

## BACK TO THE BASICS OF FAITH

6/28/2010

### *The Excellent Giver*

In the book of Genesis, we witness that Adam got off to a great start in his relationship with God. They communed and had fellowship with one another daily. God then created Eve, and for a while she and Adam continued to maintain their relationship with God beautifully. Heavenly Father had high standards for them. He didn't allow them to sit around, twiddling their thumbs with nothing to do. He said to them, *"Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it."* He told them to go and produce. He said *"Go use the power and authority that I've placed in your hands to increase and make things better."*

Before God created Eve, He had already given Adam his assignment. In Genesis 2:15-17 (The Message), it says, *"<sup>15</sup> God took the Man and set him down in the Garden of Eden to work the ground and keep it in order. <sup>16-17</sup> God commanded the Man, 'You can eat from any tree in the garden, except from the Tree-of-Knowledge-of-Good-and-Evil. Don't eat from it. The moment you eat from that tree, you're dead.'"*

Heavenly Father designed everything in the earth to aid and assist the very best possible relationship between Him and humankind. He steered Adam and Eve in the direction that He wanted them to pursue, which was to work at building and maintaining things. He did this so that they would have a practical example in their minds of how they ought to go about their relationship with Him. This example demonstrated the fact that they were not to drop the ball and neglect their communion and fellowship with God. They had to build upon it and maintain it by communicating with Him often. You see, God didn't want anything separating Him from Adam and Eve. He valued them and He valued the relationship that they shared.

Genesis 2:15 tells us that God had a garden in Eden. He told Adam, *"Look, you can eat from any tree in the garden, but you can't eat from the Tree-of-Knowledge-of-Good-and-Evil. Nope! That tree is off limits. You can't handle the fruit from that tree. The moment you eat from it, it's adios amigos'. So stay away. It's off limits."*

Isn't it funny, the moment you tell a child not to touch something, their curiosity is peaked. The self-control button switches off and their curiosity gets the better of them. They run to the very thing that is forbidden. This is what Adam and Eve did. They disobeyed God and ate of the *Tree-of-Knowledge-of-Good-and-Evil*. The moment they did, the spirit of disobedience entered into them and they were no longer connected to God in the spiritual way they had enjoyed. They took God and all He had given them for granted. They lost the fellowship, and a wall went up between them and God.

Now you and I do not know all that was contained in the fruit of this tree, but we do know that eating it caused a kind of self-awareness within Adam and Eve that separated them from God.

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They began to see themselves as being independent of our Heavenly Father. This separation had to be bridged. The gap had to be closed...the cavity filled. God wanted the connection restored, and Jesus Christ was the man to do it.

When you think about the amount of time that lapsed between Adam's sin and the restoration of the God-and-humankind relationship through the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, you have to ask yourself *"how come? Why did it take so long for the connection to be restored. Why didn't God kick the devil's tail and knock that ol' fruit right out of Eve's hand?"* The answer: because that isn't the way God operates.

God has a process, and that process dictates that we don't receive things until we are ready and prepared to handle them. He is an incredibly, excellent Giver that way. A considerate and thoughtful giver would not give you something of which you have no idea how to use. They would give you a gift that you either know how to make use of, or they will give you things that come with thorough instructions. A considerate and thoughtful giver knows that you've got the good sense to read and study the instructions to find out how to use the gift properly.

To glean a better understanding of what the recipient desires, a thoughtful and considerate giver does the grunt work of posing some really good questions to the beneficiary's family and friends. Again, God is an Excellent Giver, and He doesn't have to ask any questions to glean a better understanding of our desires. He doesn't have to scope out our preparedness to handle His gifts. He knows us through and through.

A thoughtful and considerate giver wants to make sure that the gift they're giving is the gift the recipient wants, but he or she is limited by either what the recipient or someone close to the recipient has told them. God knows our hearts. He sees what we do to prepare ourselves for His gifts. He has given us several chances to study and get to know Him better, and He has watched as we've passed by those opportunities one after another.

Adam and Eve disobeyed God, and because of their disobedience they died a spiritual death. While in this desolate state, God didn't want them to cause more harm to themselves, so He would not allow them access to the Tree-of-Life. Allowing them access to the Tree-of-Life would have permitted them a gift of which they were not prepared to receive. Yes, God is an Excellent Giver. As Christians, He doesn't give us blessings we are not prepared to handle. He makes sure that we receive things that will foster our spiritual growth and bring us happiness and fulfillment as well. Take a look at Genesis 3:22 (The Message): *"<sup>22</sup> God said, 'The Man has become like one of us, capable of knowing everything, ranging from good to evil. What if he now should reach out and take fruit from the Tree-of-Life and eat, and live forever? Never—this cannot happen!<sup>23-24</sup> So God expelled them from the Garden of Eden and sent them to work the ground, the same dirt out of which they'd been made. He threw them out of the garden and stationed angel-cherubim and a revolving sword of fire east of it, guarding the path to the Tree-of-Life.*

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God didn't want Adam and Eve living forever in a state of broken fellowship. He had a plan, and that plan included His Son, our blessed Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who would reconcile us back to the Holy Father. God patiently waited until humankind's desire to know Him caught up with their desire for other things—other things that were not nearly as precious as the God-and-Humankind relationship.

Getting to know God is the only way to spiritually grow. It is the greatest blessing that can be received for all eternity; absolutely nothing on earth compares. God has given you the best. He's given you His Son, His Word, and the indwelling Holy Spirit. All of these will help you to grow in your relationship with Him. He wants you to appreciate the gifts you've already received first, because if you can't appreciate those jewels, you certainly won't value anything else. You'll receive the things you desire, you can count on that, but understand that you've got to trust His plan and seek HIM above all else.

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