



# **THOSE TWO TREES**

**by Rodney W. Francis**

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*This book is dedicated to all who sincerely desire to learn more from the Word of God in order to live a God-glorifying life-style, and to those who will use it to teach others the positives of God's Word in the here and now.*

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# THOSE TWO TREES!

By Rodney W. Francis

The following you are about to read is the reason of why so much happens in our world today ~ thousands of years after the event took place. Whether we believe it or not cannot change what has happened. Every man, woman, boy and girl born into this world is affected by the results of the subtle deception that took place in the Garden of Eden. May this book help us all to more clearly understand why humankind behaves the way it does, and also to know that there is a very positive answer to be found in God's Tree of Life, Jesus Christ His Son.

## ***Chapter One***

# **THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL**

**A**t the beginning of time God planted a garden. It was called the Garden of Eden. Among the trees God planted there were two special trees ~ ***“the tree of life”*** and ***“the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”*** Both trees were placed in the centre of the Garden of Eden.

***“And the Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground ~ trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil”*** (Genesis 2:9, NIV). (See also Genesis 3:2-3).

- Life was in the tree of life** (Genesis 2:9).
- Death was in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil:**

***“But you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die”*** (Genesis 2:17, NIV).

God gave Adam the command to dress and keep the garden:

**“And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress** (“to labour, to work at, to till the ground, to dress a vineyard, to serve, to till”) **it and to keep** (“to watch, guard, protect, preserve”) **it”** (Genesis 2:15, KJV).

God gave Adam and the woman (she was not named until after the fall – Genesis 3:20) the choice of which tree would be central in their lives.

## **THE SUBTLETY OF DOUBT**

The crafty serpent (Satan) questioned Eve ~ not Adam ~ concerning what God said to them. God had told Adam and his wife of the results of their choice ~ life or death. After a while, along came the serpent to tempt them. He picked on the woman, Eve. If Satan had been genuine in his questions as to what God had said, he would have asked Adam, the authority, and not Eve.

- **Satan sowed doubt into Eve’s mind.**

He turned the positive statement of **“God has said”** into a negative questionable doubt: **“Has God said?”** Satan made Eve to believe that God didn’t really mean what He said. The devil made her to think that God was keeping them back from something good, the best . . . that He was restricting their freedom (see Genesis 3:1-5).

- **Once doubt was established, temptation through the senses took over!**

**Eve saw** (sense knowledge) the tree of the knowledge of good and evil **was good for food** (carnal appetite); **the tree was pleasant** (“earnest desire, strong affection”) **to the eyes!** Her eyes told her she would act more wisely as a result of partaking of the forbidden fruit:

***“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired*** (“to desire strongly, to covet”) ***to make one wise*** (“cause to act wisely”), ***she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat”*** (Genesis 3:6, KJV).

**They chose the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the very tree God told them not to eat of!!** (See Genesis 3:1-12).

The devil deceived Eve to walk by sight and sense, and took her away from walking through faith in God’s Word (2 Corinthians 5:7)! Divine order was lost when Eve obeyed the serpent, and then Adam obeyed Eve ~ Genesis 3:6.

## **SOME THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:**

**We** should pause here for a little while and think about some things. The fact that the serpent spoke to Eve in a voice that she obviously understood did not seem to overly “surprise” her. We are not told whether or not the other created animals, birds, reptiles, insects and fish actually spoke in a way that Adam and Eve could understand them. The only other recording in Scripture of an animal talking to a human being is in Numbers 22:22-35 when

Balaam's donkey spoke to him. This should have alerted her attention to be "on guard" ~ especially when he (the serpent) began questioning and then challenging the statement of God. The Bible says: ***"Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made . . ."*** (Genesis 3:1). The word "cunning" comes from the Hebrew word "arum" meaning: "Cunning (usually in a bad sense); crafty, subtil" – Strong's; "crafty and shrewd, especially in deception; sly; showing skill or cleverness" (Collins). The serpent's (or devil's) approach to Eve was that of deceiving words, speaking to her in a way that she did not realize what was his strategy against her ~ and ultimately the whole human race.

Once the serpent came on the scene, **Eve and Adam were exposed to the three sources of voices, i.e. the voice of God, the voice of man, and the voice of the devil. All voices originate from one of these three sources.** If we stop to think about it, **every decision we make in life is the direct result of our hearing a voice ~ either an audible outward voice, or a silent inward voice.** The silent inward voice is often determined by what we allow into our lives from the audible outward voices.

The fall of mankind in the Garden of Eden was the result of Eve's acting upon the serpent's voice ~ the voice of subtle deception. 2 Corinthians 11:3 declares: ***"But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived"*** ("to cheat, deceive, beguile thoroughly" – Bullinger's) ***Eve by his craftiness*** ("unscrupulous conduct, knavery, villany; in plural, knavish tricks" – Bullinger's) ("knavery" is "a

deceitful or dishonest act; trickery” – Collins), ***so your minds may be corrupted*** (“to spoil, corrupt, destroy, generally, to bring into a worse state” – Bullinger’s) ***from the simplicity*** (“plainness”) ***that is in Christ.***”

## **THE FRUIT OF THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL**

Both the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and the tree of life were fruit-bearing trees. What is the fruit of these trees?

Let us look at some of that fruit ~ first **The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil:**

### **1. PRIDE:**

They thought they knew better than God! **Pride breeds disobedience.**

### **2. SIN AND DEATH ENTERED THEIR LIVES:**

***“But from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die”*** (Genesis 2:17, NASB).

### **3. THEIR EYES WERE OPENED:**

**Sin has its own view of things!** Their eyes were opened to things they never saw before:

**(a) To the knowledge of good and evil:** Satan beguiled (“to deceive greatly”) Eve through his subtlety (“cunningness”) by telling her: ***“You will not surely die . . .” “God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil”*** (Genesis 3:4-5, NIV).

God wanted them to know only good ~ not good and evil;  
life ~ not life and death.

**(b) Their eyes were opened to their own nakedness:**  
***“And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons”*** (Genesis 3:7, KJV). Previously there was no shame of their nakedness (Genesis 2:25).

**Their eyes were opened to a false wisdom:**

***“When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it”*** (Genesis 3:6, NIV).

#### **4. REJECTION:**

***“And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they***

*heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence (“face, countenance”) of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, where are you? And he said, I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And He said, Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded you that you should not eat?”* (Genesis 3:7-11, KJV).

In Genesis 2:25 they knew no shame of their nakedness. Now, after partaking of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they are aware of their own nakedness and cover themselves. **Sin is the cause of self-rejection. Sin caused them not to like what they saw. Sin separates ~ and separation feeds rejection.**

## **5. SELF-EFFORT or humanism:**

They tried to cover themselves (Genesis 3:7). When men and women get away from the truth of God’s Word, we fall into disobedience. Disobedience is a form of pride that makes us do things our way. Christianity is not a self-effort lifestyle; it is trusting Jesus and His Word.

## **6. FEAR:**

Eating from that tree of the knowledge of good and evil brought a fear into the lives of Adam and Eve. It caused them to hide from God: ***“Then the man and his wife***

***heard the sound of the Lord God as He was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they did hide from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid"*** (Genesis 3:8-10, NIV).

## **7. TROUBLE:**

The presence of God troubled them: ***"And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid*** ("from fear of anger" – Wilson's) ***themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden"*** (Genesis 3:8, KJV). Sin troubled them and made them want to run away and hide. They could not face God any more. They felt ashamed and guilty; they felt insecure.

## **8. THEY ABROGATED THEIR RESPONSIBILITY:**

They blamed someone else for their actions. ***The man said, "The woman You put here with me ~ she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it". Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate"*** (Genesis 3:12-13, NIV). Adam blamed God for giving him the woman; then blamed the woman ~ the woman blamed the devil! **Is it any different today?** Very few will stand up and take the blame when mistakes are made. It is always someone else's fault. That is an

abrogation of responsibility that makes us weak Christians!

## **9. THEIR KNOWLEDGE, ACTIONS AND DISOBEDIENCE BROUGHT A CURSE ~ upon themselves, others, and even the ground they walked upon:**

***To Adam He (God) said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it: cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field'" (Genesis 3:17-21, NIV). God also cursed the devil for his part in deceiving Adam and Eve (see Genesis 3:14-15).***

## **10. SORROW:**

Their knowledge, actions and disobedience produced sorrow in their lives: ***"And I (God) will put enmity between you (Satan) and the woman, and between your offspring ("seed") and hers; he will crush ("strike") your head, and you will strike his heel." To the woman He said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." To Adam He said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, "You must not eat of it", cursed is***

***the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food***” (Genesis 3:15-19, NIV). So much happiness, joy, contentment and fulfillment was lost as a result of the fall.

## **11. DECEPTION:**

The woman needed her husband to rule over her to protect her from further deception: ***“And your desire shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you”*** (Genesis 3:16, KJV). According to 2 Corinthians 11:3 Eve was ***“beguiled”*** (“greatly deceived”). Her mind was ***“corrupted”*** (“spoiled, brought into a worse state, destroyed” – Bullinger’s): ***“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ”*** (2 Corinthians 11:3, KJV). The warning is clear ~ Eve was not an isolated target of the devil. He still works today to corrupt our minds and to take us away from the truth of the Gospel.

## **12. DRIVEN OUT:**

Adam and Eve had to be driven from the Garden of Eden, to prevent them from partaking of the tree of life and becoming like God ~ but in a fallen state: ***And the Lord God said, “The man has now become like one of Us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live for ever.” So the Lord God banished***

**him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After He drove the man out He placed on the east side (or placed in front) of the Garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life”** (Genesis 3:22-24, NIV).

**What are “cherubim”?** (they are plural for “cherub,” meaning “as if contending” or “those grasped, held fast”). Unger’s Bible Dictionary gives the following information: “1. **Scripture Mention:** Cherubim are mentioned: (a) At the expulsion of our first parents from Eden (Genesis 3:24), when their office was **“to keep the way of the tree of life,”** i.e., to render it impossible for man to return to paradise and eat of the tree of life. In this account there is no mention of their nature or form. (b) We next read of them in connection with the furnishing of the tabernacle (Exodus 25:18), where directions are given to place two golden cherubim upon the top of the ark of the covenant. They were to be of **“beaten work,”** i.e., beaten with the hammer and rounded, and not solid. They were fastened to the mercy seat (lid of the ark), and, facing each other, stretched out their wings so as to form a screen over the mercy seat. They were called the **“cherubim of glory”** (Hebrews 9:5). Cherubim were also woven into or embroidered upon the inward curtain of the tabernacle (Exodus 26:1) and the veil (Exodus 26:31). (c) The two cherubim placed by Solomon in the holy of holies (1 Kings 6:23; 2 Chronicles 3:7-14) were made of olive wood, overlaid with gold. They had bodies ten cubits high, and stood upon their feet, like men. The length of their wings was five cubits. They stood with **“their faces inward,”**

i.e., toward the holy place . . . 4. **The Meaning:** The cherubim from their position at the gate of Eden, upon the cover of the ark of the covenant and in Revelation 4 are evidently connected with vindicating the holiness of God against the presumptuous pride of fallen man, who despite his sin, ***‘would put forth his hand and take of the tree of life’*** (Genesis 3:22-24). Upon the Ark of the covenant they looked down upon the sprinkled blood which symbolizes the perfect maintenance of God’s righteousness by the sacrifice of Christ (Exodus 25:17-20; Romans 3:24-26). The cherubim seem to be actual beings of the angelic order. They do not seem to be identical with the seraphim (Isaiah 6:2). The cherubim apparently have to do with the holiness of God as violated by sin; the seraphim with uncleanness in the people of God” (end of Unger’s quote).

- **Sin had destroyed their God-given paradise.**
- **It robbed them of their intimate, privileged relationship and walk with God.**

Man had lost contact with God. Now, only God Himself could bring about the necessary redemption, transformation and healing that would again restore us back into a right relationship with Him. Thanks be to God, He did not leave us destitute. **He came to us in Jesus Christ** to pay sin’s penalty and bring new life in Him.

## ***Chapter Two***

# **THE TREE OF LIFE**

We will now look at the other special tree that God placed in the centre of the Garden of Eden. It is called the Tree of Life. Today the Tree of Life can only be partaken of IN AND THROUGH JESUS CHRIST. There is no eternal life outside of Him. Jesus is the only way to God. He declared:

***“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me . . .”*** (John 14:6, NIV).

The Scriptures further teach:

***“Salvation is found in no-one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved”*** (Acts 4:12, NIV).

***“There is salvation in no one else! Under all heaven there is no other name for men to call upon to save them”*** (Acts 4:12, TLB).

- **That name is JESUS!**

***“For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all men . . .”*** (1 Timothy 2:5-6, NIV).

For people who are seeking answers to know the truth today, the above Scriptures are very important. Any

**religion that does not have Jesus Christ as its very centre is a false religion.**

If we want to grow in the truth, and to taste of the fruit of the Tree of Life, there are conditions and principles we must pursue in order to obtain.

## **PRINCIPLES TO PURSUE:**

***“Happy is the man that finds wisdom, and the man that gets understanding. For the merchandise ("gain, profit") of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious ("rare, precious") than rubies ("coral, red pearl, gems" – Young's): and all the things you can desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold of her: and happy is every one that retains her. The Lord by wisdom ("skill") has founded the earth; by understanding has He established the heavens. By His knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew”*** (Proverbs 3:13-20, KJV).

Let us break these verses down a little more . . .

### **1. WISDOM:**

***“Happy is the man that finds wisdom . . . she is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her”*** (Proverbs 3:13, 18, NIV). This wisdom is found in Jesus Christ: ***“But of***

***Him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glories, let him glory in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 1:30-31, KJV).***

There is an earthly or natural wisdom, and there is a heavenly spiritual wisdom:

***“Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him show out of a good conversation ("conduct, life, as made up of actions" – Bullinger's) his works with meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envying ("jealousy, malice" – Strong's) and strife ("contention, faction" – Strong's) in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descends not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy” (James 3:13-17, KJV).***

- **Wisdom from above is what we need to be pursuing.**

Find wisdom and find life!

## **2. UNDERSTANDING:**

***“Happy is the man . . . that gets understanding . . . She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is everyone that retains her”*** (Proverbs 3:13, 18, KJV). To "understand" means the ability "to separate, to distinguish, hence, to discern, to mark, to understand, all which depends on the power of separating, distinguishing, discriminating; specially, to discern, perceive, to discern mentally, to understand" (Wilson's). Understanding is essential if we are going to make good progress in life. **It is one thing to know or have information on a matter, but it is the understanding of such that determines the outcome.**

***“Therefore be not unwise, but understanding*** ("to grasp, comprehend, be earnestly occupied with, lay to heart" – Bullinger's) ***what the will of the Lord is”*** (Ephesians 5:17, KJV). Our glorying should be in understanding and knowing God (see Jeremiah 9:23-24).

According to Proverbs 3:13-20 wisdom and understanding produce the following:

- ***“Happiness”*** (to them that find) (v.13);
- ***“Riches beyond silver and gold”*** (v.14);
- ***“It is more precious than rubies”*** (v.15); (see also Proverbs 8:11);
- Nothing else ***“can be compared”*** to wisdom and understanding (v.15);
- **Long life** is promised (v.16);
- ***“Riches and honour”*** are the inheritance (v.16);
- Wisdom and understanding produce pleasant ways (v.17);
- Bring pathways of peace (v.17);

- **A tree of life** is the portion of those who lay hold of her (wisdom) (v.18);
- Ongoing happiness to those who **“retain”** or embrace her (v.18).

### 3. KNOWLEDGE (from God):

The book of Proverbs is written to give us wisdom, understanding and knowledge: **“The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel; To know wisdom** ("skill") **and instruction** ("chastisement"); **to perceive** ("to understand, to know, be acquainted with, to discern, to see, to find, discover, to observe thoroughly with the mind") **the words of understanding; To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice** ("rightness"), **and judgment, and equity; To give subtlety** ("craftiness") **to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion** ("thoughtfulness"). **A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels** ("plans"): **To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise** ("to treat or regard with contempt") **wisdom and instruction”** (Proverbs 1:1-7, KJV).

The Proverbs become a special blessing when we read them according to the instructions given to us in these first seven verses. A proverb is "a ruling, acute saying, a similitude or a parable" (Young's). **“Wisdom, understanding and knowledge”** work together as keys in the Scriptures, and therefore it is important that we seek

them out of an honest and sincere heart (see Ephesians 1:17-18 and Colossians 1:9).

***“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding”*** (Proverbs 9:10, NKJV) (see also Jeremiah 9:23-24).

#### **4. RIGHTEOUSNESS:**

***“Say to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings”*** (Isaiah 3:10, KJV).

***“And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace”*** (James 3:18, KJV). Our righteousness is found only in Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:30). It is living according to His standards, not our own.

**What does it mean to be righteous?** Bible righteousness is "the doing or being what is just and right; the character and acts of a man commanded by and approved of God, in virtue of which the man corresponds with Him and His will as his ideal and his standard; it signifies the sum total of all that God commands and approves. As such it is not only what God demands, but what He gives to man, and which is appropriated by faith; and hence it is a state called forth by God's act of justification, viz. by judicial deliverance from all that stands in the way of being righteous" (Bullinger's).

***“For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit”*** (Romans 14:17, NIV).

## **5. HOPE:**

***“Hope*** ("a long and patient waiting; a lingering hope, still expecting and earnestly desiring, though hitherto exercised with delay and disappointment" – Wilson's) ***deferred makes the heart sick: but when the desire*** ("to desire earnestly, to have a strong affection, or, to long for . . . going after that which is sought, in order to possess and enjoy it" – Wilson's) ***comes, it is a tree of life”*** (Proverbs 13:12, KJV).

Hope is a very important part of life. For the Christian, hope causes:

- Rest (Psalm 16:9; Acts 2:26);
- Blessing (Jeremiah 17:7);
- Patience (Romans 15:4; 1 Thessalonians 1:3);
- Helmet of Salvation (1 Thessalonians 5:8);
- Gladness (Proverbs 10:28);
- Security (Job 11:18);
- Believing (Romans 4:18);
- No shame (Romans 5:5);
- Rejoicing (Romans 12:12);
- Glory (Colossians 1:27);
- An abiding (1 Corinthians 13:13);
- Righteousness (Galatians 5:5);

- Knowledge of God's calling (Ephesians 1:18; Ephesians 4:4);
- A future heaven (Colossians 1:5; Hebrews 3:6; Hebrews 6:11);
- Praise to God (Psalm 42:5; Psalm 43:5);
- Good courage (Psalm 31:24);
- Positive facing of death (Proverbs 14:32);
- Strength of heart (Psalm 31:24);
- Eternal life (Titus 1:2; Titus 3:7);
- God to take pleasure in us (Psalm 147:11);
- God's mercy to be ours (Psalm 33:22);
- God's eye to be upon us (Psalm 33:18).

**Resting and living in hope enables us to live in the benefits of partaking of the tree of life!**

## **6. A WHOLESOME TONGUE:**

***“A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach*** ("break, rent, leak") ***in the spirit”*** (Proverbs 15:4, KJV). The word "wholesome" means: "1. Conducive to health or physical well-being. 2. Conducive to moral well-being. 3. Characteristic or suggestive of health or well-being, especially in appearance" (Collins).

The way we use our tongue has a lot to do with our ongoing well-being: ***“Death and life are in the power of the tongue . . .”*** (Proverbs 18:21, KJV).

The meaning of the word "Perverseness" is: "deliberately deviating from what is regarded as normal, good or

proper; persistently holding to what is wrong; wayward or contrary; obstinate, cantankerous, perverted" (Collins).

***"The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life"***

(Proverbs 15:4, NIV).

- 7. SWIMMING IN THE WATERS OF LIFE THAT COME OUT OF GOD'S SANCTUARY** ~ symbolic of living in the Holy Spirit and abiding in God's Word:

***The man brought me back to the entrance of the temple, and I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple towards the east (for the temple faced east). The water was coming down from under the south side of the temple, south of the altar. He then brought me out through the north gate and led me round the outside to the outer gate facing east, and the water was flowing from the south side. As the man went eastward with a measuring line in his hand, he measured off a thousand cubits (about 1,500 feet or approximately 460 metres) and then led me through the water that was ankle deep. He measured off another thousand cubits and led me through water that was knee deep. He measured off another thousand and led me through water that was up to the waist. He measured off another thousand, but now it was a river that I could not cross, because the water had risen and was deep enough to swim in ~ a river that no-one could cross. He asked me, "Son of man, do you see this?" Then he led me back to the bank of the river. When I arrived there, I saw a great number of trees on each side of the river. He said to me, "This water***

***flows towards the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah (or the Jordan Valley), where it enters the sea (the Dead Sea). When it empties into the sea, the water there becomes fresh. Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows. There will be large numbers of fish, because this water flows there and makes the salt water fresh; so where the river flows everything will live. Fishermen will stand along the shore; from En Gedi to En Eglaim there will be places for spreading nets. The fish will be of many kinds ~ like the fish of the Great Sea (the Mediterranean). But the swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt. Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing” (Ezekiel 47:1-12, NIV).***

The above passage of Scripture reveals just how fruitful life becomes when we can let our life be absorbed by the waters that flow out of God's Sanctuary.

**It is the water that produces life.** Everywhere the water flowed trees began to grow and produce an abundance of fruit. The waters created trees full of life. The waters also became full of many kinds of fish. This is speaking of a harvest of souls that become ours when we allow our life to be affected by the waters of life. **God wants each of us to be living in His river of life ~ to be seeking to go into the deeper waters where we have to swim!** It is

only in the deeper waters that we are unable to support ourselves, in standing in the shallows!

**It speaks to us of the Holy Spirit-filled life.**

- **Flowing in God's Life!**
- **Being fruitful!**
- **Living Abundantly!**
- **Letting God's river take us wherever He desires to use us!**
- **Enabling God's life in us to flow out of us to touch dry and thirsty souls world wide.**

**JESUS, THE TREE OF LIFE, LIVES IN US BY HIS MIGHTY RESURRECTION SPIRIT OF POWER!** No wonder we should be filled to overflowing with His Life and Presence! Compare Ezekiel 47:1-12 with Revelation 22:1-2 which says: ***“Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb (Jesus) down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations”*** (NIV).

The Living Bible puts it this way:

***“And he pointed out to me a river of pure Water of Life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb, flowing down the centre of the main street. On each side of the river grew trees*** (literally, "the tree of life" ~ used here as a collective noun, implying

plurality), ***bearing twelve crops of fruit, with a fresh crop each month; the leaves were used for medicine to heal the nations***" (Revelation 22:1-2).

- The Tree of Life reproduces after its kind.
- Jesus in us reproduces after His kind too!
- His life becomes our life!
- We can do His works today!

## **8. LIVING THE OVERCOMING LIFE:**

***“Unto the angel (or messenger) of the church of Ephesus write; These things says He that holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks (or lampstands); I know your works, and your labour (“to be weary and faint with toiling”), and your patience, and how you cannot bear them which are evil: and you have tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and have found them liars: And have borne, and have patience, and for My name's sake have laboured, and have not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against you, because you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent (“to change one's mind and purpose with the feeling of remorse and sorrow”), and do the first works; or else I will come unto you quickly, and will remove your candlestick out of his place, except you repent. But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans (the followers of one Nicolas whose deeds are condemned without being mentioned, B.C. 70 – Young's. Most likely very similar to Balaam), which I also***

***hate. He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches; To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise (the place of risen saints – Bullinger's) of God” (Revelation 2:1-7, KJV).***

The message to the church of Ephesus is one of overcoming; especially if we desire to eat of the tree of life! What, then, are we to overcome?

The following list is taken from the above seven verses in Revelation 2 ~ they are important for us in our endeavour to overcome, for these are the things that God is telling us we need to be aware of:

- **Weariness in labouring** ("to be weary and faint with toiling") **in our Christian life** (v.2);
- **The need of patience** ("perseverance") (v.2);
- **Contending with evil doers in the church** (v.2);
- **Contending with false apostles** (v.2);

We are certainly living in a day when we need to know the difference between true and false apostles ~ **if we cannot recognize a true one, we will never know a false one, let alone contend with them!** (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

- **Contending with liars** (v.2);

It is a sad thing, but true, that there are professing Christians who are liars. Their word cannot be trusted, nor do they keep their promises. One of the marks of a true Christian is that his word can be relied on. God has

promised a reward for liars: ***“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable*** ("vile"), ***and murderers, and whoremongers*** ("the sexually immoral"), ***and sorcerers*** ("those who practice magic arts"), ***and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death***” (Revelation 21:8, KJV). ***“A false witness shall not be unpunished; and he that speaks lies shall not escape”*** (Proverbs 19:5, 9, KJV).

➤ **Leaving our first love** (v.3);

God wants each of us to continue in that first love we found when we met Jesus and to walk in it day by day. Love is the greatest gift and motivating force the Christian will ever know! We need to cultivate it continually. According to 1 Corinthians 13 it is possible for us to develop our spiritual giftings, knowledge, understanding, faith and good works, yet still not love. God's Word is clear that ***“it is by our love for one another that the world will know we are Jesus' disciples”*** (John 13:34-35) ~ not by our giftings, knowledge, understanding, faith and good works! To love means to develop relationships with others. It means to share ourselves with people. Sadly, so many find this difficult to do. But do it we must if we really love the Lord and want to fulfil His commands. Consider these challenging Scriptures: ***If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And He has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother”*** (1 John 4:20-21, NIV).

***“But I have this (one charge to make) against you, that you have left (abandoned) the love that you had at first ~ you have deserted (Me), your first love”***  
(Revelation 2:4, AMP.).

Over the years I have often heard Revelation 2:4 quoted as "losing your first love." The Bible uses the word "**left**," not "losing." The word "left" is translated from the Greek word "aphiemi" meaning "to send forth or away, to let go from one's self, then, to let go from one's further notice, care, etc., to leave, let alone" (Bullinger's). To "lose" something can be an accident, or even someone else's fault; but to leave your first love is a conscious decision, an act of the will, on our part. It is a decision we make through lack of spiritual discipline, or by neglecting to make a decision at all when we know we should.

When Christianity **in us** has left its first love, it loses its life and vitality, and becomes a religion and legalism. Let us exhort one another in these days to return to our first love.

➤ **Falling from our first works (v.5);**

Christianity is a life of first works (when nothing was too much trouble for us to do for Jesus), good works and ongoing service for God. We must guard against "settling down" to a lifestyle where there is no active outworking of the Christian message. What a tragedy it is that the following statement of Jesus is still true today: ***“The harvest truly is plenteous*** ("much, many, abundant"), ***but the labourers*** ("workers") ***are few***" (Matthew 9:37,

KJV). I ask you in all sincerity, my friend ~ **What are you doing for Jesus? Are you willing? Are you available? Have you been to talk to your pastor, minister, leader or mentor about what you can do to help gather in the harvest? Jesus said: “As long as it is day, we must do the work of Him who sent Me. Night is coming, when no-one can work”** (John 9:4, NIV).

- **Contending with false doctrines** ("teachings") (v.6);

There are all kinds of false teachings, ideas, presumptions, etc., that have crept into our "Christian" churches today. If we do not know what the Bible teaches, we will not know truth from error. It is very important that Christians get a good understanding of the major doctrines of the Bible (Hebrews 6:1-3). We need to encourage one another to be like the Bereans in the Bible: **“They received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. Therefore many of them believed . . .”** (Acts 17:10-12, NKJV). If we do not personally have a good grasp of the Scriptures, then we will not have a very good ability to discern right from wrong, truth from error, etc. One very good rule for testing whether a teaching is true or false is to **look to see where Jesus Christ fits into it. The centrality of Christ is an all-important truth of the Bible; that is, Jesus must be the central Person and theme of Bible teaching.** Any teaching that denies Jesus His rightful place, is a false teaching. **Jesus is the Son of God ~ He is God manifest in the flesh, now seated at the right hand of the Father on high** (John 1:1-4, 9-17;

Hebrews 1:1-8; 1 Timothy 3:16). **Jesus is the Word, and the Word is Jesus!**

- **Deafness to the Holy Spirit** (or hardness of heart) (v.7).

***“He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches”*** (Revelation 2:7, NIV). It is vitally important that we hear, recognize and know the voice of the Holy Spirit of God in our lives today. If we do not know the source of the voice, then we are caught up into the same saga that Eve found herself in. Other voices will be “speaking” and they will undermine the truth of God in our lives. Jesus taught us that ***“His sheep hear His voice”*** (John 10).

Hebrews chapter 3 tells us the reasons why Christians do not hear the voice of the Holy Spirit ~ unbelief!

### **Unbelief:**

- **Stops us from hearing the Holy Spirit** (Hebrews 3:7);
- **Hardens our hearts** (Hebrews 3:8, 13, 15);
- **Makes us provoke** ("to make bitter with or towards any one, to treat with bitterness; hence, to embitter, provoke" – Bullinger's) **God** (Hebrews 3:8, 15);
- **Makes us tempt God** (Hebrews 3:8-9);
- **Grieves God** (makes Him feel disgusted with us) (Hebrews 3:10, 17);

- **Makes us err ("go astray") in our heart** (Hebrews 3:10); **Makes us ignorant of God's ways** (Hebrews 3:10);
- **Robs us of entering into our rest** (of faith) (Hebrews 3:11, 18-19);
- **Gives us an evil heart** (Hebrews 3:12);
- **Makes us depart from the Living God** (Hebrews 3:12);
- **Deceitfully drags us into sin** (Hebrews 3:13).

**Unbelief has nothing good about it! It's a curse!** (For more on the subject of unbelief, see my book, *"Unbelief ~ The Power That Needs To Be Broken"*).

## **9. OBEDIENCE:**

***"Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right*** (Greek word is "exousia" meaning "authority, power") ***to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city"*** (Revelation 22:14, KJV).

- **Obedience, or the doing of God's commandments, gives us the right to the tree of life!**
- **Obedience gives us an entrance through the gates into the City** (the new Jerusalem).

There are many places in the Bible that teach Christians to be obedient.

In summing up this booklet, let me leave with you Joshua 1:8: ***“Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful”*** (NIV).

It can be done! **The same RESURRECTION SPIRIT that raised Christ from the dead LIVES IN US** (Romans 8:11)!! **That Resurrection Spirit working in us causes us to LIVE IN CHRIST, THE TREE OF LIFE** (John 15:1-16).

The same two choices that faced Eve in the Garden of Eden are still our choices today. Which tree are we partaking of? One tree leads us into a wonderful and living relationship with the Prince of Life, Jesus Christ ~ the other into an existence where we are deceived and cheated by the sinful nature it produces in those who eat of it. **True life can never be found outside of Jesus Christ.** He is God’s answer to the deception and disobedience that came into Eve’s, then Adam’s life . . . and all the way down through history through her listening to the wrong voice of the crafty enemy of our lives, Satan the serpent! His tactics are still being used on the human race today. He has cunningly and successfully “conned” the human race to believing his lies and questionable doubts concerning what God has said. What God says is always far more truthful than anything that wily serpent can come up with. The problem is that far too often we human beings are far too gullible ~ and yield far too quickly ~ to his subtleties!

Two trees ~ the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and the tree of life. Both produce their own kind of fruit. Make sure you are partaking of the tree of life through walking in personal relationship with Jesus Christ today.

May God bless this message to you!



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