

Fear God and Keep His Commandments

- *The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. 2 "Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher; "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." 3 What profit has a man from all his labor In which he toils under the sun? Eccl 1:1-3*
- The rest of the book is spent answering this “?”
- He explores every facet of life then concludes:
- *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is the whole duty of man. 14 For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil. Eccl 12:13-14*

Keep His Commandments

- *And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to keep the commandments of the Lord and His statutes which I command you today for your good? Deut 10:12-13*
- *And the Lord commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is this day. Deut. 6:24*
- The reason we keep His commands ... It is for our good always... He loves us... wants what is best for us ... looks out for our eternal welfare.

The Blessing and the Curse

- *"Therefore you shall love the Lord your God, and keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments always. Deut. 11:1*
- *"Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: 27 the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you today; 28 and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today Deut. 11:26-28*

The Powerful Reason

- *Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but 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.” Gen. 2:16*
- God gave them everything. He held back nothing. (Gen. 1:1-31)
- The only purpose for withholding this one fruit of one tree ... give them the opportunity to show their trust and love for Him.

Command Had a Purpose

- Each time they saw that tree, both its name, and punishment were to reverberate in their mind.
- We can't eat from that tree because God commanded us not to.
- It is a tree that brings death.
- Their proper response to that tree reflected trust, fear and devotion and reverence to God.
- A simple command with dire consequences.
- Designed to harden into a conviction that would lead them to avoid and fear it.
- As long as they did that they loved & trusted God

Creating Doubt

- The subtle serpent waited for the right moment.
- He took a direct attack, knowing that victory required she lose her trust and respect for God
- *“Has God **indeed** said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden’?”*
- *“Indeed” translated from two Hebrew words.*
- *Did God **actually** say* ESV;
- *Did God **really** say* NIV;
- ***Can it really be** that God has said* AMP.

Doubting the Command's Goodness

- Satan sought an emotional response by wording it this way.
- He wanted to create an emotion of surprise or doubt in Eve's mind that would make it easier to remove her conviction about God's command and thus lead her to violate it.
- He pretended to have her best interest at heart
- But the real intent of this "lie" was to murder her.
- Satan did not care about Adam and Eve

Satan Directly Contradicted God

- *You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. John 8:44-45*
- Satan accused God of being a liar.
- *You will **not** surely die!*
- But the devil was the liar.
- Every time we are tempted to break God's command ... It is never in our best interest!
- It will always bring a curse because what God wants is in our best interests and if we violate it it will always be harmful, destructive and bring a curse.

Once Doubt is Created ... it is Easy

- Satan sought to make Eve believe that God did not have their best interests in His heart.
- *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. Jn. 8:44; Gen. 3:4-6*
- At any moment when any of God's servants in any dispensation are led here tragedy follows.

Eve's Outlook Changed

- She no longer saw it as bringing death.
- she now saw *a tree desirable to make one wise*.
- It only took this change of perspective to lead her to violate God's warning and bring about her own destruction.
- This is what Satan and all who follow Satan are doing even in our own day.
- The only way they can harm God's chosen people is to get us to see any of God's commands as holding us back from something we deserve in order to be happy or fulfilled.

It Can Happen To Anyone

- *But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity in Christ. 2Cor. 11:3-4*
- What we can easily see in Eve, we must learn to detect in ourselves.
- Gravest temptations come when our need or desire we have leads us to see God's commands as the problem.
- Every command of God is actually holding us back from our own destruction!

Love = Keeping Commands

- It was God's love that gave the commands.
- It is our love and respect that creates submission, obedience and desire to fully obey.
- *21 If you love Me, keep My commandments.*
- *15 He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me.*
- *10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.*
- *John 14:15 , 21; 15:10*
- It is imperative that we understand the connection between God's love in giving the command and our love and obedience in keeping them

Love and Trust: Hand in Hand

- *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil. Pr. 3:5-7*
- If we trust God, we will do what He says,
- if we add to or take from what He says,
- we are no longer trusting in the Lord with all our heart, but leaning on our own understanding. Leaning on our own understanding will always bring a curse because God wants what is best ... If we disobey him we only harm ourselves.

No Command Holds us Back...

- ... from something good
- *The Lord commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive. Deut. 6:24)*
- Every command of God only hold us back from something harmful and destructive.
- This is why we must “*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding. (Pr. 3:5).*”

Nothing Has Changed Since Eden

- Satan still tries to convince us we can have more if we add or set aside God's commands
- God still wants us to fully trust and obey.
- God alone sees all future consequences
- We see short term blessings
- God sees the weeping and gnashing teeth in bitter sorrow.
- God is love. He only has our best interests.
- Only if we fully trust God and keep all His commandments can we be safe.

The Great Danger

- When we become convinced we can do what God has plainly warned us not to do, and we set it aside, there can only be one outcome:
- *“Do not add to His words, Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar. (Pr. 30:6)*

What About us?

- Is there a command holding us back?
- Everyone has something they want to set aside.
- Never forget Balak's scathing and lying words to Balaam that clearly mirror Satan's in the garden:
- *"I said I would greatly honor you, but in fact, the Lord has kept you back from honor." (Num 24:11).*
- God would never do that, but multitudes today who read the Scriptures have fallen for that lie.