can't Be Believed	49
	<i>Let Go of Uncertainty—Embrace God's Promises</i>	
Chapter 4	Lie: The Devil Made Me Do It	63
	<i>Let Go of Blame—Embrace Responsibility</i>	
Chapter 5	Lie: I'm Not Worthy.	81
	<i>Let Go of Insecurity—Embrace Your Identity in God</i>	
Chapter 6	Lie: The Grass Is Greener Everywhere Else . . .	97
	<i>Let Go of Discontentment—Embrace Fulfillment</i>	
Chapter 7	Lie: God Doesn't Speak into My Life	115
	<i>Let Go of Confusion—Embrace Clarity</i>	
Chapter 8	Lie: I Can't Be Forgiven	135
	<i>Let Go of Guilt—Embrace the Grace</i>	

Chapter 9	Lie: I Have Nothing to Offer	157
	<i>Let Go of Insignificance—Embrace God’s Purpose</i>	
Chapter 10	Lie: I Can Do This Without God	173
	<i>Let Go of Pride—Embrace Trust</i>	
Chapter 11	Lie: Just One Bite Won’t Matter	187
	<i>Let Go of Temptation—Embrace God’s Strength</i>	

Part Three

Chapter 12	An Apple a Day	205
	<i>Let All the Lies Go—Watch Your Garden Grow</i>	
Embracing Truth Journal		217

In the Beginning

The sandals weren't a style I'd normally wear, but they were so adorable. They immediately caught my eye.

They looked so tantalizing in the catalog—a catalog I had never looked at, let alone ordered from. But those perfect-for-summer shoes caught my eye. I imagined how they would look with my different summer outfits. This catalog wasn't one I'd ever even considered buying from before. It was just too sensual. So ignoring the urge to let my eyes and imagination linger on those sandals, I tossed the catalog into the trash.

The next day I couldn't get the wedge-heeled rope sandals out of my mind. I pulled the crumpled catalog out of the trash bin and made the fateful call. I gave the woman on the phone my order. She verified my request: "That would be the wedge-heeled rope sandal?" I concurred and gave her my payment information. As I hung up, I thought about how trendy I would look in my new summer shoes. Or so I thought.

A few days later a package arrived in the mail. I quickly opened it up, eager to see my delightful sandals. But I was totally dismayed to discover *undergarments* ten sizes too large for me instead.

I immediately called the company. They apologized and told me to put the clothes back in the packaging and simply pay the return charges. I complied.

At this point I was feeling a bit uncomfortable. I was wondering if those shoes were really worth the hassle—when another shipment of oversized undergarments arrived. This time when I called the company, the customer service representative was argumentative; insisting that I must have placed this order. After giving her my weight, height, and circumference I finally convinced her I had only ordered sandals.

Ignoring the sense of foreboding, I again repackaged the undergarments and paid return postage fees. Two weeks later, a shoebox-shaped package arrived. I was ready to forgive all injustices just to get those sandals on my feet. With great anticipation I tore off the wrapping and opened the box.

Ugh! The shoes in the box were uglier than a homemade bar of soap, as my mom would say. They only slightly resembled the irresistible pair in the photo. They had a distressed look, as if they had been worn before and discarded. I thought maybe they'd look better when I had them on, but as I tried to squeeze my foot into one, I noticed they were two sizes too small! I called the company and let them know I'd be making a final return. I requested that they never send me anything again. Including a catalog!

Have you ever been deceived by something as innocent as a picture in a catalog? The images are shiny, attractive, and very tempting. They are a lot like the forbidden fruit that lured Eve from her normal behavior and better judgment and opened up the world to lies, hurts, shame, and brokenness. Okay, sandals aren't the downfall of society. But when we believe a lie that is packaged and presented so nicely and innocently, we find ourselves

justifying our actions. We buy into the lie instead of God's truth and the wisdom of our faith. Then when we try to force our life into that lie, we realize it doesn't fit the heart and purpose of God's design for us.

Have you encountered problems? Chances are that many of your problems stem back to some lie you have bought into.

Most of us are aware of the problems we are experiencing but are much less certain about where those problems came from. Maybe you too have spent many waking hours rehashing and revisiting your emotional hardships in an effort to find their origin and, just maybe, find a remedy. Are you surprised when anger rises up in you during a conversation or the happenings of a regular day? Has jealousy seeped into your thoughts and undermined a relationship? Does a false belief that you aren't any good take over when you are about to start something new?

Our biggest problems seem to make an appearance with clamor and without invitation. And then they accompany us on our journey as if they had been with us since the beginning. I want you to know that there is something to that sensation. These problems, these thought- and energy-consuming issues, are born of the lies that have been a part of the human experience, the female experience, since the very beginning in the Garden of Eden.

Do you feel dissatisfied? Unfulfilled? Betrayed? Insecure? Oppressed? Unloved? Abandoned? Vulnerable? Afraid? Unworthy? Then you are not alone. Some of these feelings might be tied to specific circumstances or particular seasons of your life. Others might be struggles you hold onto or that seem to hold onto you. Either way, it is time to head for the garden. If you and I are going to discover why our problems are our problems, then we must uncover the lies that distort our perspective and purpose. Those lies have been with women since the time of Eden.

Get Rid of What Doesn't Work

On our way to a full and whole life, we will want to have plenty of room in our minds and hearts for what *does* work. God's hope. God's answers. God's promises. God's truths. And here is some great news: We also get to let go of what doesn't work. It will take some soul-searching and might even involve a few painful goodbyes as you bid adieu to behaviors, lies, and patterns that have been a part of your life for a long time. But it will be worth it because you'll be moving toward real answers by looking at the real causes for the problems.

Have you ever sat down to talk about a problem with your husband, a brother, or a male friend and had this experience? You start to explain that something is troubling you. You mention what might have led up to this trouble because it's complex and not easy to state in one sentence or two. Then just as you get comfortable and start to dig into the actual problem, you notice the perplexed look on your male listener's face. And as he opens his mouth, you know beyond a shadow of a doubt that what he is about to say, what he is about to offer up *before* you even fully explain the complexities of your issue, will be a painfully unhelpful suggestion.

Why? Because men think differently than women do.

Men approach situations with the thought of conquering the issue or the problem. Here are examples of the quick fixes a man might offer for our complicated scenarios:

Depression? Try a new exercise.

Hurt? Ignore that person.

Isolation? Join a health club.

Misunderstandings? Ignore it.

Insecurities? Get a new outfit.

Oppression? Get some fresh air.

Unfulfilled longings? Eat a hot-fudge sundae.

Sound familiar?

We don't want a temporary fix to a long-lasting problem. We want to figure out the "why" of a problem. "Why is this happening?" Now, before I spark a debate in marriages, let me state that men often offer us right answers. We know their counsel can be wise, godly, and exactly what we need to hear. But there is a process that most women go through to come to the other side of an answer that is of lasting influence in their lives. To make a change or to resolve an issue, we need to fully understand a few things, including

- how the difficulty is affecting us
- what the actual issue behind the difficulty is
- where the issue or problem came from
- what the absolute right answer to resolution is
- how to let go of the problem
- how to embrace the answer and make it work

When it's listed out like that in black-and-white, it is clear that we have more steps and stages to go through than the first list of quick fixes. Even if these aren't all a part of your personal process, chances are that you recognize a few from your problem-solving kit.

We don't want pat answers. We're women. We're smart, creative, and emotional beings. We want to examine things and understand them. We want to talk through our to-do lists and the things that occupy our thoughts and our occasional sleepless nights. Even when our feelings confuse us or leave us more

perplexed about our purpose than ever, we want to talk about them. It is actually a very remarkable and noble trait to want to understand who we are as women and as daughters of the King. This will serve us well in the journey ahead.

Where to Go from Here?

All problems originated a long time ago in what was a delightful paradise. And the woman who faced them first was Eve. Her name means “life-giver” and she is referred to as “mother of all.” Each of us bears a strong resemblance emotionally, mentally, and spiritually to this great mother we all share.

To know why we think and feel the emotions we do, it’s helpful to go back to the story and life of Eve. As we study her we will begin to understand ourselves and learn how to let go of the lies and grab hold of God’s life-changing truths for our own personal journeys.

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There is great blessing when you embrace the very best purposes and wonders that God has planned for you.

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“In the beginning” is the start of God’s Word and the start of our journey to discover more about our nature, God’s nature, and the wonderful new garden path we can walk when we are willing to release the lies and start living in the glorious truth, purpose, and hope our loving Creator intended for us...in the beginning. God longs for us to walk in this life with the wisdom we glean from Eve’s story, from the riches of His Word, and from our own personal encounters with the living Christ.

A life of integrity and wholeness takes some work. There is a need to let go of lies and ungodly behaviors that undermine your

faith journey. And there is great blessing when you embrace the very best purposes and wonders that God has planned for you. Can there be any sweeter joy and motivation?

To find our way to greater awareness of God's hope and strength, you and I will explore stories from other women and stories and instruction from the Bible. And we'll also mine our personal experiences to discover what is holding us back from embracing the freedom, love, value, hope, and purpose God designed for us.

Part One



Chapter 1

The Conception of Deception

We're smart women. We pray. We care about what God wants for our lives. Right? So why are we still susceptible to the lies that can undermine or destroy our lives emotionally, spiritually, and physically? How is it we can be deceived? Well, just as Eve went against God's instruction and plan for her and Adam by eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, we often make choices that let sin into our lives. Though we listen to God, nod, and enjoy our path of purpose, all of a sudden we find ourselves staring longingly at something forbidden or "less than" what He wants for us.

Let's take a look at how we let sin in and also become aware of the places we've already let sin in. It isn't always obvious to us when we are feeding off of the dangling fruit of deception rather than on a steady diet of truth. Others might notice before we do. But eventually the ungodly thoughts and behaviors become apparent. The weight of carrying around the lies makes us weary. The effort we put into pretending all is well takes every bit of our strength and energy until one day we wake up with a fatigue that is bone-deep.

Even if it is a hardship that has brought you to this point of exploration, my friend, I am grateful that you have the courage and desire to examine the lies that might be a part of your past

or present. It can take quite a jolt to our version of “life as usual” before we wake up to the deep desire to walk closely and authentically with God. Whatever has brought you to this place—your personal “in the beginning”—consider it a gift because this is a journey that will transform your life.

How Sin Gets In

Sin doesn't just happen. There is usually a deliberation, a turning point that takes place when we go for the behavior, decision, thought, attitude, or action that aims us away from godliness. James 1:14-16 highlights the progression of sin:

Each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

With Eve, sin started with the notion that Satan put in her mind about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He put questions in her mind about the relevancy and validity of God's Word. From there he denied the power of God's Word and the consequences of sin. Finally he made false claims concerning why God had forbidden her from eating the fruit of the forbidden tree. He told her that the fruit would actually enhance her life.

It was not a sudden impulse that caused Eve to pick the fruit off the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. There were forethought and deliberation in her actions. Genesis 3:6 records those deliberations: “When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate.”

There was a progression to Eve's actions. First her attention was drawn to the forbidden after a conversation with the devil. Next, she began to look at the tree of the knowledge of good and

evil differently. She thought about the flavor of the fruit—“it was good for food.” She tried to imagine the taste of the fruit of the tree. She longed for the sensation of biting into the texture of the objects hanging from the branches. She dreamed about taking in what God had prohibited.

Eve felt an attraction to the tree. “It was pleasant to the eyes.” She found herself irresistibly drawn to the middle of the garden, where the tree was planted. She stared longingly at the beauty of its shape, branches, leaves, and succulent fruit.

She began to speculate about what would happen to her if she ate the fruit. “Desirable to make one wise”—what would it be like to be wise? Eve, who had felt perfectly content before, now felt like her life lacked something vital. She felt incomplete. The other trees could not compensate for what she felt was missing in her life. The wisdom she already possessed was no longer enough. All her hopes, desires, and aspirations became centered on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The account in Genesis does not tell us how long Eve thought about the tree. She might have thought about the tree for a few minutes, hours, days, or even weeks. The fruit on the tree began to push out every other thought. She might have envisioned it in her mind when she closed her eyes. She might have dreamed about it while she slept.

The tree that hadn’t been a big concern for her before suddenly became prominent in her thoughts. She was allowing it to become bigger and more important than God’s instruction and the truth she had been experiencing since her creation—that God had given her all she needed.

Healthy Desires vs. Destructive Desires

Sin begins with desire. But before we talk about the slippery slope of ungodly desire, I want to make it clear that not all desire

is evil. In fact most desires are not evil. God understands desire. In Psalm 37:4, God promises that if we delight ourselves in Him, He will give us the desires of our heart.

As women we desire many good things. We desire...

- companionship
- love
- acceptance
- affirmation
- fulfillment
- purpose
- meaning
- identity
- food
- pleasure
- happiness
- health
- beauty
- security
- fun
- self-enhancement

Sometimes a good desire is twisted into a bad desire. Satan is a master at perversion. I will never forget the time a woman at a retreat confessed to me that she was in love with my husband, Brian. After all, who could forget a conversation like that!

Believe it or not, I looked at her with compassion. She was a new Christian and had only been attending our church for a short time. Her husband was not a Christian, and he had a problem with alcohol. I knew she had brokenness and sorrow in her life. I also knew, as soon as the words left her mouth, that she was speaking a lie.

Does this mean that I think that she was intending to lie? No. But I recognized that she was speaking from a deception she had embraced as truth. So I kept my composure and my compassion and spoke truth to her.

“You’re not in love with my husband. You are in love with Jesus in my husband,” I told her.

She shook her head. “No. I think about your husband all the time, and I have had some perverse dreams about him.”

This new scenario required a little more grace on my part, but God let me see the truer picture. “Satan is trying to pervert something precious and pure. You are falling in love with Jesus, and Brian is the one who is telling you about Jesus. You think you are in love with the vessel, but really you are in love with the Lord.”

I prayed with her and assured her of my forgiveness. Later that year her husband got saved, and their marriage and life took a dramatic upward turn. She was embarrassed that she had once thought she was in love with her pastor. She came to understand that Satan had wanted to keep her from the true desire of her heart and her true path.

Innocent Beginnings

Desire might start innocently in the mind. Then the devil comes along and begins to suggest to you that you need to fulfill the desire for yourself. He might tell you that God doesn't care about fulfilling your desires. He might say that God won't ever fulfill it. Or he might suggest that God is taking too long to fulfill it. Satan will recommend ways to fulfill it on your own. His voice will have a sense of urgency, and you'll feel pressure to move forward in your strength and direction rather than in God's strength and perfect will. How often have you grabbed at the first opportunity that came along and realized you had done so to fill the void and because you were unwilling to wait for God's best?

When a desire becomes your only focus and interest, so much so that you are willing to sacrifice God's ways and plan to fulfill your longing, you are entering dangerous territory. Eve provides us with an example of a woman who stopped heeding God's Word for her life. Her desire to taste something new, hold something

beautiful, and to be “wise” was not evil, but because she wanted them on her terms and in her own timing rather than in the ways God planned to usher them into her life, she undermined her commitment to Him.

Taken by Surprise

Eve was unaware of the serpent’s real identity and nature. She never thought she would come across something bad in the Lord’s garden. And she didn’t have a concept of evil. Although we have years of personal history and also the wisdom of Scripture to give us more insight, we can still be unaware and caught off guard by the presence of evil, sin, and temptation when we don’t guard our hearts with God’s truths and promises. We don’t think we’re entertaining the devil because we don’t expect to find him in our home, our situations, and our sacred places. “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8). He can be found just about anywhere...a truth we discover in our day-to-day lives. Be aware that Satan could be lurking anywhere, ready to deceive you.

Darla’s Downfall

Darla is a beautiful woman. She has fiery brown eyes and sculpted features. She met a young man at her father’s church. At first their relationship was wonderful. He constantly flattered her and endeared himself to her with gifts. However, after a year or so of dating, he began to pressure her into immoral activity. The pressure intensified and he took more control of her mind through constant criticism and by withholding approval. For years she was in bondage to the relationship with this man she had met at church. One day, at a Christian women’s retreat, the reality of this young man’s nature dawned on Darla. With the help and prayers of family and friends she ended the relationship. She now refers to those years as the years she dated Satan.

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We come to church to worship our Lord and to bring our brokenness before Him. If we lose sight of this truth, we place our attention on the wrong things.

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Darla never expected to meet someone ungodly at her father's church. The church would seem to be the safest place to meet a promising, righteous young man. He came to services, carried a Bible, and acted like other Christians. In the beginning he was full of flattery and offered her security and fulfillment. Though in retrospect Darla says she saw early indications of his controlling, angry nature, yet she thought she could handle it. After all, she had met him at church. Sadly, she let desire override her discernment of God's truth.

When we let a longing for love and companionship take over our hearts, we crowd out God's leading. We drown out the still, small voice calling us to truth. If we are honest with ourselves, we even try to ignore the loud calls of conviction because we want what we want at the time, and we think we know best.

Darla thought the physical garden of church would be a place where she could give herself over to her desires and it would all be good with God. Haven't you heard? The church is indeed the body of Christ, but it is also made up of very fallible humans. We come to church to worship our Lord and to bring our brokenness before Him. If we lose sight of this truth, we place our attention on the wrong things.

The Garden of the Mind and Heart

It is not only physical places Satan has access to, but also to our minds. Satan tries to enter our thoughts. He introduces thoughts, fictional scenarios, and lies.

When my friend Nancy was going through a particularly

difficult time she commented to me, “I can’t afford to think my own thoughts.” Nancy was well aware of the warfare that was taking place in her mind. She couldn’t trust every thought that came to her. She had to discern what was true and what was being suggested to her.

There is biblical evidence for this reality. In Matthew 16 Jesus asks the disciples, “Who do you say that I am?” Peter answers with a wonderful disclosure about the true nature of Jesus when he states, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:15-16).

Jesus responds to Peter’s disclosure by telling Peter that this declaration was a divine revelation. “Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven” (verse 17). Peter did not naturally come up with this divine disclosure. God had given this revelation to him. However, just a short time later, as Jesus was talking about the suffering He would endure in Jerusalem, Peter rebuked Him: “Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!” (verse 22). No doubt Peter felt he was on a roll, having had his last utterance identified as divine. However, this time, Jesus’ reaction is quite different. “He turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men’” (verse 23).

How could it be possible for Peter one moment to have a divine revelation and the next to have a satanic one? Satan intruded into his thoughts.

Notice how Jesus identified Satan’s activity. He stated that Satan was mindful of the things of men above the things of God. Satan appeals to the lust of men’s flesh. He makes men and women think about what pleases them. This will help you with your own thoughts. Thoughts that center on self-pleasing rather than on God-pleasing need to be carefully examined.

Settling for Less than God's Best

At the inception of desire, it's important to ask the Lord to clarify what it is you really want or should want. Ask for His will to become known before Satan begins to twist the desire in your mind. There are times when God will put a desire in our hearts because He is preparing to give us something special. Paul talks about God working in us to will and to do for His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13). Satan seeks to corrupt the desire so that we will not wait for the greater gift from God or recognize it when it comes.

King David was walking on his rooftop one evening when he saw a beautiful woman bathing near his palace. Her name was Bathsheba, and she was the wife of one of his best soldiers, Uriah. David had her brought to him, and the result was disastrous.

A few weeks later Bathsheba sent a message to David informing him that she was pregnant with his child. The king decided to try to cover his sin. He brought Uriah back from the battle under the pretext of wanting information about the army of Israel. David spoke to him and then sent him home to spend the night with his wife.

Uriah didn't cooperate with David's plan. Being a true soldier, Uriah thought about the other men on the battlefield. He felt guilty sleeping in his cozy bed with his beautiful wife when his comrades were sleeping in the open fields away from the comforts of home. He made his bed that night near the entrance of David's palace, along with the other servants.

David was dismayed. He tried one more time—he wine and dined Uriah and got him drunk. Again Uriah refused to go to the comforts of his own home.

David then sent Uriah back to the battlefield. David instructed his general to put Uriah in the front of the battle and then draw

the troops away from him so that he would be killed. After Uriah died in battle, David took Bathsheba into his house and made her his wife. Everything seemed concealed until the king received a visit from Nathan, the prophet.

Nathan began by telling the king the story of a rich man who had stolen his neighbor's only sheep. David was enraged at the rich man and ordered his death. Nathan then said to David, "You are the man!"

The prophet delivered this message from the Lord:

Thus says the LORD God of Israel: "I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your keeping, and gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more!" (2 Samuel 12:7-8).

God had done so much for David already and was prepared to do even more for him. But David had sinned by taking what he desired instead of abiding by the Lord's leading. David, in fulfilling his own desires, had settled for much less than what God had planned for him.

Before the Fall

Corey, a woman with Alzheimer's, came to visit me. Conversing with her for very long proved challenging, so I decided a simple distraction might be best. I turned the television on and settled on an episode of the old series *Perry Mason*. That seemed a safe choice.

Corey became very quiet and focused. She enjoyed the slow-moving courtroom drama. I was congratulating myself on the good decision, when all of a sudden she jumped to her feet and rushed at the television. "You're lying!" she screamed at the woman in the courtroom scene who had just taken the stand.

She turned to me with desperation in her voice, “We’ve got to stop her! She’s lying.”

In vain I tried to convince Corey that the scenario wasn’t real. I tried to point out that everything in the room we were sitting in was in vivid colors while the drama on the television was being played out in black-and-white. She sat down resolutely. “I am so angry at that woman,” she fumed.

At the time I was so surprised that Corey thought she could actually influence something happening on the screen. Yet, when it comes to the story of Eve in the Bible, I often find myself behaving just like Corey. I enter the drama and as Genesis unfolds, I see Eve’s attention focusing on the forbidden fruit. I know what will happen. I know this is the craziest thing this woman in paradise could do. And every part of me wants to call out to her, “Turn away! Think about Adam! Think of future generations of women!”

As Eve walks toward the tempting fruit dangling from the tree, I want to warn her with every part of my being. “Turn away. Walk away now!” I don’t want her to fall from God’s grace. I don’t want her to follow through with this action that will forever change her relationship to her Creator.

But her hand moves closer to the forbidden fruit until she is holding it in her grasp. She tugs and it falls softly into her hand. She lifts the tantalizing morsel to her mouth. Her lips part and her mouth opens wider to take a bite of the succulent fruit.

“No!” I want to cry out. “Don’t do it.”

Though I’ve read this story a thousand times, it always ends the same way. Eve takes that bite and there is no turning back. Her teeth pierce through the skin and into the meat. She savors it for a moment. As she chews the prohibited pleasure, she passes it to Adam and he bites down on it also. The deed is done.

Innocence Lost

It'd be nice if we had someone shouting out a warning when we or a loved one was about to fall. Sometimes the warnings are subtle or nonexistent, and the mistake, the sin, and the consequence happen.

My friend Betty's daughter got involved with a pedophile on the Internet. Carrie thought she was corresponding with a boy her own age. The man portrayed himself online as a peer so that he could entice her to stay in communication. He flattered her, and finally emotionally seduced her. By the time Carrie realized that she was being deceived, she was mesmerized and under the influence of the bond he had created.

Betty found out that the man had seduced her daughter, so she tried to put an end to their communications. However, Carrie would sneak off to a friend's house or to the library and use other computers to keep the conversation going. The man became cruel in his e-mails, but she couldn't distance herself from him or the abuse. She begged for his approval. Finally she could not take the pain and rejection any longer. At 15 years of age she committed suicide.

When we refuse to acknowledge darkness,
we forget to cling to the light.

Betty was devastated. Her precious daughter had been told lies about her value. Her daughter had given her bright future over to someone with evil intentions because she believed his deceptions more than she believed the truths she knew about love, grace, and acceptance from her family and God.

Through this time of great pain, Betty felt a growing desire to warn other mothers. I asked her what message she wanted to

convey to other moms. Without hesitation, she answered, “Tell them to teach their daughters the value of healthy fear.”

Betty explained that she had shielded her daughter from every story about evil men and women. Carrie had grown up believing that everyone and everything was safe. She had no idea that someone would act with malice toward her.

This part of the story is not unique. Many of us try to protect our children and ourselves from evil by avoiding the acknowledgment of evil. We set up boundaries and borders. We might do such a good job of excluding talk of evil that we forget how a foundation of information and healthy awareness can become our best protection against harmful situations and people. When we refuse to acknowledge darkness, we forget to cling to the light.

When anyone pretends that sin and evil are merely dramatic features of the Bible and have nothing to do with life today, they will become very susceptible to falling into patterns of sin and self-deception. Our advance warning is found in the advance preparation of studying God’s promises and truths and by becoming aware of evil’s existence so that we are never complacent or unbelieving.

Rising to God’s Best

Satan is out there lurking in unexpected places. He is waiting and wanting to deceive women into unproductive lives by his lies. Our best defense against his lies is a solid understanding of the truth. Jesus Himself is the truth we need to grab hold of. In John 14:6 He told Thomas, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”

The closer your grow to Jesus and the more you fill your mind and heart with His truth, the less susceptible you will be to the lies Satan would like to feed you. God has great plans and purposes for your life. Satan would like to subvert those divine plans and keep you in bondage to lies.

Together we will explore the lies Satan suggests and the greater truths found in Jesus Christ—the truths that will set us free from those lies and bring us into the greater purposes of God. Are you ready to be set free? Then let's continue!

Questions for Study and Personal Reflection

1. Read the first two chapters of Genesis. What phrases jump out at you? Is there anything you noticed in this reading that you hadn't paid attention to before?

2. What intrigues you most about Eve? What can you relate to the most in her story?

3. This is your “in the beginning” opportunity to make some changes.

What excites you about embracing some godly changes right now?

What makes you nervous about a new beginning...even a good one?

Why is “right now” an important time to be reading this book?

4. Can you identify any difficulties or struggles in your life right now? What are they?

5. When have you settled for less than God’s best? What impact did that decision have?

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6. If you were watching your life on instant replay, at what point would you call out to the screen, “Don’t do it! Don’t do it!” Describe a time when you were deceived or almost deceived by the devil.

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7. Pray and ask God to shed light on some areas of deception that are a part of your life. As you read this chapter, were there any warning alarms sounding in your heart and head? Write down those areas of possible concern.
