

## ***Back to Adam and Eve***

I've never really thought about this before, but you know, in the garden, where God said not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? What's wrong with that anyway?! If we **don't** know what's right and wrong then we'll end up saying and doing things that will hurt others, hurt God, even! Surely, it's very important to know what's right and wrong, isn't it?

But maybe it's because Adam and Eve had a relationship with God, and while an important spin-off from a relationship with God is knowing right from wrong, fundamentally, a relationship is not about right and wrong. Relationship is not about whose 'fault' something is. It's about living in a trusting relationship – saying 'sorry', but letting it go and moving on.

So Adam and Eve have a decision to make – that fruit looks **really** nice! Should we...? Then along comes Satan, and what's his tactic? First, **doubt**: "Did God really say...?" He wants us to doubt God's love for us. Doubt is a killer for relationships – if we doubt God, we are saying we don't trust him, and relationships **must** be based on trust.

Then, **literalism**. Yes, OK, in a sense, Satan was telling the truth. God **did** say, "in the day you eat of it you will surely die", and Satan knew that, no, Adam and Eve wouldn't drop down dead if they ate the apple, but the point was that while God was using those words to convey an important truth: he was using 'die' in a metaphorical sense, but Satan took it literally. So, he told them "You will not surely die", i.e. "you won't drop down dead" ... but that was a distortion of the truth because it wasn't what God **meant**.

But then, as soon as we start focusing on right and wrong, rather than developing a trusting relationship, we end up with blame and shame. What a mess we've made!

Adam and Eve got their way of thinking horribly wrong: focusing on what's right and what's wrong is the death of relationship.

Zoom forward to Jesus' day. Whose fault was it (Lk 13) when the tower of Siloam fell and killed people or (Jn 9) the man was born blind? No, says Jesus, you're not thinking straight: "Unless you repent, you too will all perish." (OK, he didn't mean literally die [perish], of course, but that's not my point here.) What struck me was that 'repent' here meant that they needed to change their way of thinking (metanoia). You won't be able have a relationship with God if you're always thinking of blame and shame.

They got their way of thinking horribly wrong: focusing on what's right and what's wrong is the death of relationship.

Zoom forward to today (albeit with a bit of caricature)...

Some say, if you follow these biblical principles <proof texts supplied> then God will bless you with spiritual and material blessings.

Some say, if you follow these biblical principles <proof texts supplied> then God will heal you, even from incurable diseases.

Some say, if you understand and follow these biblical principles <proof texts supplied> you'll realise that the only way your sins can be forgiven is this (one explanation of the way of salvation).

We've got our way of thinking horribly wrong: focusing on know what's right and what's wrong is the death of relationship.

No! I'm not saying we shouldn't bother thinking. No! I'm not saying we shouldn't study our Bibles. No, I'm not saying "All you need is love..." And yes, we do need to think about what's right and wrong in certain situations, but the motive has to be **trying to please the one we love**, and not working out the exact parameters of perfect behaviour – we can leave that to the Pharisees!

I've been thinking and reading my Bible more than ever before – I can't **stop** thinking about it, as you may well have noticed! But I'm doing it because I'm in love with the one who inspired it, not solely in order to decide right from wrong, and **certainly** not to decide how other people should behave. That's **definitely** something I can leave to the Pharisees of this world.

### In diagram form:

*As in Adam all die*

FALL  
(turn away from God)  
Relationship → "Focusing purely on behaviour"

*so in Christ shall all be made alive*

REPENT  
(turn back towards God)  
"Focusing purely on behaviour" → Relationship

In this past wonderful two years, I think I've repented, I've changed my mind, big-time. After 48 years of worrying about knowing what's 'right', I've found a God who looks more like Jesus, and I've started to really enjoy being part of God's family. And it's glorious!

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