



## Life Group Study Notes

### "The Tree"

Sr. Ps. James Lowe - December 10, 2017

#### Warm Up (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. No right or wrong answers.

- What was your curfew when you were in high school?
- What is the fastest you've ever driven?
- What's your favorite dessert, and what's the most you've ever eaten of it at one sitting?

#### Word (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at [www.bethelworld.org](http://www.bethelworld.org)

Genesis 1:31; 2:8-9, 15-17 ESV *And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good... And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil... The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 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."*

- The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was not inherently evil itself. The entire creation is declared to be good, and this included this particular tree. This tree represented all that could be known concerning good and concerning evil. Of course, God himself is good and defines what is good and what is evil. God set a boundary for the first humans, indicating that they were not to partake of this knowledge directly by themselves. Instead, they were to learn from God. He would teach them what was good and what was evil.

Genesis 3:1-6 ESV *Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "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.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of*

*it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate...*

- Like Eve, we often make the mistake of not knowing or of changing God's commands, and not trusting his will for us. In the Bible's original language God said, "dying you shall die," indicating that they would die spiritually as well as physically. Eve reduced the warning to physical death. God said, don't eat it. Eve said, God also forbade touching it. In her confused thinking, Eve gave in to the serpent's subtle accusations against God. She questioned God's goodness, integrity, and authority. Adam in turn failed to exercise the charge given to him by God to keep or guard the garden God had planted. Together they rebelled against God and rejected him as the one from whom they were to learn about good and evil. They wanted to possess the full breadth of knowledge concerning good and evil for themselves by themselves. The irony is that the very pursuit of this quest led to their active participation in evil.

*Genesis 3:7-9 ESV Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"*

- The tragic consequences of the first humans' rebellion against God include their estrangement from God, their spiritual death, their psychological unhealthiness, their own relational dysfunction, their own moral corruption, and their own physical death. In spite of all of this, God is shown to be looking for them and is implied to be longing for relationship with them.

*Genesis 3:14-15 ESV The Lord God said to the serpent... "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."*

- God himself promised that he would bring about the destruction of humanity's spiritual enemy. This promise is a reference to the coming of God's Son into this world to die on the cross for our sins, and to rise from the dead and conquer death on our behalf. Jesus reverses the consequences of our sin, offering restoration and eternal life.

### **Discussion (10-15 minutes)**

**Choose one of the points below, and discuss how the lesson applies to our lives.**

- What mistakes do we make that are similar to Adam's and Eve's mistakes?
- How are we supposed to learn from God concerning good and evil?
- How does Jesus help us overcome evil and walk in obedience to God?

### **Prayer (10-15 minutes)**

**Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.**

- Thank God for his pursuit of us in spite of our sin.
- Ask God to train our hearts to love good and hate evil.
- Ask God to lead us in bringing others to know and follow Jesus.