Who Told You That You Were Naked?

Sue Bohlin reflects on God's question to Adam after he fell and broke the creation.

There is a most interesting interaction in Genesis 3 between Adam and God after the Fall, when Adam and Eve sinned by rebelling against God's command not to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. God calls to Adam, who is hiding among the trees of the Garden of Eden, "Where are you?" Adam explains, ". . . I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid."

And the Lord God said, "Who told you that you were naked?" (3:11)

Hmmmm. Interesting question, one that Adam doesn't answer.

The first thing the newly fallen man tells his Creator is that he was afraid, and he was naked. Up to this point, in a literally perfect world, there was no fear, and there were no clothes. How did he know to identify this new feeling of being afraid? And "naked" is the opposite of "clothed." In a world without clothes, "naked" has no meaning, right?

When Adam says he was afraid because he was naked, my guess is that this was how he described the new, unwelcome feeling of *shame:* the horrible awareness of being very not-okay, of being vulnerable and embarrassed and exposed.

But I've been munching for days on the next question: *"Who told you that you were naked?"*

In Genesis 3:7, we read that as soon as Adam and Eve sinned, "Then the eyes of both of them opened, and they knew they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings

for themselves." Apparently there was an immediate and awful awareness of a change, of something very very wrong.

(I personally think they might have been previously enveloped with light and glory. Psalm 104:2 tells us that God, who made them in His image, "covers himself with light as if it were a garment." The moment they sinned, I think they lost their light.)

But God didn't ask, "How did you know you were naked?" He asked, "*Who told you* that you were naked?"

There are only four characters in the garden: God, Adam, Eve . . . and the serpent, who we find out later is "the devil who deceives the whole world" (Revelation 12:9).

So, although Adam doesn't answer God's question, it sure sounds to me like it was the nasty serpent.

And I wonder if that question is in the scriptures to direct us to pay attention to the voices that speak to us:

- Who told you that you were too much?
- Who told you that you were not enough?
- Who told you that you were fat?
- Who told you that you were ugly?
- Who told you that you were dumb?
- Who told you that you were incompetent?
- Who told you that you were a loser?
- Who told you that you were too old?
- Who told you that you were too young?

And now I'm seeing the pattern extend to the broken sexuality in our culture:

- Who told you that you were a boy in a girl's body?
- Who told you that you were gay or lesbian or bisexual?
- Who told you that you were asexual or polyamorous?

Social media has given the enemy of our souls a megaphone for

his devious, destructive lies.

I thank God for His clarifying question that is just as salient today as it was the day the creation broke at the Fall: “Who told you that you were _____?” We need to look beyond the message to the WHO behind it, the source of the voice planting doubt and lies in our souls.

And instead of listening to the voice of the one whose native tongue is lies (John 8:44), we should listen to the One who speaks loving truth to us about ourselves:

• You are the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13)
• You are the light of the world (Matthew 5:14)
• You are blessed of the Father (Matthew 25:34)
• You are more valuable than many sparrows (Luke 12:7)
• You are clean because of the word which I have spoken to you (John 15:3)
• You are the branches (John 15:5)
• You are My friends (John 15:14)
• You are the called of Jesus Christ (Romans 1:6)
• You are beloved of God (Romans 1:7)
• You are a temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells in you (1 Corinthians 3:16)
• You are Christ’s body, and individually members of it (1 Corinthians 12:27)
• You are a letter of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:3)
• You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:26)
• You are sons of light and sons of day (1 Thessalonians 5:5)
• You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9)

Now when we hear, “Who told you that you are _____?” we can say, “YOU did, Lord! You told me in Your word!”

This blog post originally appeared at blogs.bible.org/who-told-you-that-you-were-naked/
on November 16, 2021.