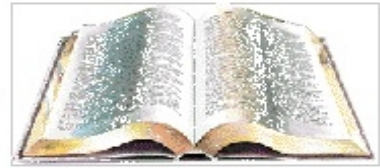


What God Says...



Forbidden Fruit

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What is the reason our children, young people or anyone else for that matter, are not obedient to or deviate from the commandments and the guidance of the Word of God? Allowing logic, to enter the equation for a moment, suggests that it be either;

- 1) because they have not been taught, not been in an environment conducive to learning or not paid attention to what was being taught or,
- 2) they simply do not have the fear of God in their heart and act according to their own feelings, belief or what they are coerced to do, due to their environment, part of which they sometimes choose to engage in themselves.

Now, there is the possibility of a third reason, which is weakness, but which partly falls under the second. We know what is right, but we allow ourselves to be drawn away because we yield to our human reasoning and senses rather than believe what God says. That reminds us of how it all got started in the very beginning...

Going back to the garden of Eden, that is exactly what happened and what caused sin to enter the human race in the first place. Eve chose to listen to the suggestion of the serpent (devil), that maybe what God had said to Adam was not entirely on the level and only partially true. The doubt that the serpent was able to sow in her heart ("*has God indeed said?*") plus the fact that the forbidden fruit was "*good for food*", "*pleasant to the eyes*" and "*desirable...*", caused her to make a decision that had fatal consequences; "*she took of the fruit and ate*". The result was spiritual death! What had the devil accomplished? To change her point of view!

In almost all movies and TV shows related to law and lawlessness, there is always the good against the bad, those that uphold the law against those who break it - good against evil, right versus wrong etc. etc., but what about our own lives, is it any different? God says through Paul in his letters that there is an inherent fight between good and evil in us. God has imparted His Nature in us who responded to his call and there is a war going on between the nature of Christ in us and our human flesh, the world and the devil. However, he also gives the answer to the conflict - the victory is through Jesus Christ (Rom.7:13-25).

There is a book in the Bible who has a lot to say about practical living and that is Proverbs. It also emphasizes Knowledge, Understanding and Wisdom. One commonly known verse is; "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*" 9:10. A simple and plain reminder of where everything truly wise has its starting point.

The book of Proverbs could also be called the book of decisions and consequences, because it outlines a lot of causes and effects of ones decisions in life.

I watched a webinar the other day called "Economics is inherently religious". Among others, these statements were made by Dr. Marlene McMillan;

"People who live in Liberty think different than people who live in bondage." [referring to economics etc., but it is much more far reaching than that and the way we handle money will to a great degree determine our spirituality, which is another subject for another time. Luke 16:11]

*"Liberty is the opportunity to make a **choice**, to assume **responsibility** and accept the **consequences**."*

The book of Proverbs has many illustrations of that very thing. Choices can be made according to or contrary to God's Word and we must assume responsibility for the decisions we make and accept the consequences for our actions. Besides, God tells us what will set us Free - the Truth! (John 8:32). What is truth? Pilate asked the same question of Jesus just before He was crucified. See **TRUTH** at www.WhatGodSays.org

How do we start thinking differently and how do we make good decisions? It's been said often that "**most of us need a check up from the neck up**". God puts it exactly like that when He says; "*Be **renewed in the spirit of your mind***" (Eph4:23) and "*do not be conformed to this world: but be **transformed by the renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*"(Ro.12:2)

In others words; Think differently than you did before. Is it possible that we are not thinking right in some areas of our lives? And, has our thinking been influenced by the people we associate with, the place we live in, the culture and environment around us? Most likely and quite probably. So what must we do to think differently? We must acquire (good and correct) information, knowledge, understanding and wisdom through the Word with the guidance of the Holy Spirit! It also comes through hearing Holy Spirit anointed preaching and teaching, fellowship, communion and prayer.

1 Corinthians 2:10: But God has revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

Romans 10:17: So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

*Acts 2:42: And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' **doctrine and fellowship**, and in **breaking of bread**, and in **prayers**.*

Hearing does not just mean to hear audibly, but understanding. In Revelation Jesus says to each of the seven churches; "*He that has an ear let him hear (understand) what the spirit is saying to the churches...*"

Everything that we encounter in our lives we judge through a "window" of our Philosophy - the way we think about and perceive things according to the information and knowledge we have acquired so far. Everything in this world started with a thought, and creative thoughts were followed by a deliberate plan and then put into action. The clothes you wear, the chair you sit on, the house you live in the car you drive and so on. Everything began with a thought.

This is not only true with things, but also relationships that we develop as pertaining to friends and associates. [Your parents, siblings and family you are stuck with :-)]. You make judgements both conscious or sub-

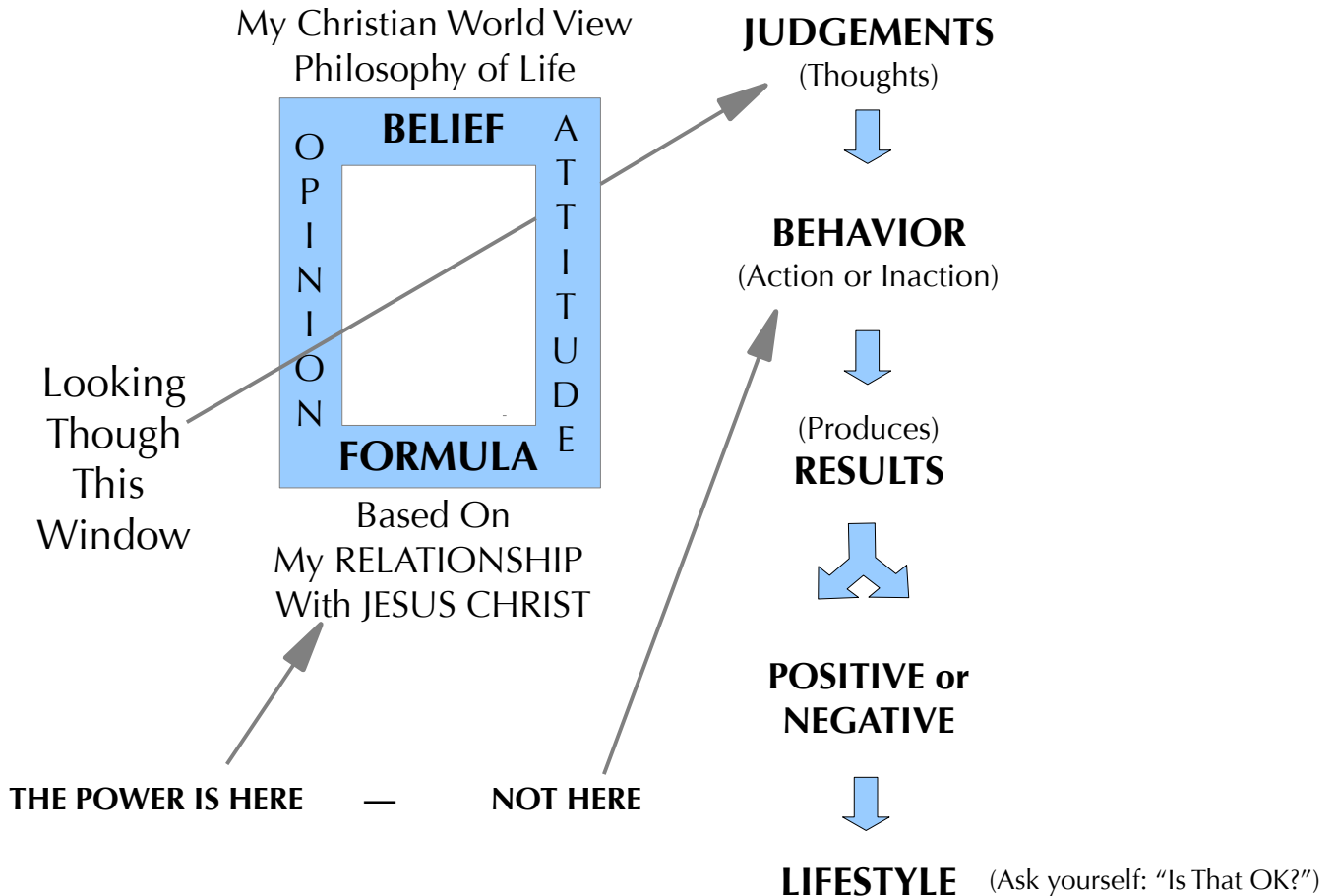
conscious in thinking about who you want to hang around with, who you allow as an acquaintance, a friend or a close friend - someone you share life thoughts and ideas with. Those thoughts were probably not planned out as in a project, but came slowly and progressively, influenced by the environment you allowed yourself to be in. Do you share the same foundation of Life? Who will influence the other the most? The truth is, both will be influenced by the other, but usually one more than the other. Who is the strong one?

How your life turns out is based on how you judge and respond to people, situations, events, the world, economics and so many more areas and the most important of all is - how you respond to Jesus Christ as He is revealed throughout God's Word. Actually Jesus Christ IS the Word (John 1:1).

Let's look at this graphic illustration of cause and effect....

The Big Question is:

**HOW IS MY RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST?
DO I HAVE A BELIEF FORMULA BASED ON BIBLICAL TRUTH?
ARE MY OPINIONS AND ATTITUDES LINED UP WITH GOD'S WORD?**



**Trying to CHANGE BEHAVIOUR in order
to change the results will never work,
But JUDGING RIGHTEOUSLY will!**

When the question is asked: "Do you believe the first ten verses in the Bible?". What is your response? Since this will be read mostly by Christians, the answer will likely be yes. But think about it - if you truly believe that *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"* - ten profound words that makes a statement far beyond our limited human intellect and understanding - that God could actually speak into existence such an incredible, actually indescribable and unlimited universe, which we can only catch a small glimpse of and not understand much to any great degree - why would you not want to check out what He has to say to us related to a life of Liberty and Freedom through the Truth that is available to us in Jesus Christ? Or, do we think we know better and are not sure about what He is saying - Like Eve in the Garden? Choosing rather to listen to the devil and his seducing tactics? Is not God big enough to be able to protect His Word so that it speaks the Truth to all people everywhere? He says that;

Isaiah 55:11: So shall my word be that goes forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

God's Word is not only *the* way to eternal life through Jesus Christ, but also *the* LIFE MANUAL to live godly in this present age. The Word is also called the light. Typically people stumble in the dark but can see where they are going in the light. When we have fellowship with Jesus Christ we live in the light: *"If we say we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness. We lie and do not practise the truth"*. (I John 1:6) and *"He who says, "I know Him", and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him"*. (I John 2:3,4). As a matter of fact we are to be a light in the world, showing the way to Jesus; *Matthew 5:14: You are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hidden."*

Some decisions we make have small as well as short term consequences and some have big and lifelong as well as life altering consequences.

Belief in God's Word is not something we can selectively choose what to accept and what not to. The Word is like a plumb-line which is functioning anywhere on the planet because of gravity. All plumb lines anywhere on the globe point to the center of the earth's gravity. There is nothing anyone of us can do about it because God has put that in place and is an unchangeable universal and very practical truth. It is the line by which every building in the world is aligned to be able to have a structure that is sound and stable. So it is with us also. When we align ourselves with the Word of God which is our "plumb line", we are building our lives based on His principles that never changes - a sure foundation we can trust in..

Let's look as some examples and the various impacts that can be had on our lives;

You are going for a hike in the mountain and you ignore the weather forecast and don't bring any rain gear. Well, you just got very wet when it started pouring contrary to your belief in the weatherman. No big deal - you got home and changed into dry clothes. However, next time you might pay closer attention to avoid the discomfort. Not a big life consequential event, but a lesson learned from experience nonetheless.

Next, you drive 60km in a 30km school zone. You've done it before without a problem, besides you were in a hurry. Not very smart, because this time you were caught and it hurt in your pocket book and additionally they now have a record of your speeding violation. It's a lot bigger deal now, but still not life threatening, yet it could have been. Hopefully a lesson is learned here.

However, time went by and that was in the distant past and - you did it again! - through a play ground zone! But this time someone ran after a ball into the street and you hit a little boy. He was not seriously hurt, but a school supervisor saw you and reported the incident. Now, you are in serious trouble. Possibly a big fine, maybe lose your license for a time and a police record. Insurance may go up and quality of life has taken a dent.

You go to a party where they serve alcohol. You don't drink but your friend does and he/she is driving. She assured you she was in control and below the limit. However, on the way home it was raining, the alcohol had impaired the judgment and there was an accident and your friend was killed. In the autopsy they found that the alcohol level was way over the limit. You were lied to by your friend. You are devastated by your friend's death and you are greatly affected. In this situation, you might actually have learned a serious life lesson. You think; "It could have been me that was killed?" "Was I ready?"

The righteous should choose his friend carefully, For the way of the wicked leads them astray Pr.12:26

Another scenario...You go to a party where there is served alcohol and you decide to have one glass of wine or one drink or one beer. For some people, that one decision started them on a road to disaster, but they did not foresee that or even thought about that, because it was supposed to be only one drink. They had heard about that happening to other people, but "*that was them and it will not be happening to me*".

Proverbs 20:1: Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.

Let's continue the story... However, you had another glass and thought you were within your limit. Then you drive home and behold, there is a roadside check. You get to blow and you're just over the limit. Now you have a DUI record which will not go away. You had not planned on this, but a bad decision altered your life forever. Your future is now being affected. It's getting serious and your record is smeared seriously. You think: "*Many people did mistakes when they were young and they still had a pretty good life right?*" For some it does not stop there and disaster follows. Now, when employers do Police Checks, which is becoming more and more common and sometimes required, your record will show up and might limit employment opportunities.

That leads some into a situation that on the surface looks pretty good (*I can control it syndrome*), but what is not known to the general public is that they are a weekend or binge alcoholic and drink quite regularly - but nobody knows. Their life is impacted in ways only few know, but it is certainly not a life of Liberty and Freedom and a conscience free of offence. "*What's wrong with it*" is often the question, or "*it can't hurt*", when the questions should really be "*what's right with it?*".

Then we have the story when someone gets into an intimate relationship with a person outside of marriage. The guilt and shame can be overwhelming and their future is impaired and can be unalterable if a pregnancy occurs and all the complications with possibly being a single mom, or a man that knows he has a child somewhere, or is possibly in a custody battle. Now we are talking about seriously affecting your life. Whether your decisions are impaired due to alcohol, drugs or simply wrong philosophy, the results are always the same - something you don't really want for your life.

We all know the story in the Bible about David who committed both adultery and murder. He was forgiven, but the consequences to himself and his family was severe. His life was never the same.

Dating and eventually marrying the wrong man or wrong woman, whether he/she is a Christian or not, could affect you entire life in a way that you would not want, but now you are bound by your commitment to both man and God - or, you may have a different "view" on that. Yet countless young men and woman play with fire in inviting situations that is hard to control and consequences that usually have serious implications, not only in a temporal wrong relationship, but also with the one they will eventually marry.

This does not only apply to marriage, but close friendships as well. There is a difference between being friends with people and having a close friend or friends. Do you and your friend(s) share a common faith in Jesus Christ? If not, who is influencing who? I know people who have been influenced by a friend to faith in Jesus, but I also know of those who developed close relationships and eventually married an unsaved person and not only did the one that was a Christian before lose their faith, the marriage broke up as well. Did she come back

to the Lord? So far, not that I know. She listened to the voice that said "*has God indeed said?*", changed her point of view and took of "*the apple*"- the forbidden fruit.

When scripture speaks about being unequally yoked, it refers to the old way of farming where you used a pair of oxen to pull the plow or the wagon etc. You would never put a pair of animals together under the same yoke that were of different kind like a horse and an ox or a donkey and a cow. They would never be able to pull in the same direction or with the same strength and the field to be plowed would not be very straight if plowed at all. The same is true with people and in particular with someone who is a believer and one who is not. See what God says;

II Corinthians 6:14: Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 15: And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?

All decisions, but in particular decisions that will affect your entire life, and could have serious consequences, must be entered into carefully and prayerfully and according to God's Word.

Going back to the quotation earlier, talking about Liberty:

"Liberty is the opportunity to make a choice, to assume responsibility and accept the consequences."

Did Eve think about the consequences? Yes, she did, but listening to the devil, she decided what God had said was probably not true or just partly true according to the devil. The devil did not focus on Eve eating an apple, but on changing her point of view. When people's point of view is impaired, eating an "apple" is not that hard.

The Devil is still in the business of doing that. Those that listen to him through various means; the media, TV, friends and others who are propagating devious ideas and opinions about God's Plumb line and have their point of view shaken and changed will eventually eat of the "apple" and produce a life that is off balance from Liberty, Freedom and Peace in Jesus Christ.

Maybe it would be good to think it through and start with consequences and saying; "what if this or that was the **consequences** of my actions, did I assume the **responsibility** for that and did I make a wise and Biblically based **choice**? Remember the Plumb Line?

Like in the natural every structure that has ever been built right has used the Plumb Line as the guide, so let us use God's Plumb line to build our lives - His Word which is a light to our path.



Thus he showed me: Behold the Lord stood on a wall made with a plumb line, with a plumb line in his hand. And the Lord said unto me, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said; "A plumb line". Then the Lord said: "Behold I am setting a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel;..."



The devil got Eve to throw aside the "plumb line" and apply a different Point Of View!

What is the View like from Your "Window"?

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