

**LETTERS FROM GRANDPA**  
**# 152**

Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will deal with the familiar story about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden. The Scriptures teach: **"In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Gen. 2:9)** What is "good" and what is "evil" is very relevant today. Thanks for taking time to read this letter.

Famous apologist, Ravi Zacharias, interacted with an atheist who said he couldn't believe in God because there was so much evil in the world. Ravi said: *"When you say there's too much evil in this world you assume there's good. When you assume there's good, you assume there's such a thing as a moral law on the basis of which to differentiate between good and evil. But if you assume a moral law, you must posit a moral Law Giver, but that's Who you're trying to disprove and not prove. Because if there's no moral Law Giver, there's no moral law. If there's no moral law, there's no good. If there's no good, there's no evil. What is your question?"* Ravi drove home the point by observing: *"Some men love their neighbors, and some men eat their neighbors, do you have a preference?"*

Yes! There are really people in this world who believe it is "good" to kill and eat their neighbors. In 1962, Don and Carol Richardson risked their lives to share the gospel with the Stone Age Sawi people of New Guinea. The Sawi were headhunting cannibals who glorified lying and duplicity. For example, killing and eating your neighbor when you first met, was not as "good" as making him think you were his friends, and killing and eating him later. When Don told them the story of Jesus, Judas became their hero. They thought he was "good" as he deceived Jesus for three years before having him killed. Don's book, "Peace Child" tells how these lying murderers came to Christ. If there is no God, however, what difference does it make? If man evolved by accident and only the fittest survive, what is wrong with killing and eating your neighbor?

This brings us back to Genesis and the familiar story of forbidden fruit. In the middle of the garden, where Adam and Eve could not avoid it, was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam and Eve were free to eat of every other tree, but the tree involving the knowledge of "good and evil" was forbidden. There was no "evidence" given by God for this prohibition. The only reason to obey such a command was the confidence that God was "good". Therefore the wicked one attacked the goodness of God. He convinced Eve that God was not good. That old liar said that God was trying to deny her something that would bring her happiness. He pointed out that the tree was good to look at, good for food, and desirable to make one wise. Eve was deceived! Though Adam was "not deceived" he joined with Eve in rebelling against God (1 Tim. 2:14). This is the way that sin entered into the world and death by sin. God is good! He wanted to protect mankind from death. Man however, chose to reject God's "goodness" and decide for himself what was "good."

The Scriptures teach that the way of transgressors is hard (Prov. 13:15). Adam and Eve discovered this by personal experience. Growing old and digging graves is not easy. Fighting thorns and thistles is not fun. Dying is not desirable! Hebrews 2:15 points out that the fear of death puts

man in constant bondage. Because man rejected God's command, the friendly animals became predators. Poisonous weeds began to grow in the midst of good food. Adam and Eve, who never had a sick day, now struggled to survive the ravages of illness and disease. The way of transgressors is hard! I still have a vivid recollection of praying in the hospital for a young man who had pneumonia. I mistakenly assumed that since he was young and healthy he would survive. He didn't survive! He wasn't healthy! In a few days he was dead! The reason, I found out later, was that he had AIDS. He did not contract this deadly disease by accident. He knew what God wanted him to do, but foolishly decided on his own what was "good and evil".

Just as Adam and Eve could not avoid that tree, neither can we escape making decisions every day about "good and evil". Don't be deceived! God is good and his commandments are not grievous (1 Jn. 5:3). Obedience to God is not a curse, it is a blessing. PLEASE BE BLESSED!

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce