

## Obedience is Better than Cupcakes!

Katie and Luke ran inside their house, calling for Mother. They had been playing outside with friends, and came home because they were very hungry. They expected to find Mother in the kitchen preparing lunch, but she wasn't there.

Instead of finding Mother, Katie and Luke found a note on the kitchen table and a plate of the most wonderful cupcakes they had ever seen. There were chocolate cupcakes with gummy worms curled on the tops, vanilla cupcakes with fluffy white icing and tiny candy flowers, and strawberry cupcakes frosted in pink and sprinkled with red sugar. Katie read the note to Luke. It said, "Children, baby Lilly and I are next door helping our neighbor and will be right back. Please do not eat these cupcakes. Love, Mother."



Oh, how the children wanted to eat the cupcakes! They were *so* hungry and the cupcakes were *so* beautiful. Katie left the room so that she wouldn't be tempted to disobey Mother. Luke looked longingly at the treats. "Cupcakes are for eating," he thought, "Why would Mother leave these cupcakes here if she didn't want us to have them?" He found his hand slowly reaching toward a chocolate treat, but stopped suddenly. Luke had just remembered the story his daddy had read to them from the Bible last night. You can read the same true story in your Bible, in the third chapter of Genesis. Here's what happened.

In the beginning, after God created the first man (Adam), He planted a garden for Adam and the first woman (Eve) to live in. The Bible says that every kind of tree that was beautiful to look at and good for food was growing in the garden—apple trees and banana trees, cherry trees and orange trees, mango trees and peach trees—and in the middle of the garden, the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

God said to Adam, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely, but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you may not eat, for in the day you eat from it, you will surely die." Adam must have told Eve what God had said. Perhaps he even told her, "Do not touch that fruit!" just to be safe.

The Bible says that Satan, taking the form of a snake, came to Eve in the garden one day. He spoke to her, (don't you imagine that Eve was surprised to meet a talking snake?) and said, "Did God say, 'You shall

not eat from any tree in the garden'?" Eve corrected the snake. "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" The crafty snake scoffed, "You surely will not die!"

Eve looked at the fruit. She saw that it would be good to eat, and that it was beautiful. The snake told her that the fruit would make her wise! She doubted God—in just that minute, she didn't believe that God meant what He said or that He wanted what was best for her. Eve ate the fruit. She gave some to Adam, and he ate, too.

Adam and Eve knew they were in trouble when God came to them later, and asked them about what had happened. Adam blamed Eve, and Eve blamed the snake, but God knew better. He knew that Adam and Eve had chosen to disobey. Because they doubted God, they sinned by eating the fruit. Because they sinned, they had to leave the beautiful garden, and they had to live in bodies that would get sick, grow old and die. Because of their wicked action, everyone who would ever be born would need a Savior, someone to bear the punishment they deserved.

Luke was glad he had remembered this story. He knew that his mom would never say "no" to something good unless she wanted him to have something that was better for him. And he remembered that God wanted him to obey his parents. Luke ran to find Katie and left the cupcakes alone. When mom came home she was pleased with the children for not eating them. "I'm trading these with a friend," she said, "for tickets to the circus for the whole family." How glad Luke and Katie were that they had obeyed!

It may surprise you to know that Katie and Luke don't *always* obey, but the cupcake temptation helped them to remember one lesson they should never forget. We can always trust that if God says "no" to something we want, it's because He wants to give us something better. Remember how Luke realized that his mom wouldn't say "no" to something good without a good reason? God is like that, too. The Bible says that God doesn't keep back any good thing from those who love and follow Him (Psalm 84:11b). The rules of God are perfect (Psalm 19:7). We don't always understand how what we *get* is better than what we *wanted*, but we can always trust God.