

Community Church of Huntington
Picking Fruit in the Fall
Donna C. Stafford

September begins the season of fall, a season that brings colored leaves, cornstalks, pumpkin picking, fruits, apples, peaches, plums, and pears, to name a few. During picking and harvesting season, we are often tempted by the smells of baking apple pies, peach crisps, caramel apples, apple crisps, and warm cider donuts.

The scriptures contain a reference to picking fruit and temptation in the story of Adam and Eve ([Genesis 3: 1-10 \(NIRV\) New International Reader's Version](#)) in the Garden of Eden. This story brings up different things for different people.

This author's research reveals many different origins of the apple's symbolism as the "fruit of temptation" in this biblical story. This association solidified over centuries of Christian art and literature. So, while the Bible does not specify the fruit, the apple became the prevailing symbol due to its symbolic resonance, cultural familiarity, and visual qualities that aligned with the themes of the Eden narrative. To be clear, this does not mean that apples are unsuitable for you or should not be eaten. It could as well have been a pear, a mango, a banana; you name it, any fruit would do. The fruit doesn't matter. The crux of the matter is giving in to temptation and sin.

Many themes can be brought out in the story. We can think about the serpent, the apple, or the tree in the middle of the garden, sometimes called the tree of knowledge, of good and evil. It is one of the most well-known stories in which Eve is being tempted by the serpent. When the serpent tempted Eve, she succumbed to the temptation, eating the apple (fruit) and thus causing the fall of humankind. We can think about what it would be like to live in the Garden of Eden or question God's judgment on our individual acts. For now, let's think about **temptation**. It always surprises me that such a small act can cause such a big commotion!

The fact is that we are constantly tempted each day, and it is up to us to make good choices and do what we know in our hearts is right. But does this mean that we always do? Of course not. We are human beings. We make mistakes. We struggle. We sometimes make good choices, and sometimes we fall into temptation. But because we all have different personalities and opinions, we are all tempted by various things. Most of the time, temptations sound so good because they promise pleasure or something extraordinary that we don't have. Eve ate the apple, not because it was a simple apple but because the serpent told her that by eating it, her eyes would be opened, and she would be like God and know everything.

We all long for things we don't have or are told we aren't supposed to do. Don't we? There is nothing like someone telling us, "You can't have that," or, "Don't do this," to

make us want it even more! Some people are tempted by food, alcohol, or drugs, thinking it will help drown out the worries in their lives. Some are tempted by gambling because they believe more money will solve all their problems.

Everyone is tempted by something and may have made a move toward temptation. However, the problem arises when we do those things and feel we must hide them from others. We hide them because we feel guilt and shame over our decisions. We know that our choice was not the best and that we let temptation win. And we don't want anyone to know, so we keep it a secret until we hear someone else struggling with a similar issue. But the best thing we can do is talk about our problems and get support from those around us.

We have looked at temptation as a negative thing that pushes us to make bad choices. Sometimes, living out our faith can be scary, and we are afraid to talk about our beliefs for fear others might judge us. Or we are afraid to do what Jesus calls us to do because it contradicts what society tells us is *cool*. But it's up to us to listen for God's still-speaking voice rather than listening to the voices of the serpents all around us. God knows there are many.

As you go into your week ahead, remember it's always apple (fruit) picking season. Think about the things that tempt you and your choices because of those temptations. Consider letting your faith lead your life, not temptation.

1 Corinthians 10:13

No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

Closing Prayer:

Please, Lord, give us the wisdom to walk away when tempted and the clarity to see the way out you will provide. We thank you, Lord, that you are a faithful deliverer and that we can count on your help in our time of need. May we be open to your teachings and never be afraid to be open to God's call in our lives. It is said that God does not call the equipped but always equips the called. May it be so. All thanks be to God. Amen.

Community Church of Huntington
Pastor Frederick A. Little, Jr.
Sunday Church Services: 9:00 AM

My best,

Donna C. Stafford