

# Just Imagine!



## TouchPoint 3

Hey, Mic here again. I have much more to say about the personal God that I spoke to you about in our last TouchPoint, but I think you'll appreciate what I'll tell you a lot more if I use the next couple of TouchPoints to open up something else first.

In a sense, you already know a lot about what I want to bring up first – at least experientially. There's almost no way to be alive and not know about this! And I think you will want to know why and how things got this way.

What I'm referring to is the painful reality of evil. You don't have to live long to realize that it's everywhere. Read the news. Flip on CNN. Listen to the latest in pop music. Watch virtually any movie on the big screen (and the small screen, too). Read a few blogs. You can't escape it. Evil is everywhere. Take a few minutes and write down some of the things you have observed in your world that you see as evil:

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And it's not just the huge, big stuff that's easy to recognize like the latest corporate embezzlement case or investor fraud probe or war or rise in gas prices that defines evil. It gets more personal. Evil is manifested in the slap of your lover's hand across your face, in the silent treatment spouses give each other, in the latest price increase your family budget cannot afford, in the anger you feel toward someone who just cut you off on the freeway, and in the disappointment you feel when you find evidence of drug use in your child's dresser drawer.

Evil is not just a problem that other people have. It hits directly home in each one of us in almost every aspect



of our lives. It's what tempts us to overeat, oversleep, overstep, under appreciate, under cut, undermine and all the rest. It's what's responsible for the everyday, internal struggles between right and wrong that all of us have. One author puts it like this:

“I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate...I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway...I have discovered this principle of life – that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong.”

You'll be surprised when I tell you who said that.

### It Wasn't Always This Way

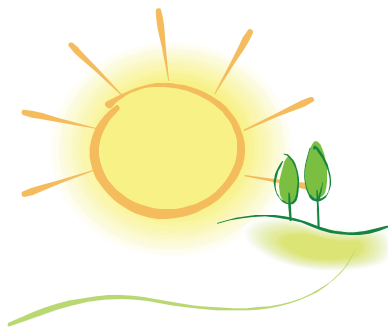
But I'm getting ahead of myself here. There's so much to tell you! But I want the Bible to tell you the story. Remember our first TouchPoint? I said that spiritual things are discerned on God's ground. The Christian Bible is God's primary way of explaining himself to us.

Genesis 1, the very first chapter in the whole Bible, records how the earth came to be. The account there is going to be different than what you've been told!

In the creation of the earth, God put into play all the good stuff we enjoy – earth, sky, and sea, and all the accoutrements that go with each.

He made gorgeous landscape vistas, incredible animals with almost unimaginable variety, plants and trees and fauna of almost every description. And He also made people with his bare hands (as we saw in our last TouchPoint).

The cool thing is that when He created everything, He made everything perfect – including people. Read the entire first chapter in Genesis. It will only take a few minutes. Then find and write down the phrase God uses over and over again in Genesis 1 that tells us about the level of perfection of the creation:



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Imagine a world where nature is always in harmony – no killer tornadoes, no rising rivers that cut off and destroy homes and lives, no killer bees, no mad cow disease or e-coli tainted vegetables. There is enough water when it's needed, no heat waves that bring on wild fires, and no one needs SPF 50 sunscreen!

Imagine a place where only the best behaviors and motives described people. Imagine living in a time and place without anyone acting selfishly. Imagine a world where everyone actually valued everyone else, where no one would crawl over another person to try to get ahead or feel the need to make another person look bad just so you could look good. Imagine living in a world where no children were abused, no spouses are abandoned, no one was hungry. A world with the total absence of evil!

**“Imagine a world where everyone actually valued everyone else”**

Almost unimaginable to us now, that's exactly what our world once was. And that was the way God had intended us to live our whole lives! People would be born, nations would be created, the earth would be developed for the proper and unselfish use of people. And all of this would happen without wars, border skirmishes, pillaging and kidnappings, economic plunder, or environmental disasters.

Dream for a few minutes about what a perfect world would be like in your imagination. What are some of the things that would be different in the world if you were in charge? \_\_\_\_\_

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Unfortunately, it's the evil world we have inherited, not the ideal one. So what went wrong? The first evidence of the pall evil would cast on our world became evident when this God I've been telling you is so personal, personally paid a call on Adam and Eve.

“...the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, ‘Where are you?’ He answered, ‘I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid’”(Genesis 3.8-10, New International Version).

Naked! Not the warm and safe nakedness one feels with one's lover, but the nakedness of unwanted exposure, the kind that terrifies and humiliates. Think of the worst thing you've ever done to another person – and then imagine standing in their presence with the full extent of everything you did wrong fully open for them to see, and you get a little of how devastating was the exposure of their nakedness that day.

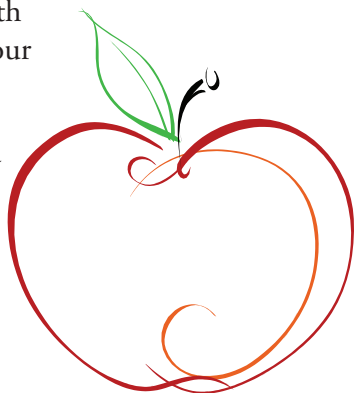
We can infer from the text that God had visited often with Adam and Eve before this, but from this moment on, things would be different. Something painful and unfamiliar had wedged itself between God and his two friends: separation. Alienation is a powerful, destructive force. The difficulty you and I have with relationships of almost every kind directly descends from the painful separation that was experienced between God and Adam and Eve because of what happened that day. The great paradox here is that our nakedness makes the association painful, but the separation, instead of providing relief, is just as painful.

I made a curious statement in our very first conversation together: “You are longing to be connected to God.” Even if you never realized it before, this longing goes back to our creation and to a time when people were able to directly connect with God. We share the lost connection with God right along with Adam and Eve. That's where our deep longing comes from.

All this from just eating the apple? Well, there was a bit more to it than just that, but we'll save the full story of how it happened for our next TouchPoint.

ExplorationPoint: As we finish this conversation, I suggest a little exploration in the Bible. Read Genesis 1 and 2, and then flip to the very end of the Bible and read Revelation 21 and 22. I realize that some of what you read, especially in Revelation, will sound a little strange, but you'll easily recognize enough there to make your time worthwhile. Here's why I want you to do this:

Even though this TouchPoint and our next TouchPoint are pretty grim, I want you to know up front how the story ends. You'll see remarkable similarity between the world that was and the world that will be. You'll be reminded how personally available God was and one day will be.



Journal a few of your thoughts as you read. What do you sense about God's creative power? What do you sense about His desires for his creatures? What parts of your life are you looking forward to living without the presence of evil? What are some of the relationships in your life that need healing?

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# Just Image!

## Questions

What recurring phrase did the author of Genesis 1 use over and over again to describe creation?

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Genesis 3.8-10 expresses the deep hurts that sins causes. What are they? (fear/separation from God)

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What are some of your personal life experiences that attest to the hurts that sin causes?

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How pervasive in our world is evil?

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How do you think some of the things in your life would be different if there were no sin?

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After reading Genesis 1-2 and Revelation 21-22, who would you say is responsible for all things pure, beautiful, perfect, and good?

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According to Genesis 2.18-27, God is responsible for the creation of something very important to humanity. What is this creation?

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Please send this answer sheet, either by e-mail or land mail

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