

# We Choose to Live from our Knowledge of Good and Evil

[extract]

“...we fail to abide in love because we choose to live from our knowledge of good and evil. This...is why the Bible depicts the origin of our separation from God as eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, which was in the middle of the garden (Gen. 3:1-9).

Consider, why was the fruit of the forbidden tree a fruit that was said to give the knowledge of good as well as evil? Isn't the "knowledge of good" a good thing? Aren't we Christians supposed to be promoting "the knowledge of good"? Isn't following God all about increasing our "knowledge of good and evil" so we can side with "the good" and resist "the evil"? And yet, whether it fits our preconceptions or not, in the Genesis narrative the nature of the sin that separates us from God is said to be the "knowledge of good and evil."

What is it about eating fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil that warrants its depiction in Scripture as the source of original sin? How does living with our knowledge of good and evil separate us from God? These questions are rarely asked and even more rarely investigated with any thoroughness. It is largely for this reason...that the church has failed so miserably at loving the way Christ commands us to love.

We have failed to understand and internalize the biblical teaching that our fundamental sin is not our evil – as though the solution for sin was to become good – but our getting life from what we believe is our knowledge of good and evil. Our fundamental sin is that we place ourselves in the position of God and divide the world between what we judge to be good and what we judge to be evil. And this judgment is the primary thing that keeps us from doing the central thing God created and saved us to do, namely, love like he loves.

Because we do not usually understand and internalize the nature of our foundational sin, we usually think our job as Christians is to embrace a moral system, live by it, and thus to be good people in contrast to all those who are evil. In fact...God's goal for us is much more profound and much more beautiful than merely being good: it is to do the will of God by being loving, just as God is loving. More specifically...that God's goal for us is to discover a relationship with him and thereby a relationship with ourselves and others that returns us to a state where we don't live by our knowledge of good and evil. Indeed, the goal is nothing less than for us to participate in the very love that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit share throughout eternity.

Walking in obedience to God, we are still to detect good and evil, of course. Living in love in no way implies moral relativism...there are selective contexts in which it is appropriate and necessary to share with others and even confront others with our detection of the impact of evil in their lives. But we are not to derive any worth from our detection of good and evil. Nor are we to draw conclusions about people on the basis of it. We are to derive worth from God alone and to love without judgment and without conditions on the basis of the unsurpassable fullness of life we get from God. Our only job is to love, not judge.

As we do this, the love that God eternally abides in us, and the world sees it and is drawn to it. Whatever good we need to do and whatever evil we need to avoid is done as a result of this. The goal of this work is to help us all move toward and eventually live in this place.”<sup>1</sup>

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1 - Gregory A. Boyd (2004), “Repenting of Religion: Turning from Judgment to the Love of God”, Baker Books: Michigan p:16-18