

Restoring my Soul

A five day devotional guide

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Life in the Garden

Have you ever considered what life was like in the garden of Eden before Adam and Eve fell? No doubt, it would have been wonderful! Each day, in the cool of the evening, Adam and Eve met and conversed with Yahweh Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This would have been about the time of day that the couple were preparing their dinner, using the fruit of the trees that were growing in the garden.

Of all the fruiting trees that were in the garden, the most important one was the tree of life. This fruit was the main course of Adam and Eve's fellowship meal with Yahweh, each day. The fruit of this tree gave life to Adam and Eve as they received the word of God. As they ate, His word sustained their mortal bodies and provided them with wisdom and direction for the works that they were to do in the garden.

In the garden of Eden and in the world where Adam and Eve lived in fellowship with God, there was nothing evil. There was no dark side, with its accompanying calamity, pain and death. Death was not known to them. Everything around them was only good. In the realm of the angels, however, there had already been rebellious calamity. Adam and Eve may have been aware that many of the angels had joined Satan's rebellion, and had fallen as a result.

But, as yet, this event had not had any impact on them. Evil was confronting and afflicting the angels, but there was no strong intimation of evil in Adam and Eve's consciousness. Satan's evil influence did not begin to affect mankind until he came into the garden of Eden, took on the form of a beautiful, clever serpent, and positioned himself in the centre of the garden of Eden under the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

References:

2Pe 2:4, 9 Ecc 7:29
Eze 28:13-16 Rev 12:9
Isa 14:12

Further Study:

Genesis 3

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 3

Eve's uncertainty

Satan messed with Eve's mind as he spoke to her and directed her to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He said to her, 'Indeed, has God said, "You shall not eat from any tree of the garden"?' And Eve replied, 'From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, "You shall not eat from it or touch it, *lest you die*".' However, Eve was being a bit vague at this point.

When Eve said, 'Lest you die', for some reason she seemed unclear as to what God had meant. God had been far more emphatic than this when He spoke to Adam about not eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God had said to Adam, 'Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it *you shall surely die*'.

Satan seized on Eve's lack of clarity and uncertainty in her statement, 'Lest you die', and said, 'You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' In this last statement, Satan called God's honesty into question and attacked His motives. He was implying that God was not trustworthy. In effect, Satan suggested to Eve that God was not telling the truth when He said to Adam, 'From the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die'. He was calling God a liar, by implying that He was being deceitful.

References:

Gen 3:1-5

Gen 2:17

Jas 1:15

Psa 7:14-15

Further Study: 2 Corinthians 11

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 4

Satan's deception

Satan proposed that he was the one who was telling the truth and God was being deceitful. He implied that God was keeping something from Adam and Eve, which was within their reach to obtain. All they had to do was to show some initiative and they could become like God, knowing the difference between good and evil, and blessing and calamity.

More than this, if they became like God, they could become *the origin* of good or evil – the ones who could create and determine the difference between these two things. They could rise above their present state. According to the lie of Satan, God was limiting their progress, while Satan was offering them the opportunity to advance.

Eve's perceptions of what was good or evil were distorted by Satan's lie as she listened to him speak and looked at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And here is the important point: the good and evil that Satan was proposing Eve should live by, would become the effect of eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Satan's version of good and evil was different from God's. Satan was pressing Eve to accept what he was saying so that he could replace God in her life.

Satan had set about to stir up desire in Eve through his deception. Rather than Eve living by the word of God, and being fed from the tree of life, Satan was provoking in her the desire to have a set of principles which she could live by, and which would make her the source and director of her own life. Under Satan's deceiving influence, Eve was persuaded to view the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in a different way. As she looked at the tree and its fruit, the Hebrew language says, 'It became a desire to her eyes'.

References:

2Co 11:3

Eph 4:22

Joh 8:44

Tit 3:3

Rev 12:9

Further Study: 1 Timothy 2

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 5

The fruit of eating

As Eve looked at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, she was deceived into thinking that what she thought she saw was real. The tree suddenly became desirable; it looked beautiful. How could eating from it cause harm? Its fruit was most desirable; she wanted to make it part of her diet; it would become her food. She thought it would not only be a source of life for her, but it would make her wise. Satan had deceived her into thinking that, if she lived by the knowledge of good and evil as she saw it, she would become the master of her own destiny. She would be like God.

The desire that was provoked within Eve would become another law within her. This other law would place Eve at the centre of her own life. This kind of self-centred living would become the law that she would live by. The apostle Paul spoke of this principle of self-centred living that is now in our hearts. He referred to it as 'another law'. He said that this law within us works against us when we set out to do God's will.

The good and evil that Satan was proposing Eve should live by, would become the *effect* of eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. As Eve ate of the fruit, the *effect* of the deception of pursuing a 'like God' destiny became substantial in her life. What she ate became her life. A lie became part of who she was.

The question we must ask ourselves is, 'From which tree are we eating?' God has predestined that we pursue the pathway of sonship by eating of the tree of life at the communion table. It is here that His fruit, the Bread of life, becomes the food by which we live. God had planned that we should feed on His life, and that this was to be our daily food.

References:

2Ti 2:25-26 Heb 12:4
Gal 5:17 1Pe 2:11
Rom 8:2

Further Study:

Romans 7

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 6

Our own good

The psalmist proclaimed, 'O taste and see that the Lord is good; how blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!' For Adam and Eve, Yahweh was their God. He was a good God. He was the origin and source of all things for them. Through fellowship, they knew all things in God and God in all things. They were 'of God', with the promise of becoming His children once they were born again of His Spirit.

By contrast, if they accepted Satan's proposition that it would be a good thing to become like God without being born again of God, then they would become godless. They would become a god unto themselves. As a result, their own law would have to proceed from their own heart as the origin of what was good for them. This would be a direct result of them living from the basis of their self-centredness, having chosen to be the gods and masters of their own destiny. As we have just described, their own law would become another law. This law would motivate them to lust for power and to exploit the resources available to them in the natural universe that surrounded them.

They would also need to take hold of the laws that govern nature. They would do this through the study of what is now called 'science'. The word 'science' is derived from *scientia*, which simply means 'knowledge'. They would use these governing laws and manipulate them for their survival and advancement. Worse still, they would even take hold of the law of God as the basis of their own religion, subverting it so that it served their own law, as well as the ambitious projections and goals they would seek to accomplish for themselves. Their self-centredness would become self-righteousness and they would, like God, pursue their own charitable programs.

References:

Psa 34:8
1Pe 2:2-3
Zec 9:17

Psa 139:17
1Ti 6:20-21
Col 2:8

Further Study:

Psalm 36

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 7

The pathway of darkness

God warned Adam and Eve that if they chose their own pathway, by touching and eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they would die. They would make themselves enemies of God, bringing themselves under the judgement of His wrath. God's wrath wars against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who follow the path of deception and suppress the truth through unrighteous behaviour.

Unrighteousness would, henceforth, darken the hearts of those who follow the pathway of deception. This darkness would be a powerful delusion. It would cause men and women to project themselves to others as wise, whereas in fact, they would be fools. Worse still, by believing they could be like God, this kind of thinking would become a presumption born of deception. It is, in fact, irrational to think this way, only leading, in many cases, to madness and eccentric behaviour.

In pursuing a godless way of life, mankind would exchange the promise of the glory of sonship for another image. They would seek an image that is found in the philosophy of evolution – an image that springs from the lusts and corruption that come from the other law in the heart of fallen man. They would reject what is spiritual and exchange the truth of God for a lie, walking in the ways of their own flesh, claiming that science is the only true pathway. They would worship the creature rather than the Creator. Because of their deception and corruption, they would be given over to all kinds of depravity, addictions, immorality and homosexuality – dishonouring their own bodies with degrading passions. Finally, they would be given over by God to eat the fruit of their own ways.

References:

Mat 12:34-35

Mat 15:19

Pro 14:12

Pro 16:25

Eph 5:6

Further Study:**Daily Proverb:**

Romans 1

Proverbs 10

The substance of the lie

Jesus said that Satan was ‘a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.’ In the garden of Eden, Satan distorted the truth of God’s purpose for mankind. In deception, Satan defined for Adam and Eve what the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil would do for them. His definition, once they ate from the tree, is what the fruit became to them. That is how he planted and formed the lie in them. His deception became their reality. Once they ate the fruit, the lie became substantial. Until that point, Satan’s words had no power. Until they chose to act upon his lie, he was merely playing with their imaginations.

To put it another way, the deception of Adam and Eve was not, in itself, disobedience. In fact, the deception had no power until Adam chose to disobey. The disobedience did not take place with Eve; she was merely deceived. The disobedience took place ‘in Adam’, when he caved in to Eve’s demand and ate the fruit.

Once they had both eaten, their eyes were opened, and Satan’s alternative proposition became an essential element of their now fallen, unredeemed human heart. Moreover, far from being ‘like God’, the only new knowledge that Adam and Eve gained was that they were naked. Apart from fellowship with God, they felt suddenly vulnerable and found themselves at the mercy of the elemental principles of the world. However, in His great mercy, God addressed their shameful state with the promise of a coming Redeemer – Christ the Lord.

References:

Joh 8:44
1Ti 2:13-15
Gen 3:17

Col 2:20-21
2Ti 2:19

Further Study:

Daily Proverb:

Galatians 4

Proverbs 11

The tree of life

The Bible records that God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – created man in Their own image and according to Their likeness. God created man with the predestination of becoming members of Their family, as sons of God. To become His sons, they would have to receive the work of each Member of the Godhead. Specifically, they would have to be born again of the seed of God the Father, be given the right to participate in sonship in the family of God by receiving sonship life from God the Son, and be given the power of their own sanctified expression from the Holy Spirit.

When God created the heavens and the earth, He planted a garden in a place called Eden and there He placed the man whom He had formed out of the dust of the ground. Out of the ground, He caused all kinds of trees and plants to grow - some for beauty that were pleasing to look at, and others that were good for food. In the middle of the garden, He planted the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The fruit that grew on the tree of life gave life and substance to every word God spoke to man. Man's natural food was fruit, but man was not meant to live by food alone, but by every word that proceeded from the mouth of God. When the Lord God spiritually 'walked in the wind' (i.e. in the cool of the day), He no doubt talked with Adam and Eve and communed with them in the middle of the garden under the tree of life. Adam and Eve ate of its fruit as they received the word of God in the fellowship of their evening meal. The fruit of the tree of life gave strength to Adam and Eve to put God's word into action. That is why the tree of life is referred to as 'the wisdom of God'.

References:

Gen 1:26

1Pe 1:23

Deu 8:3

Rev 2:7

Joh 1:12-13

Act 1:8

Further Study: Revelation 22

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 12

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was not evil or poison in itself. Paul, the apostle, taught us that, when it comes to food, no food is unclean or evil of itself. However, the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil became an evil to Adam and Eve when they conceded to Satan's temptation and made it the fruit of their own disobedience. They already had God's knowledge of good and evil, because they knew all things in God and God in all things. But Satan proposed another kind of knowledge of good and evil, which they did not have. He proposed a 'like God' knowledge of good and evil.

What does this mean? Adam and Eve already knew right from wrong before they ate the forbidden fruit. They understood that evil had consequences and that ungodliness and unrighteousness would lead to death. The nature of Satan's deception was to propose another destiny for mankind. He defined it as the 'like God destiny'. Furthermore, this new definition for man would have its own definitions of good and evil. Because these new definitions of good and evil were different from the good and evil that belonged to God, they would be in competition with God. A person cannot be in competition with God without being against God. Remember that God was, and is, the owner of the universe and the ruler over everything in it.

By contrast, those who chose to follow the destiny of sonship within the family of God, would live and relate in love. Love is not self-centred in any way. Love is manifest through offering. Those who offer themselves give themselves in the service of others. By this, the good of God is revealed. The judgement of God is the justice of perfect love. It becomes an evil, or calamity, upon all that is self-centred or wicked. Judgement acts upon the disobedient, in the hope that they will come to repentance.

References:

Rom 4:14-16
Gen 2:16-17
1Ti 6:17

Exo 19:5
Mat 5:24

Further Study:

Daily Proverb:

1 Samuel 15

Proverbs 13

The effect of the Fall

A darkened mind cannot judge what is truly good or evil. Only those who are born of God and who are spiritual, can rightly judge what is good and evil. Paul, the apostle, said that those who are born of the Spirit can rightly judge all things. However, they themselves are not judged by those who lack the illumination that comes from the Spirit of God, once a person is born of God. When Adam and Eve ate of the tree, their minds became truly darkened. Their new knowledge led only to fear. They knew that they were now vulnerable.

Satan's promise to Adam and Eve was that the fruit would vitalise them with an impartation of power to see and perceive – to see physically, mentally and spiritually, things not otherwise discernible. In other words, he promised that the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil would strengthen their physical powers of sight and multiply their mental powers of perception, so that they could understand, in a full and integrated way, how to control the world in which they lived. This would make their own ideas of good and evil viable. It also would give them spiritual illumination, springing from themselves, apart from fellowship with God. Ironically, it was in fellowship with God that they were able to know all things, particularly the things that belonged to their own name and sanctification. The purpose of Satan's deception was to separate Adam and Eve from fellowship with God.

Satan was seeking to frustrate the purpose of God when he took advantage of Eve through this deception. This led to Adam's disobedience, and they were cut off from the life of God and fell into death. Satan's deceptions always work this way. Satan offers the attainment of higher wisdom; but his intention is that those who receive his deceptions will only discover their own incapacity and vulnerability, becoming depressed, afraid and hiding themselves from God.

References:

Joh 3:7-8 2Co 11:3-4
Heb 2:14-15 Gen 3:8-10
2Co 2:10-11

Further Study:

1 Corinthians 2

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 14

First love

The fellowship that Adam and Eve had with Yahweh in the garden of Eden, as they communed together by eating from the tree of life, is called 'first love'. 'First love' is a term Jesus used in His letter to the leaders of the church in Ephesus. He said to them, 'I have this against you, that you have left your first love'. What did Jesus mean by this? Was He saying that the Ephesian Christians had simply forgotten what the love of God felt like when they first heard and believed the gospel? Had they just stopped loving one another?

Jesus gave us the key to understanding 'first love', when He said, 'Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works'. We see that first love is a place, or context, that is associated with particular works. This is what the garden of Eden was for Adam and Eve. Notably, Jesus said that those who returned to first love, by overcoming what had caused them to fall from fellowship with Him, would be able to 'eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God'.

The apostle Paul explained what 'first love' was, by drawing our attention to the great love of God, which was revealed when Christ died on the cross for us. This offering was the expression of the love of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Through this offering, we were brought back from the death of sin with Christ, and we were raised up and seated together with Him in heavenly places. 'Heavenly places' is even more wonderful than the garden of Eden! As we abide together in Christ, we are able to do the good works of sonship that God named for us.

References:

Rev 2:4-5

Eph 5:2

Gal 5:6

2Co 5:14

Eph 3:17-19

Further Study:

Ephesians 2

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 17

The life of the communion

Just as the tree of life was central to Adam and Eve's fellowship with God in the garden of Eden, eating and drinking the communion elements are essential to first love in Christ Jesus. This is because Jesus is the Tree of Life. He said, 'Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.'

When Jesus gave His disciples the bread and wine of the communion, He explained to them that the bread was His flesh, and the cup was His blood. Paul taught that we are to eat and drink these two elements of the communion, in faith for an ongoing participation in Christ's offering.

What does this mean for us? Remember, the fruit of the tree of life sustained and equipped Adam and Eve as they received the word of God. In the same way, everything that the communion elements represent, becomes increasingly substantial in our lives as we receive and obey God's word. This includes our continued fellowship with the Lord and with each other throughout the week; receiving faith for participation in the sufferings of Christ; receiving, living and ministering the life of Christ as a member in particular of the body of Christ; and maturing as a son of God.

'First love' is more than just coming together for a communion service each week. It would appear that the Ephesian Christians were regularly meeting for communion. Yet, there was something about the way they were meeting, that meant they had fallen from first love. Their gatherings and interactions with one another had become an imitation of the first love fellowship from which they had fallen. It is sobering to consider that they were unaware this had happened.

References:

Joh 6:54-56 Jer 2:2-3
Luk 22:19-20 Mat 24:12-13
Rev 2:2-3 Php 1:9

Further Study: 1 Corinthians 11

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 18

Sanctification

The first condition of first love is that we must present ourselves in true identity. When we were born from above by the word of the Father, we received our name as a son of God. This name was prepared for us before the heavens and earth were created. It defines the truth of who we are and the works we are to do as a son of God. This is essential to being made complete as sons of God who are in His image and likeness.

Living according to our name means that we are being the person God made us to be. This is called our 'sanctification'. Of course, we do not know everything about our name as a son of God. Remember, it is given to us as a seed. It needs to grow! We are sons of God now, but there is a fullness of sonship to which God wants us to attain. Our name becomes clearer through the process of offering. Through offering, we are able to prove the will of God, which is our sanctification, or name.

A person who wants to grow in sanctification, will not demand that others receive them in a particular way. Instead, by faith, they will present themselves in fellowship and accept the discipline and instruction of their heavenly Father, which accompanies their interactions and activities as a son of God.

Many people remain separated from first love because they reject their sanctification. Instead of being the person whom God named them to be, they either want to be someone else, or they want someone else to define who they are and what they should do. This demonstrates they have no faith for sonship. Often, these people become frustrated and reactive when they are not received in the way they think they should be.

References:

Rom 12:1-2

1Pe 1:23

Eph 4:11-13

1Th 4:3

Psa 139:16

Further Study:**Daily Proverb:**

1 John 3

Proverbs 19

Worship and offering

Jesus taught that 'God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth'. When we are born of God, we have the ability to worship the Lord because the Spirit of God is in us. This is evident because the Holy Spirit gives to us the capacity to love and appreciate others. This capacity replaces the self-centredness which, otherwise, gives rise to comparisons and competition, as well as jealousy and conflict. These fallen attitudes and behaviours cause wounding and alienation. Having been born of the Spirit, we are able to be one spirit with the Lord and with each other. Furthermore, because we know and accept who we are, we are able to perceive and give worth to the names of other sons of God. This is how we worship in truth.

Worship in spirit and truth is the foundation of fellowship. And worship *leads to offering*. Abraham understood this principle. As he went up Mount Moriah, to sacrifice Isaac according to the word of the Lord, he said to those who had travelled with him, 'The lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you'. Not only did Abraham understand that worship was the basis of offering, he recognised that resurrection life was fundamental to our participation in offering.

Offering is the activity through which the will of God is accomplished. It involves revealing one another, by the Spirit, as we give to others with the capacities that belong to our name as a son of God. Practically, this fellowship will be characterised by cooperation. Cooperation involves working together in the one mind of the Lord, to see God's will achieved in, and through, His corporate body. The basis for this cooperation is the ability and readiness to make offering by revealing the name and capacities of others. That is, our offering is not what we can give, but rather, how we can reveal another.

References:

Joh 4:24 Eph 4:4-6
Rom 5:5 Gen 22:5
1Co 6:17 Mat 15:8-9

Further Study:

Psalm 50

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 20

Fallen from first love

'First love' is the term that Jesus used to describe the relationship of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We were all predestined to be born of God and to participate in this relationship. We know, however, that having been delivered from slavery to sin, born of God, and raised with Christ as a member of His body, it is possible to fall from first love. How does this happen? What are the factors that contribute to such a fall? These are very important questions for a son of God to consider!

To understand how a person, and indeed a whole church, can fall from first love, it is helpful to consider the fall of mankind. Adam and Eve fell from a fellowship in first love with Yahweh. Of course, when we are born of God and joined to first love, we do not return to the conditions of the garden of Eden. To be born of God and raised with Christ into heavenly places is a great advance on the fellowship that Adam and Eve enjoyed. Nevertheless, the attitudes, responses and behaviours that led to their fall, are the same factors that can result in our departure from first love.

Writing to Timothy, the apostle Paul noted that, 'Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression'. Paul was highlighting that transgression is associated with being deceived. Furthermore, he was distinguishing transgression and deception from the disobedience of Adam, which resulted in sin entering the world. Eve was deceived when she was separated from Adam and the Lord, and listened to an alternative word from Satan. Satan's word was a lie. He proposed that it was possible for Eve to have life apart from fellowship with Yahweh. As Eve heeded his proposition, her perception of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was distorted. To her, the fruit of the tree now appeared to be good for food, pleasant to the eyes and desirable to make one wise.

References:

Rev 2:4-5 Gen 3:6
Eph 2:4-6 Jer 15:6
1Ti 2:14 Job 31:1

Further Study:

Jeremiah 2

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 21

Falling into transgression

The desire to be the source of her own definition was aroused within Eve. Consequently, she rejected her sanctification and wilfully transgressed God's word by eating the fruit. She ate because she desired an image of herself that was different from the image in which God had created her. That is, instead of continuing in her sanctification as the wife and helper to Adam that God had created her to be, Eve sought to create a different image of herself.

It is notable that, having eaten the fruit, Eve was not initially aware that her transgression was a problem. Acting from the basis of her self-made image, Eve endeavoured to convince Adam that her newfound perspective was a good one. We can just imagine her enthusiastic and sophisticated reasoning! Eve wanted Adam to accept the image she had created for herself, and to join her in the romantic pursuit of all the future possibilities she believed this had opened for them. However, Eve's actions and opinions were simply a further expression of her transgression. She was not living, or speaking, the truth.

The apostle Paul warned that we can be deceived and fall into transgression in the same way that Eve did. Writing to the Corinthians, he said, 'But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ'. With Paul's words in mind, transgression can be understood as straying from simple and devoted obedience to Jesus. We stray when we give our ear to a spirit, or word, that is different from the word of God which is preached by Christ's messengers. Such words provoke us to pursue an image of ourselves that is different from what God has named for us. However, receiving and believing these words will inevitably lead a Christian to embrace an attitude to life that Paul described as 'the spirit of the world'.

References:

Gen 2:18, 21-24
2Co 11:3-4
1Co 2:12
Gal 5:4

Further Study:

Galatians 1

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 24

Walking in fellowship

Paul explained to the Corinthians that ‘alternative words’ can be present in the church. They are put forward by people who do not have the same spirit of faith as Christ’s messengers. Their teaching is contrary to the gospel of sonship that Paul preached. They believe that God’s blessing can be obtained without the need for an ongoing participation in the fellowship of Christ’s offering, as a sanctified member of His body. Through smooth and flattering speech, these people deceive those who are unsuspecting and vulnerable.

Like Eve, we become vulnerable to these other spirits and other words, when we are disconnected from the Lord and from His people. However, we can be protected from the devices of Satan by remaining in fellowship with God and with our brethren in the body of Christ. This is what it means to be ‘in the name of the Lord’. King Solomon declared, ‘The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe [set on high]’.

The apostle John explained that if we walk in the light of God’s word, we will have fellowship with each other and with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Importantly, he taught that in this fellowship, we have access to the blood of Jesus which is able to cleanse us of sin. This means that we are delivered from the desire to live by any principle or spirit, other than the Spirit of life that is in Christ Jesus.

Daily prayer is central to our ongoing participation in this fellowship. As we continue in fellowship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit through prayer, we are able to walk according to the Spirit every day. We are able to live in the world without being vulnerable to the deception of Satan. That is, we are able to distinguish the will of God (which is our sanctification) from all the alternative options that are being offered to us.

References:

Rom 16:17-18 2Ti 4:3-4
Pro 18:10 2Pe 2:1-3
Rom 8:2

Further Study:

1 John 1

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 25

Sin entered through disobedience

Eve needed a word from outside of herself to recognise her transgression and the disastrous effect it was actually having on her and on others. In this regard, if Adam had not sinned, he could have helped Eve, to recover her from her transgression. Together, they could have sought the Lord for wisdom concerning Eve's restoration. With this in mind, we note the instruction of Paul, who wrote, 'Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass [wilful transgression], you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted'.

Clearly, Adam did not 'consider himself' when Eve approached him in her transgression. Instead, he succumbed to the temptation of having life apart from God. In contrast to Eve, Adam was not deceived at this point. He knew what God had said. However, he chose the romantic option Eve offered to him, rather than his own sanctified relationship with the Lord. Adam was disobedient to the word of God. Through his disobedience, the eyes of both Adam and Eve were opened. As Paul noted, through Adam's disobedience 'sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned'.

The most fundamental definition of 'sin' is 'to miss the mark'. By eating the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil, the desire to pursue and have life apart from God, became another law within Adam, Eve and all the sons and daughters of men who would be born after them. Living by this principle would only cause them to miss the mark of God's plan for them. However, more than just missing the mark, sin would become a governing principle, or power, that was operating within them, affecting the way they lived. It is for this reason that the Scriptures liken sin to something to which fallen men and women are enslaved. If they are not recovered to relationship with God, sin remains their master.

References:

Gal 6:1

Rom 5:12

Joh 8:34

1Ki 21:25

Eph 2:1-2

Further Study:**Daily Proverb:**

Romans 6

Proverbs 26

Sin is crouching at the door

Following the fall and their departure from the garden of Eden, Adam and Eve conceived and brought forth two sons – Cain and Abel. The Scriptures record that Abel became a keeper of sheep, while Cain became a tiller of the ground. This is not what God had intended Cain to become. It was Adam who had been called by God to order and tend the creation. As the firstborn, Cain's work should have been priesthood. However, through self-definition, Cain sought to make offering in the likeness of Adam's name and work. In Cain's mind, his identification as a ruler over the creation was confirmed by his successful cultivation of a harvest from the ground, which had been cursed.

Because Cain did not offer according to his name, God rejected him and his offering. This rejection caused Cain to become angry. God tried to encourage Cain by explaining to him that there was a way for Cain to be acceptable. God was giving Cain an opportunity to understand his sanctification. Cain could then make offering in a manner that was consistent with his name. However, Cain wanted to offer in his own way. This desire revealed the operation of the other law within him.

God continued by warning Cain, saying, 'Sin is crouching [ready to leap] at the door [of your heart, which has another law within it]; and its desire is for you, but you must master it'. The 'other law' was operating within Cain as he sought to define his own name and offering. The operation of the other law within him was the doorway for sin to gain an advantage in his life. To overcome sin, Cain would need to let go of the image that he had created for himself. The desire to maintain this image was motivated by the other law. Overcoming sin was possible if Cain humbled himself and found fellowship with his brother who was spiritual.

References:

Gen 2:15

Jas 1:15

Num 3:12

Heb 11:4

Rom 7:8-9

Further Study:

Genesis 4

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 27

The pathway of recovery

When Cain did go and speak to his brother, Abel, his desire to define his own life and basis for offering was stronger than his commitment to fellowship. His interaction with Abel was not based in love. Consequently, sin overtook him, resulting in the violent murder of his brother. It is likely that this was the first time that Cain had experienced these emotions of sin. He certainly had never seen anyone die. We can imagine that Cain was completely overwhelmed by what had happened. Although God punished Cain for the murder of his brother, He also gave Cain the opportunity to be recovered from his sinful state.

Sadly, for him, instead of remaining in the context where he could make offering and be recovered to fellowship with God and with his family, Cain departed from the presence of the Lord and settled in the land of Nod. He chose to pursue his own way. His children were called 'the sons of men' and became increasingly wicked.

From time to time, we all sin, even though we have been born of God. In fact, in the words of the apostle John, 'If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us'. The Scriptures also teach that a righteous person falls seven times, and rises again. Repentance and faith are the keys to rising again and continuing in first love. Repentance simply requires us to turn to the Lord and receive His word as it is ministered to us in the body of Christ. With this word comes the faith to believe what God is saying to us and to obey Him. This is how we walk in the light of the word. It is evident that we are walking in the light because we have fellowship with one another. In this fellowship, the blood is cleansing us from sin and giving us the capacity to offer in love.

References:

Gen 4:8, 16 2Co 3:16
Gen 6:5 Heb 12:16-17
Pro 24:16

Further Study:

2 Corinthians 7

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 28