

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA

211

Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will deal with some familiar verses from the book of Genesis. **“And the Lord God commanded the man, ‘You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.’” (Gen. 2:16,17).** This story may seem far removed from your daily life, but it is not. This “tree” about “good and evil” is significant beyond words. It stands at the crossroads. It determines life or death. It reappears, not only in every generation, but in every life. At some point in your life you will face the same question as Adam and Eve. Will you follow God's rules, or make up rules on your own?

Soccer is the most popular sport in the world. Literally billions of people are captivated by it. Athletes practice endless hours and multiplied thousands cannot wait to turn on the TV or rush to the stadium to see a soccer game. As popular as it is, however, this amazing sport can be destroyed in a single day by not following the rules. If every soccer player decided to do what was right in his own eyes the resulting anarchy would destroy the game. This is true of all games. It doesn't matter whether it is checkers or chess, or contests of strength and speed. No athlete is crowned unless they compete according to the rules (2 Tim. 2:5). The same is true in the race of life!

The tree in our text defined “good” and “evil”. These words are meaningless to those who do not believe in God. Atheist Richard Dawkins has said it like this: *“The universe we observe has ... no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference. ... DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music”*. If man is merely a bag of chemicals who has evolved from pond scum, what does it matter whether you love your neighbor or eat your neighbor? If there are no rules and no Rule Maker, why criticize Hitler? He was merely dancing to his DNA.

Don Richardson, in his book *Peace Child*, writes of the Sawi people in Netherlands Guinea. This stone age tribe considered lying and duplicity as a virtue. The book opens with the story of a man seeking to make peace with the Sawi tribe. After convincing the man they they were his friends they killed and ate him. In their way of thinking, the longer they deceived him the more virtuous they were. When Don told them the story of Jesus, Judas Iscariot became their hero. He epitomized the deception and duplicity they were striving for.

Eve looked at the tree and noticed that it was good to look at, good for food, and desirable to make one wise (Gen. 3:6). The more Eve thought about it the more she was inclined to forget about the “truth” of God and develop her own “truth”. Even though Adam was not deceived he still joined with her in this rebellion against the rules (1 Tim. 2:14). Sometimes the best way to escape from a serpent is to flee. For example, the Bible warns us to “flee sexual immorality” (1 Cor. 6:18). It is not wise to try and reason your way out of fornication. Adam and Eve would have been well advised to run away from evil and obey God rather than reason with an enemy that is supernatural.

Just think, Adam and Eve already knew what was “good”. Everything around them was “good”. Everything God made was “good”. The word “evil”, however, was a mystery. What did this new word mean? Was God trying to keep them from something desirable? Had they decided to trust God and go by the rules they would never have had to dig a grave, shed a tear, or experience a pain. They chose, however, to reject God and make up their own rules. The rest is history.

But what about you and me? The Bible warns that in the last days some will abandon the faith and be seduced by evil spirits and the doctrines of demons. Such teaching comes from hypocritical liars whose conscience has been seared with a hot iron (1 Tim. 4:1,2). Their new nomenclature involves “your truth” and “my truth”. Just as in Eden, the wicked one is trying to trick us into forgetting what God has said and making up our own rules. Remember, when you make up your own rules you ruin the game!

The Psalmist said: **“Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers.” (Ps. 1:1-3).**

I want you to be blessed, so be careful where you “walk”, “stand”, or “sit”. Evil companions invariably corrupt good character (1 Cor. 15:33).

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce