



Restoring my Soul

HE RESTORES MY SOUL, HE LEADS ME IN PATHS

PSA 23:3

OCTOBER 2022

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A FIVE DAY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

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Yahweh fills all things

Before the creation of the heavens and the earth, there was only the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They were active and fully satisfied in Their fellowship, for They are the sum of all diversity and expression. There was no 'emptiness' or 'nothingness' outside of Yahweh; nor was there room for any other expression within Their fellowship. This is because Yahweh, who is 'I AM', fills everything. **Eph 1:22-23.**

From Their own covenant fellowship, *Elohim* Father, Son and Holy Spirit said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.' **Gen 1:26.** This declaration marked the beginning of the Everlasting Covenant. It was the initiative of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to create and bring to glory a multitude of sons who are born of Their life and are participants in Their fellowship. **Eph 2:10-11.** Their love was expressed through this initiative, because it was pure giving. They did not extend Their covenant life to a new creation because of any lack in Their fellowship.

The statement, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness,' encapsulates the dialogue of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit concerning the sonship predestination of every person who would ever live. The Scriptures identify *Elohim's* discussion as 'the counsel of the Lord', 'the whole counsel of God', and 'the counsel of His will'. **Psa 33:11. Act 20:27. Eph 1:11.**

From the Scriptures, we can identify two key aspects of God's counsel through which His covenant purpose is established and accomplished. The first is His knowledge of good and evil. This is the knowledge by which He creates all things. **Isa 45:6-7.** The second is the one Spirit and life of Yahweh, through which His righteousness and glory is expressed and multiplied. **Joh 6:63.**

The counsel of God's will

The entire covenant purpose of God was *finished* in Their fellowship discussion before the beginning of creation. We note, for example, that *Elohim* said of Himself, 'I am God, and there is none like Me, *declaring [or manifesting] the end from the beginning*, and from ancient times things that are not yet done.' **Isa 46:9-10**. For this reason, Paul explained that the Lord's 'works were *finished* from [before] the foundation of the world'. **Heb 4:3**. **1Pe 1:20**. They were conceived and finished in I AM before the beginning of the creation.

The counsel of God's will established the details of His *immutable* plan for the sons of God. **Heb 6:17-18**. The word 'immutable' means 'unchanging over time', or 'unable to be changed'. We see the principle of immutability in the life of a seed. In the natural creation, a seed follows a defined and invariable process in order to come to fruitful maturity. It begins with a figurative death as the seed falls into the ground and is buried. It then germinates, sprouts, and grows. This process takes time, and its sequence is unchangeable. Notably, Jesus said that the principle of the seed revealed 'the mysteries of the kingdom of God'. **Luk 8:9-10**.

When *Elohim's* Everlasting Covenant purpose was declared, a 'void' was established, or created, in the midst of Their fellowship. Through the establishment of this void, or context of offering, the Godhead made room in Themselves for the fulfilment of Their covenant purpose. Identifying this context, Moses wrote, 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was *without form, and void*; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.' **Gen 1:1-2**. We note that the establishment of this void was not the first day of creation.

The unfolding purpose of God

The void was the context in which the Everlasting Covenant of Yahweh, who is I AM, was finished. Significantly, the Holy Spirit was hovering over the waters of the void. This point focuses our attention on a key aspect of the unique offering of the Holy Spirit; that is, the sanctification of the Spirit. **Rom 15:15-16. 2Th 2:13. 1Pe 1:1-2.**

Through sanctification, the Holy Spirit separated the end (the Father's initiative) from the beginning (the Son's initiative). He did this by establishing time and space as the context in which *Elohim's* Covenant would come to pass, through an immutable, or timely and ordered, process. Describing this unfolding of God's finished work, *Elohim* said, through the prophet Isaiah, 'Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it.' **Isa 46:11.** Here is a key. The immutable purpose of God comes to pass, and fills the void, *through His proceeding word*. When the Holy Spirit proclaims the word of God, saying, 'Today', that which was finished in the counsel of God is called into existence, progressively being revealed in the void. **Heb 3:7-8. Rom 4:17.**

The second stage in the progressive manifestation of God's Everlasting Covenant was the seven days of creation. **Gen 2:1-3.** In the void, the creation was brought forth and multiplied *by the word of God*. For example, bringing to pass the first day of creation, '*God said, "Let there be light";* and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning *were the first day.*' **Gen 1:3-5.** Within this formative setting, man was created on the sixth day, and would multiply to become an innumerable company.

The creation of man

In contrast to the angels, and to all the living organisms of the earth who were created by '*Elohim*', Moses explained that it was '*Yahweh Elohim*' who created man. **Gen 1:3**. He formed man from the dust of the ground, creating his fully functional biological body. Then, in a second action, the Lord God breathed 'the breath of lives' into the nostrils of man and, by this means, man became a living being, or soul. **Gen 2:7**. The identification of *Yahweh Elohim* as the Creator of man signifies that man's life and expression is dependent upon his connection to the fellowship of headship, which is revealed by the name *Yahweh Elohim*.

Pertaining to this destiny, the Lord God placed Adam in the garden of Eden. **Gen 2:15**. The garden was the context from which God's covenant plan would continue to unfold, according to the times ordained by the Lord. The tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil were in the midst of the garden, revealing God's provision for the administration of His covenant purpose. **Gen 2:9**.

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil symbolises the creative initiative that belongs to the fellowship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The knowledge of good and evil belongs *only* to God. It belongs to His own mandate as the Creator. The Lord said of Himself, 'I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things.' **Isa 45:5-7**. The angels are sustained by the fruit of this tree, for they were created to facilitate and uphold the creation of God. Note that they do not initiate this creation but, rather, they are servants of the Lord and of His covenant purpose. **Psa 103:20-21**.

The multiplication of life

The tree of life symbolises the one Spirit and life that belongs to the fellowship of Yahweh, through which Their life is multiplied. Mankind's predestination was to *multiply* the life of God to the creation, through offering, in fellowship with Yahweh. The tree of life is the provision for this mandate. The fruit of the tree of life, which is the 'food' that belongs to Yahweh *Elohim* and to the sons of God, is light and life. **Joh 6:63. Eph 5:8-10.** Adam partook of this spiritual fruit through his daily fellowship with Yahweh, in the Spirit, at the tree of life. **Gen 3:8.** Through conversation with Yahweh, during this *agape* meal, he received grace and understanding regarding the works that belonged to his mandate as a son of God.

The Lord God blessed man, saying, '*Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it.*' **Gen 1:28.** Furthermore, He charged man with the work of naming all the animals, and with the responsibility to tend and keep the garden. **Gen 2:15,19.** The Hebrew word for 'keep' in this passage of Scripture literally means, 'to hedge about; to guard'. Of course, Adam had dominion over the whole creation. The only entity that he needed to guard against was Satan, who had fallen from heaven and was now walking about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. **1Pe 5:8.**

To prepare a helper who was comparable to man, the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam. He took a rib from Adam's side, with which He formed woman to be his helper. **Gen 2:18,21-23.** At this point, the woman was like a 'clone' of Adam, and was unable to bring forth children. According to God's immutable plan, the woman was predestined to be the vessel through which identities would be multiplied. However, there was a delay between her formation as 'woman', and the Lord's initiative to establish her as 'Eve', the mother of all living. **Gen 3:20.**

Further Study GENESIS 2

Not ignorant of his devices

In his second letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul indicated that we should not be ignorant of Satan's devices, lest he take advantage of us and rob us of our inheritance as sons of God. **2Co 2:10-11**. To understand the working of Satan, and how we overcome him, we must again direct our attention to the details of the fall of mankind.

In the first instance, it is apparent that Adam's insufficient application to the work of guarding the garden of Eden opened his marriage to the deception of Satan. Through Adam's disobedience, the woman was exposed to Satan's devices. Having gained access to the garden, Satan transformed his appearance to that of a seraph, or flying serpent. **Gen 3:1**. That is, he presented himself as 'an angel of light'. Paul revealed Satan's capacity to do this, saying, 'Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.' **2Co 11:13-15**. The Devil positioned himself in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. By implication, he claimed ownership, or possession, of this knowledge, communicating as though he had a *right* to speak from there.

The serpent addressed Eve, asking her, 'Has God [*Elohim*] indeed said, "You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"' **Gen 3:1**. The woman responded, saying, 'We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God [*Elohim*] has said, "You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die"' **Gen 3:2-3**.

We recall that it was 'Yahweh *Elohim*' who said that man was not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; it was not '*Elohim*'. **Gen 2:16-17**. Satan falsely declared that the Father's creative initiative was the expression of His own identity and life, apart from the fellowship of Yahweh. He challenged the reality that the fellowship of headship is the order of life through which mankind has their expression.

The failure to choose

When the woman gave ear to Satan's overtures, she, too, identified God, rather than the Lord God, as being the source of the command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. **Gen 3:2-3**. The woman's response indicated a lack of clarity and conviction regarding the fellowship of headship, and signalled that she was *yet to choose* this fellowship as the context and provision for the expression of her life.

As was the case for Adam, the woman's ambivalence to what God had chosen for her was manifest under the pressure that was brought to bear by the alternative way of life proposed by Satan. We note that Adam's choice was not whether or not to exercise dominion over the creation; it was whether he would believe and accept the call to be a son, and to reveal Christ and the Father, by the Spirit, through this work. **1Co 1:9**. Likewise, the woman's choice was not whether or not to be the vessel of multiplication but, rather, whether she would accept her call to be a son of God and, by the Spirit, reveal her husband, as his helper. In doing so, she would reveal Christ and the Father. **2Ti 1:9**.

Satan said to the woman, 'You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and *you will be like God*, knowing good and evil.' **Gen 3:4-5**. Of course, this was a lie. However, it is important to understand the nature of Satan's lie. Having positioned himself in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Satan *drew from the void* to offer alternative possibilities for the expression of the woman's life. He proposed that these alternatives could be realised by the woman through her possession of the knowledge of good and evil.

Satan's fatherhood

Jesus described the nature of Satan's fatherhood by saying, 'When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.' **Joh 8:44**. The point is, *Satan cannot father anything in anyone*. Rather, he fathers, or generates, alternative possibilities *from the void*, with which he tempts mankind. These are alternatives to the immutable will of God, through which the righteousness of God is being progressively and increasingly revealed in the void. A person is drawn away by the desires that are aroused within them as they give heed to Satan's lies. **Jas 1:14**.

Satan himself drew from the void to define a destiny for himself. This presumption was motivated by envy. He said in his heart, 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, *I will be like the Most High*.' **Isa 14:13-14**.

Eve was receptive to Satan's lie because of her tenuous connection to the fellowship of headship, indicating that she was yet to apprehend the faith that comes by hearing the immutable word of Yahweh. **Rom 10:17. 2Co 4:13**. The Lord God had already declared that Adam and Eve were to be fruitful and multiply, but she was barren. The season of delay between the proclamation of the word and its fulfilment, 'at the right time', was a trial of faith for Eve. **Rom 5:6**. The word of the Lord was testing her until it came to pass according to the immutable purpose of God. **Psa 105:19**. Satan was able to exploit the woman's lack of clarity and conviction concerning God's will for her life. Drawing from the void, Satan proposed that, through the knowledge of good and evil, the woman could become like God; that is, *she could become the origin of multiplication*.

Bewitched by Satan

As Eve gave her ear to Satan's lie that she could be like God the Father, she began to desire His capacity to be the source of life. The desire to have something that belongs to another person is the definition of *envy*. It is based on a perceived lack in oneself. Eve's envy demonstrated that Satan's lie, which he had drawn from the void, *was becoming a void within her*. She desired to fill the void with the life and capacity of God the Father, which she coveted, but could never obtain. How did this happen?

The Scriptures recorded, 'So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.'
Gen 3:6.

Having heeded Satan's word, the woman began to see the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil from a different perspective. For almost four thousand years prior to this encounter, the fruit had not been appealing to the couple. In fact, Adam and Eve had viewed the fruit as being dangerous. The woman knew that she was not even to *touch* this food. **Gen 3:3.** Now, however, it had become beautiful in her sight; that is, she saw that it was good for food.

The term, 'pleasant to the eyes,' means that the fruit became an object of desire. Significantly, the Hebrew word that is translated as 'pleasant' in this passage means 'a longing,' and by implication 'a charm'. Once Eve's perspective became deluded, the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil became a spiritual 'charm' that Satan used, *through enchantment*, to provoke the desire within her for this food. By this means, the woman was 'bewitched' by Satan.
Gal 3:1-2. 2Co 11:3-4.

Desire conceived

Once Eve was deceived, the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil became a spiritual 'charm' that Satan used, *through enchantment*, to provoke desire within her. She began to view the fruit as 'desirable to make her wise'. The Hebrew word that is translated as 'desirable', in this instance, means 'to take pleasure in, to desire, to lust, to covet, to be desirable, to desire passionately'.

At this point, the lie that Satan had propagated from the void and had proposed to the woman, *became a void within her*. She coveted the wisdom that belongs to God, desiring to multiply identities and to cultivate life in her own image. Evidently, desire had been conceived in her, giving birth to sin as she took and ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Significantly, another law, or principle, of life was established within the woman's heart as a consequence of eating the forbidden fruit. **Rom 7:23**. Not only was she driven to be like God the Father, but she also directed this desire towards her husband. Now, through her speech and conduct, she endeavoured to use her knowledge of good and evil as an enchantment to solicit others to serve her agenda. As the Scripture recounts, 'She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.' **Gen 3:6**.

Driven by covetousness, and having taken and eaten of the fruit, the man and the woman transgressed God's Royal Law, which declares, 'You shall not covet' and 'You shall not steal'. **Exo 20:15,17**. Consequently, they began to die. **Gen 2:16-17**.

The apostle James summarised this process, writing, 'But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed [deluded; allured, beguiled]. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.' **Jas 1:14-16**.

Desire for her husband

Adam and Eve were drawn away by another word sourced from Satan, which aroused desire within them and beguiled them. Desire was conceived within them as they began to covet what belongs to God's mandate and capacity. This sin was fully manifest when, motivated by covetousness, they endeavoured to lay hold of, and to exercise, the knowledge of good and evil. In doing so, they transgressed God's Law, and received the wages of sin, which is death.

Rom 6:23.

Explaining the implications of eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the Lord God said to the woman, 'I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.' **Gen 3:16.** We note in this passage that the Lord God distinguished between the multiplication of the woman's sorrow, and the pain associated with bringing forth children. The sorrow that was greatly multiplied under the curse of sin includes the anxiety and depression that is associated with a woman's romantic endeavours to cultivate life in her image and likeness. This sorrow is distinct from the pain of childbirth.

We recall that the woman viewed the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as being '*desirable* to make one wise'. **Gen 3:6.** Significantly, when the Lord said to the woman, 'Your *desire* shall be for your husband', He used *a different word*. It means 'to stretch out after; or a longing'. It is a desire that is motivated by envy and a sense of loss. The Lord's statement reveals that the woman's desire, or longing, which is directed towards her husband, is the fruit of Satan's lie. Because a lie has no substance, the drive within her to be like God is a vacuum, or 'black hole', which can never be satisfied. Fearing being lost to this black hole of identity obscurity, the woman is driven to control her environment.

Further Study 1 CORINTHIANS 11

The void in men and women

Following the Fall, the Lord said to the woman, 'Your desire shall be for your husband.' **Gen 3:16**. A woman's 'desire for her husband' is a yearning for him to provide, or to be, for her, what she needs for identity verification. This was exemplified in the demand that Rachel made of Jacob, saying, 'Give me children, or else I die!' **Gen 30:1**. This desire, driven by envy, is a powerful imposition upon others. Describing the power of envy, King Solomon noted, 'Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?' **Pro 27:4**.

This same void was established in the hearts of men when Adam ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. However, the Lord explained that a man's desire would be expressed differently from a woman's desire. Reflecting the purpose for his creation, fallen man is driven by the desire for identity verification, through the exercise of dominion over his life and over others. The Lord said to the woman, 'He shall rule [have dominion] over you.' **Gen 3:16**. He does this through the subordination of others or through empowerment by association with those who possess the authority, capacity, or charisma that he covets for himself.

The Lord said to Adam that, because he heeded the voice of his wife and disobeyed His command, the ground would be cursed for his sake. Specifically, the Lord declared, 'Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.' **Gen 3:17-19**.

The cares of the world

The thorns and thistles that a man experiences in the context of his life and work refer to the incidents and interactions that *frustrate* his endeavours for dominion and rulership over his life and over others. This frustration typically produces anger in a man. He reacts in this manner either to take dominion over something that is challenging his authority or because of the loss of authority and dominion. This anger, or wrath, can be explosive or internalised, resulting in the vengeful isolation of oneself or others in a family, in the church, and in other social settings.

Psychological distress is another common effect of thorns and thistles in the life and work of a man who lives by the other law. **1Ti 6:9-10**. Under pressure, many men pursue all manner of sensual enchantments in an attempt to escape the torment that they are experiencing. These endeavours reveal only that they are in bondage to the law of sin. **Rom 7:23**.

Notably, Jesus described thorny ground as ‘the *cares of this world* and the deceitfulness of riches’ which choke the word in a person’s heart so that it becomes unfruitful. **Mat 13:22**. Paul taught that this principle equally applies in the context of marriage, writing, ‘But I want you to be without care. He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord – how he may please the Lord. But he who is married *cares about the things of the world* – how he may please his wife ... she who is married *cares about the things of the world* – how she may please her husband’. **1Co 7:32-34**.

Paul was not saying that marriage is undesirable or that it is better if Christians do not marry. Rather, he was drawing attention to the fruitless culture in marriages that are not reformed in the cross of Christ. These marriages operate by the principles of the world which were established in the fall of mankind.

Further Study 1 CORINTHIANS 7

A fallen marriage

A man who is married and cares about the things of the world has turned his face from the headship of Christ, which is expressed by the word from Christ, through the presbytery. He either endeavours to uphold and serve the romantic culture that his wife aspires to cultivate in her own image or he is provoked in reaction against the obligations that she places upon him. **1Co 7:33**. Either way, the direction for his life and the family is driven by his responses to his wife; it is not sourced from the word of the Lord. **1Co 11:3**.

A woman who is married and cares about the things of the world is focused on cultivating a romantic, or ideal, family context according to her own perspective. **1Co 7:34**. Motivated by the other law within her, the woman imposes this desire upon her husband and family as being 'the best thing for him and the family'. It comes from her, and not from the fellowship of headship, through offering.

Romance in a marriage relationship that is based on the expression of these desires is *uncleanness*. This is because it provokes jealousy and envy within, and beyond, the relationship, resulting in the emotions, or passions, of sin. **1Co 3:3**. Because of this uncleanness, this marriage and family will be unavoidably oppressed by unclean spirits, as they continue to live by the desires fathered within them through Satan's lies.

Unless a couple is engaged in a process through which they are being cleansed, the dynamics of sorcery, manifesting as seduction and domination, will be apparent in their marriage. That is, a Christian couple must be delivered from their conversation at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, to a conversation at the tree of life. **Eph 4:29**.

Recovery at the tree of life

The emotions of sin that arise in a marriage relationship are the evidence that one, or both, of the spouses is endeavouring to be known through the expression of their fallen desire, or envy. The apostle James wrote, 'What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?' **Jas 4:1**. It is important to recognise that this way of living is under the judgement of God. This judgement belongs to His jealous love. **Deu 4:24**. His jealousy is expressed from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. By implication, a couple will remain under the curse of sin and the judgement of God, while ever their interactions continue to be informed by their knowledge of good and evil. **Mal 3:9**.

A spiritual couple recognise the fallen desires within themselves and within their relationship. As emotions arise over a particular issue, they are able to stop; to take heed to themselves; and to acknowledge the contention for what it is. In doing so, they can 'draw a line' under the matter, forget it, and move on with the works that belong to the day. In fact, this conversation is how a spiritual couple commences their day. **Pro 15:4**. Practically, they communicate with one another regarding the works that belong to their sonship as part of the household. Moreover, they consider how to walk in the love of God, 'today', fulfilling the will of God as they avail themselves of the remnant of the Spirit that belongs to their marriage covenant. **Mal 2:15. Mic 6:8**. *Agape* at the tree of life is the source of their romance, for it is based in their appreciation of each other as they each lay down their life to reveal the other, by the capacity of love that the Spirit pours into their heart. **Rom 5:5**.

Further Study PROVERBS 3

Remaining at the tree of life

When we were born again as sons of God, and baptised into Christ, we were delivered from slavery to sin, and were raised and seated in heavenly places with Christ and with the other members of His corporate body. **Eph 2:4-6. Rom 6:17-18.** As citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, we have the right to participate in the *agape* meal of the Father's house. The food for this meal is the fruit of the tree of life which is in the midst of the heavenly city. **Rev 22:14.**

The tree of life was manifest to the whole world when Jesus was crucified on the cross. **1Co 1:23-24. Pro 3:18.** The fruit of the tree of life, which is Christ's body and blood, is fed to us by the Spirit through the ministry of the members of His body. Eating this food joins us to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. **1Co 10:16. Php 3:10-11.** In this fellowship, we are being progressively delivered from the other law, and are being cleansed from our sin. Moreover, we are fulfilling the works that belong to our predestination as a son of God.

Nevertheless, the apostle Peter exhorted us to be sober and vigilant, warning, 'Your adversary the Devil walks about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.' **1Pe 5:8.** The implication, of course, is that it is possible to spurn our participation in the Lord's love feast, and to return to the way of life that belongs to the sons of disobedience. Significantly, the apostle Paul said that Satan is at work in the sons of disobedience. **Eph 2:1-3.** When Satan is at work in a person, their conduct is driven by the desires of their flesh and of their mind. **Eph 2:3. Isa 4:1.**

The working of Satan

A person in whom Satan is at work is not only driven by the desires of the flesh; but, also, the way in which they *relate with others* will be according to the working of Satan. Seeking to engage others for the purpose of satisfying their self-centred desires, they will instinctively employ the techniques that Satan used to gain advantage over mankind. In other words, sorcery and other demonically-inspired practices will be the means by which they relate with others, including in their marriage and household.

This principle is epitomised by Antichrist, the ruler of the eighth world kingdom in the time of the end. Highlighting this point, Paul taught, 'The coming of the lawless one is *according to the working of Satan*, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish.' **2Th 2:9-10**. From this passage, we understand that the exercise of power, the use of signs, lying wonders, and unrighteous deception are the workings of Satan. They describe, therefore, the techniques of sorcery that are employed by those who choose to walk after the flesh, rather than according to the Spirit. **Rom 8:1,5-6**.

The apostle Paul exhorted the lampstand church in Rome to be established according to the gospel that he had declared to them. **Rom 16:25-26**. Specifically, he exhorted the believers to note and to avoid those who caused divisions and offences in the church, through cultural practices that were contrary to the doctrine that he taught. **Rom 16:17**. He noted that those who behave in this way do not serve Jesus Christ, but, rather, serve their own belly. They *deceive* the hearts of the simple 'by smooth words and flattering speech'. **Rom 16:18**. Paul was drawing attention to the sorcerous, enchanting communication of those who are, by implication, messengers of Satan.

Crushing Satan

The apostle Paul wrote to the Romans, 'I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil. And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.' **Rom 16:19-20**. Through obedience to this command from Paul, the believers in Rome would have participated in the fulfilment of God's judgement upon Satan, which was proclaimed following the fall of mankind.

At that time, the Lord God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.' **Gen 3:14-15**. It is noteworthy that the very first prophetic statement of the Scriptures was directed toward Satan, proclaiming his demise.

'The seed of the serpent' refers to everyone who continues to live by the principles of the flesh, under the dominion of Satan. Paul described Satan as 'the god of this world,' and he was identified by Jesus as 'the ruler of this world.' **2Co 4:3-4. Joh 14:30**. Accordingly, his seed are of 'the spirit of the world.' **1Co 2:12**. In contrast, the Seed of the woman is, first, Christ. Her children are also the sons of God who are in Christ. We know this because Paul said that the God of peace will *crush Satan under our feet*. **Rom 16:20**.

We 'crush Satan under our feet' as we are delivered from the fallen way of life that he fathered in mankind through deceit and sorcery. **Gal 1:3-5**. Repentance and faith in response to the word of the cross are fundamental to this deliverance and to overcoming Satan. **Act 20:20-21**. In the light of the word, we are able to see and renounce our fallen fleshly practices, and to grow in our capacity for *agape* fellowship as sons of God.

The source of idolatry

The knowledge of good and evil belongs to the Lord God, alone. This is the knowledge by which He creates all things. **Isa 45:6-7**. We were created in His image and likeness through this knowledge. Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in an endeavour to 'be like God'. **Gen 3:5**. That is, they desired to create for themselves a life and destiny in their own image and likeness.

Adam and Eve rejected Yahweh *Elohim* and His predestination for their lives when they chose to become the origin of their own life and expression. However, instead of obtaining the capacity for creation when they ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Adam and Eve's eyes were opened, and they knew that they were naked. **Gen 3:7**. Their 'nakedness' was not just the absence of clothing. It means that they each lost the mandate for life and expression that belonged to their name as a son of God in fellowship with Yahweh.

Adam and Eve's first response to the realisation of their nakedness was to sew fig leaves together as garments to cover their nakedness. **Gen 3:7**. This represented an attempt to 'tailor' a name, or expression, for themselves. Their 'clothing' was a projection of their self-defined image, which was sourced in what they viewed as being good or evil for themselves. **Pro 14:12. Isa 29:16**. Significantly, clothing themselves in this manner revealed their idolatry.

Idolatry means that we are replacing God with a projected image of ourselves that we *create and worship*. This image is our own idea of what it would be like to be a creator. **Gen 3:5**. In this regard, the idol that a person creates and worships is really a reflection of who they want to be and the life that they want to live. This is the desire of their heart. **Pro 30:12**. It is a rejection of the life and sonship expression that God the Father has predestined for them.

Further Study ISAIAH 45

Idolatry is iniquity

The Scriptures teach us that idolatry is iniquity. **Eze 14:4-5.** *Iniquity* means that we are living and walking according to our way. Making this point, Isaiah the prophet declared, 'All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.' **Isa 53:6.** *Turning to our own way* means that we are walking according to the dictates of our own heart and by the sight of our own eyes. **Jer 18:12. Pro 21:2.** We prove to be *stubborn* when we insist upon our own way, despite hearing the word of the cross which reveals our iniquity and proclaims the works of obedience that belong to our sonship. It is notable that Samuel addressed the disobedience of King Saul by saying, 'Stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry'. **1Sa 15:23.**

The most overt expressions of idolatry in the Scriptures are the worship of crafted images representing deities that, supposedly, bestow particular blessings upon their followers. In our Western society, we do not tend to worship deified effigies. However, we do bestow worth, through attention and time, to practices that we believe will give us life. Moreover, we idolise those who exemplify the life and expression that we covet.

The most insidious forms of idolatry are the religious practices that we presume belong to the Father's house, but are, in fact, motivated by our fallen desires. For example, the Lord described the worship of Jesus by women who persistently reject the process for deliverance from their romantic expectations of life, as being the abominable practice of weeping for Tammuz. **Eze 8:14.**

In all cases, choosing iniquity and idolatry is a rejection of God's fatherhood toward us. Living this way brings us under the fatherhood of Satan. By continuing to presume upon the right to create a life and expression for ourselves according to our knowledge of good and evil, we remain under his dominion. Ultimately, the worship of idols is the worship of Satan himself.



Restoring
my Soul