

LOVE THAT PASSES KNOWLEDGE

Lesson 1 - Mankind Acquires Knowledge



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Lesson One – Mankind Acquires Knowledge

Tell the group: We are about to undertake a study of knowledge and love – man's acquisition of knowledge, God's love in the presence of man's knowledge, and the love we should exhibit.

Let us start at the beginning of man's history:

Genesis 2:19-20 Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field.....

When one considers the number of different animals, we must conclude that Adam had a great amount of knowledge and intelligence to be able to name each of them. In fact, his level of knowledge and intelligence was such that he was able to communicate with the Father directly. In addition, he was free from sin allowing access to the Father:

Genesis 3: 8-9 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD GOD called to the man, "Where are you?"

But their knowledge was limited:

Genesis 2:25 The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

Ask the group: What does this verse tell us about Adam and Eve's knowledge level?

Answer: It tells us that they had no awareness of any wrong associated with their state of nudity. They were innocent like a little baby before the baby "learns" modesty from its parents.

Adam and Eve had free reign to everything in the garden except one tree.

*Genesis 2:17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it **you will surely die.**"*

The tree's name was Knowledge. That's amazing considering that Adam had to be much smarter than any man living today. This wasn't just any kind of tree of knowledge. It was the knowledge of good and evil.

Ask the group: What did God mean by "die"?

Answer: Two things 1) Separation from the presence of God, 2) physical death.

Then the serpent appeared on the scene and talked with Eve. Let's look at the conversation between the serpent and Eve:

Genesis 3:1-7 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did

say, `You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'" **"You will not surely die,"** the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat of it, that **your eyes will be opened and you will be like God knowing good and evil.**" When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, **and they realized they were naked;** so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

The serpent spoke three things that tempted the woman.

- 1) "You will not surely die." This was a direct contradiction to what God had said. It was a lie.
- 2) "your eyes will be opened". This was the truth. The "natural eyes" of man were opened – closing the eyes of the "spirit" – "and they realized they were naked"
- 3) "you will be like God, knowing good and evil". This, too, was true. But the consequences were different than Eve expected. It resulted in Adam and Eve being cast out of the Garden of Eden.

Genesis 3:22-24 And the LORD God said, "**The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.**" So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

Ask the group: What did God mean when he said, "The man has now become like one of us"?

Answer: That Adam and Eve had become "gods" (note the small letter "g"). They had become little gods. Being a little god is not a good thing; it brings the judgment of God. As we judge, God allows the same judgments to come on us.

Psalm 82:1 God presides in the great assembly; he gives judgment among the "gods":

Matthew 7:1-5 "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. **For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.** "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

Ask the group: Is all knowledge bad?

Answer: No. Knowledge itself is not a bad thing. The Word of God calls us to get knowledge.

Hosea 4:6 my people are destroyed from **lack of knowledge.**

*Joshua 1:8 Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. **Then you will be prosperous and successful.***

*Ephesians 1:15-20 For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may **give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.** I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,*

The Word declares that Jesus walked in the Spirit of knowledge:

Isaiah 11:1-5 A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him-- the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD-- and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

Ask the group: If knowledge is not, in itself, a bad thing, why did God feel it was necessary to put Adam and Eve out of the Garden?

Answer: Because He didn't want them to live in the condition that came upon them by eating of knowledge of good and evil. Let's look and see the fruit of this tree in man's life. Many call this the tree of religion, bringing a counterfeit to true Christianity or a true walk with God. It is a tree, that when eaten, becomes "the god" of man causing man to act as a little god. Knowledge becomes a god to man rather than God telling man how to think and what to do, rather than man being led by the Spirit of God;. Let's look and see how this fall came about.

Lust or covetousness is involved from the beginning – the drawing out of the flesh rather than the Spirit. Lust and covetousness is not the right tree.

*Genesis 3:6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was **good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom,** she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.*

When their eyes were opened, they knew something. They gained knowledge of good and evil – knowledge that they were naked.

*Genesis 3:7 Then the **eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; ...***

Now, because of knowledge that awakened the flesh or brought the flesh to the surface, men judged themselves. For the first time, man judged himself after the flesh, and then he tried to cover his sin.

*Genesis 3:7 ... so they sewed fig leaves together and **made coverings for themselves.***

Judgment and trying to cover up is not the right tree.

Then God comes walking through the garden, and man runs and hides in fear from God's Presence. This is the first time that man experiences fear. Fear is not the right tree.

*Genesis 3:8-10 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and **I was afraid** because I was naked; so I hid."*

When God asked Adam how he had this flesh knowledge, the knowledge of good and evil, he blamed the woman, and then the woman blamed the serpent. Not willing to take responsibility and blaming others for our sins, is not the right tree.

Let's take a look at the fruit line-up of this tree called Knowledge of good and evil.

1. Covetousness – desire for positions that don't belong to us. "You will be like God."
2. Lust – appeals and draws the flesh.
3. Knowledge about the flesh.
4. Judgment of the flesh.
5. Covering up, or self-provision of the flesh.
6. Fear – causing our flesh to believe that it can hide from God.
7. Blame others for sin and troubles.

This is what we mean by the sin nature of man. As a result of this single act of disobedience, these seven "evil" attributes arise in mankind. No wonder God put man out of the garden.

*Genesis 3:22 And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. **He must not be allowed** to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and **eat, and live forever.**"*

Ask the group: But it appears that the damage was already done. Why was God concerned about Adam and Eve eating from the tree of life?

Answer: Because this act of disobedience created this sin nature. This sin nature could not exist in the presence of God. If Adam and Eve ate of the tree of life, they would have established this sin nature for eternity, and they would never have been able to again be in the presence of God. A born-again process was needed to reestablish that fellowship. That process was a part of God's plan – His Son Jesus.

Next Week: We will look at God's reaction to man's acquisition of knowledge of good and evil.