



## ***Session 7 Your Choices Determine Your Destiny***

### **I. CHOOSING GOD’S GIFT OF LOVE – JESUS CHRIST**

- A. Psalm 1 presents each one of us with the most important choice we will ever make in this life, the choice of accepting or rejecting God’s gift of love. (Jn. 4:10) For anyone who has been journeying with us thus far in our Psalm 1 study, “Choices Determine Destiny,” you understand that you cannot live like the blessed man (Ps. 1:1) or be like the tree of life (Ps. 1:3) unless you have invited Jesus Christ, God’s gift of love, into your heart. It is only through Jesus Christ, that you will not perish like the chaff in the final judgment. (Ps. 1: 4-6)
- B. Although it only takes a moment for you to make this quality decision to receive God’s gift of love, His Son Jesus Christ, into your heart, it will take you a lifetime to fully abide in the abundance of God’s love gift – to abide in His Son Jesus Christ.
- C. Psalm 1 clearly shows you the main pathway of abiding in God’s love. It is through your prayerful meditation on God’s Word day and night. (Ps. 1:2) The primary focus of your meditation on God’s Word is to be Jesus Christ, the ultimate manifestation of God’s love for you.

***1 John 4:16 And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.***

- D. In order to overcome compromise in your life - to not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, or stand in the path of sinners, or sit in the seat of scoffers (Ps. 1:1) - it is crucial for you to deeply know the love of God, as seen in the face of Jesus Christ. (Eph. 3:16-20) The more clearly you see Jesus Christ and His love for you, the more you will be able to put to death the things of the flesh, dying to your own agenda – your own will and way - dying to sin.

### **II. THE CHOICE BETWEEN TWO TREES**

- A. Every day you will be confronted with two fundamental choices that underlie every decision you make in life – the choice of going God’s way, the way of the tree of life, or the choice of going your own way, the way of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. These two choices are clearly seen in Psalm 1 with two drastically different destinations – one way leading to eternal life and the other way leading to eternal death.
- B. By looking at what happened in Adam and Eve’s life in the garden of Eden, you will be able to understand more clearly the underlying spiritual battle that goes behind every choice you make, along with how God has equipped you as a believer in Jesus Christ to walk victoriously through temptation.
- C. In the beginning of time, in the midst of the garden of Eden, stood God’s love gift, the tree of life. God had given Adam and Eve every good and every perfect gift (James 1:17), “every tree that is pleasant to sight and good for food,” including the very best love gift of all - the tree of life. (Gen. 2:9; Rev. 2:7, 22:2)

***Genesis 2:9 And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.***

- D. Adam and Eve had everything they needed to prosper and have good success in their God-given mission – to be fruitful, multiply, subdue, and have dominion (Gen. 1:28). As a born again believer, you have been given “every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ” (Eph. 1:4) to accomplish your God-given mission. (Matthew 28:18-20)
- E. Adam and Eve had a choice of whether or not they were going to follow God’s commandment. As you understand what these two trees symbolized and imparted, you will be able to more clearly understand what is behind every decision you make and the importance of following God’s instructions given to you through the Word of God.

***Genesis 2:16-17 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”***

- F. The tree of life is not only a symbolic representation of the life of Jesus Christ, but it also had the ability to impart the life of God. As a believer in Jesus Christ you are able to partake of the life of Jesus Christ, the Tree of Life, through the eating of God’s Word (Jeremiah 15:16, Matthew 4:4, John 6:63); through the eating and drinking of the body and blood of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 11:23-26 and John 6:26-68); and by doing God’s will (John 4:34).
- G. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil had the ability to impart death to Adam and Eve through the partaking of its fruit. Although it is not directly stated, I believe that this tree was a symbolic representation of the Law.

### III. THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL

- A. From Genesis 1:31 we understand that everything God made was good, which would include the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. However, it was not good for mankind to eat its fruit. God in His infinite love for Adam and Eve commanded them not to eat from this tree and told them clearly what would happen if they chose to disobey Him.

***Genesis 2:17*** God said, “...***for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.***”

- B. Doesn’t this sound like the Law? The Law in and of itself was good, but if it is disobeyed, the consequence is death.

***Romans 7:12*** ***Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.***

***Romans 7:5,10*** ***For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. 10 And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death.***

- C. Diagram of the tree. Take a look at this picture of this tree representing the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

1. The roots in this diagram represents the law.
2. The tree growing up from the root system of the law is sin.

***1 Cor. 15:56 ....the strength of sin is the law.***

3. The fruit that this tree produces is death.

***Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death.***

#### IV. FOLLOW GOD’S COUNSEL IN YOUR CHOICES

A. Adam and Eve were given the choice of following God’s Word, His commandment – which reflected God’s will, His way, His plan for their lives. Or, they could choose to follow satan’s word – which reflected satan’s will, his way, his plans for their lives. In Psalm 1:1 the psalmist refers to satan’s words, his counsel, as “ungodly.” All ungodly counsel has its origin from satan and his demonic forces.

B. In every decision you make you have a choice of following the counsel of God or the choice of following the counsel of satan, just like Psalm 1:1-2 states.

***Psalm 1:1-2 Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. 2 But His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night.***

C. God’s counsel is found in His Word; therefore, God exhorts you in Psalm 1 to meditate on God’s Word day and night. If you allow God’s counsel to take root in your heart, you will grow into the likeness of the tree of life (2 Cor. 3:18), living like the “blessed Man” , Jesus Christ.

D. If you allow the counsel of satan’s words to get into your heart, you will soon find yourself standing in the path of sinners. This means that you are actually carrying out satan’s plan for your life as shown by your actions. And, if you continue down satan’s pathway for your life, you will find yourself speaking satan’s words out of your mouth, allowing satan to use your voice to contradict and mock God Himself. You must realize that unlike God’s counsel, satan’s counsel stems from his hatred for you and his desire is to steal, kill, and destroy your life. (John 10:10)

#### V. SATAN’S DECEPTIVE TACTICS

A. In the garden of Eden satan disguised himself as the serpent. Today, satan disguises himself through the voice of the flesh and the voice of the world. satan tries to influence you by mixing his words with your natural reasoning, your finite wisdom. However, God calls you to mix His Word with faith - faith in His infinite wisdom as revealed by His Word, His instructions.

***Proverbs 3:17 (Wisdom) She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her; those who hold her fast will be blessed (happy). (NIV)***

B. As you look at how satan influenced Adam and Eve, you will understand how he influences you and those around you. satan has a two pronged foundational attack against your life. He mainly attacks your belief about who God is and who you are in Christ.

- C. satan Attacks Man’s Belief about God’s Identity – His Nature and Character
1. Because God is a God of abundance, abounding in love God said to Adam:  
***Genesis 2:16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat but the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”*** See also Genesis 2:9  
The serpent satan took God’s words and twisted them by adding one tiny little word, which changed the whole meaning of what God had communicated to Adam and Eve.  
***Genesis 3:1*** satan said ***“Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’”***
  2. God told Adam and Eve that if they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that they would ***“surely die”***. ***Gen. 2:17*** Once again, satan adds the one little word “not” to God’s instructions. Satan said, ***“You will not surely die.”*** ***Gen. 3:4*** This was the exact opposite of what God had said. Basically, satan just called God a liar. And guess what? Adam and Eve agreed with this lie.  
***1 John 5:10-11 ... he who does not believe God has made Him a liar...***
- D. satan Attacks Mankind’s Belief about Their God-Given Identity - Your Identity in Christ
- Next, satan told Adam and Eve that if they ate from this tree of the knowledge of good and evil that they would be like God, knowing good and evil. Adam and Eve were already like God, they were created in His image and likeness. (Gen. 1:27)
- Genesis 3:5*** satan said, ***“For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”***
- E. Perhaps, you don’t realize how often you have the slithering serpent coming and knocking on the door of your mind and heart, trying to sell you his junk, just like an earnest deceptive salesman. He tries to get you believe that really it won’t matter that much if you don’t follow God’s instructions in this one area, one time.
- F. Where has satan slipped his word “not” into your mind and heart when it comes to following God’s Word (Ps. 1:2), His instructions (Ps.1:1-2)? How has satan caused you to disbelieve who God is and who you are in Christ? Whose words will you allow to go into your heart and out of your mouth – God’s Word or satan’s word?
- G. Many times the best way to deal with the first “knock on your door” from the deceptive salesman is to not answer it. Just ignore him. (Romans 4:19-20)
- H. After Adam and Eve ate satan’s lying words, they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They failed to believe and obey God’s instruction of love, His wisdom, for them regarding this one tree. What is the one thing God is calling you to believe and obey?

## VI. WHAT HAPPENED AFTER ADAM SINNED?

- A. When Adam and Eve ate from The Tree of The Knowledge of Good and Evil, they came into the experiential knowledge of the way of the law. The Law judged Adam guilty for his sin, and the judgment was death.

***Romans 6:28 For the wages of sin is death.***

- B. Some of the agents of death are listed in Deuteronomy 28 including a lengthy list of sicknesses and diseases, poverty and lack, and many other things.

- C. Why did Adam, and as a result the entire human race, come under such a harsh judgment for one sin?

1. Because the Law reflected God's standard of holiness, which means it had to be obeyed perfectly.

***James 2:10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.***

2. God knew it was impossible for mankind to keep His standard of holiness, every point of His Law, that is why God warned man not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

- D. The moment that they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, their lives became quite the opposite of what they hoped they would gain. They were not only kicked out of the garden of Eden, but they were also no longer allowed access back into it.

***Genesis 3:24 So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.***

- E. Instead of fulfilling their God-given assignment to extend the blessing of God, His love - His garden, throughout all the earth, they caused the curse of death to infiltrate and have dominion over themselves, their descendants, and over God's beautiful creation. (Rom. 6:23)

- F. Why was man locked out of the Garden of Eden, where the Tree of Life stood, the antidote to death?

1. Because sinful man could not come directly in contact with God's holiness; otherwise, it would kill him, leaving him in the death state eternally without any way to be redeemed.

2. God knew the heart of fallen man. He knew that man would need to exhaust all his own ways of trying to save himself from his depraved state before turning to the only way God had provided through Jesus.

***Is. 53:6. All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way.***

- G. How does mankind try to save themselves? Basically, by eating from the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil," by trying to justify themselves by their good works, according to the law. If you try to follow Psalm 1:1's instructions to earn your salvation, you can not do it.

***Romans 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.***

H. Some of the ways in which man tries to justify himself apart from Jesus Christ are by doing good deeds, doing religious deeds, and doing deeds of self-punishment.

I. What is Jesus' response to man's deeds for self-justification? No-way!

***John 5:40 But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.***

J. What is the way?

***John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.***

K. The flaming sword turned every self-righteous act away, guarding the only way to "The Tree of Life".

***Galatians 3:24-25 Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.***

L. In the fulness of time, Jesus came to redeem mankind back to God through the laying down of His life on the Tree of Calvary. (1 Peter 2:24) On this tree, He became a curse, He was made sin, so that you could be redeemed from your sinful state and be made righteous with His righteousness. (2 Cor. 5:21)

M. By receiving the gift of God, Jesus Christ into your heart, and being born again (John 3:3-7), you are able to eat from the Tree of Life again, where you are able to have His life and have it abundantly.

## VII. DOES GOD CALL YOU TO FOLLOW HIS COMMANDMENTS?

In the great commission, right before Jesus leaves earth to return to heaven, He communicates to His disciples the passion of His Father's heart. One of the burning passions on His heart was for us to teach others to observe all the things that Jesus commanded.

***Matthew 28:18-20 Jesus said, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.... teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you....***

In Jesus' ministry He gave us some key commandments or exhortations that make all the other commandments possible.

1. Listen, pay attention, to His Words of life and do them.
2. Be born again. Receive God's greatest gift, His Son Jesus Christ, into your heart.
3. Believe in Jesus Christ, His Word, drinking continuously from His rivers of life and love.
4. Abide in the love of God, as seen in the face of Jesus Christ.
5. Love God with your ALL as God loves you with His ALL. Find your greatest delight in Him.
6. Turn, repent, from sin - going your own way and doing your own will. Follow Jesus - His way and will.

