

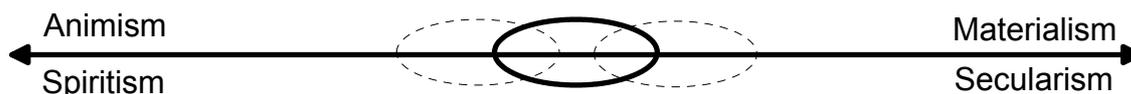
Genesis 3:1-13

*"Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?'" And the woman said to the serpent, "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.'" And the serpent said to the woman, "You surely shall 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.**" When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of Thee in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself." And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" And the man said, "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." "*

To properly understand the struggle we face and the warfare in which we are involved we need to understand the Biblical view of the universe and its associated spiritual dimensions. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 . . .

*"For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but **at the things which are not seen**; for the things which are seen are temporal, **but the things which are not seen are eternal.**"*

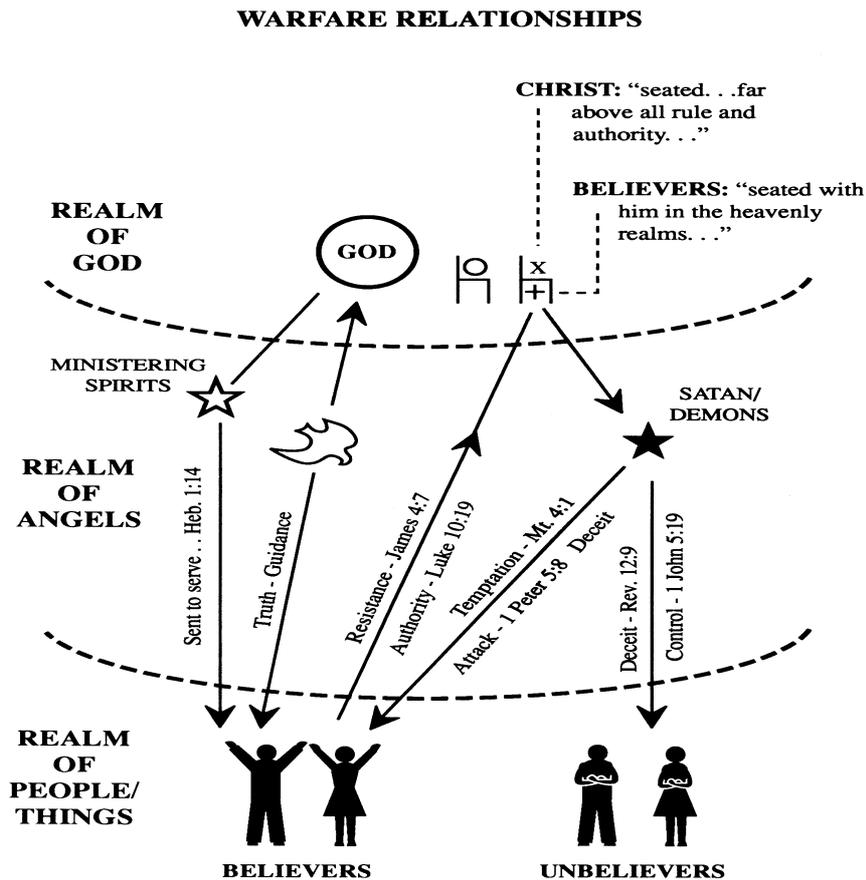
The spiritual world which we cannot see is in fact eternal while the physical universe in which we live is transient and will one day disappear. A 'world view' is a perception of everything that exists in both a material and immaterial form. Some world views do not include any spiritual element at all, others are heavily spiritualistic. Only that revealed by Scripture is accurate.



The line above illustrates, in simple form, the variation of world view from people with animistic views on the extreme left through to people with a secular/materialistic view on the extreme right.

We must understand the existence of this spiritual dimension to life and live out the reality of all its implications. Satan has for too long sold us the lie that there is no spiritual dimension and that our destiny is in our own hands not that of the Creator. Only God’s Word gives us a true perspective on both the material and immaterial dimensions to all that exists. It is this Biblical World View we need to understand. If our world view is lacking in some respect then our understanding of life and the issues we face will be flawed.

Dr Timothy Warner in his manual on Resolving Spiritual Conflicts uses the illustration below.



With a Biblical world view firmly in our minds we can begin to understand the issues illustrated by the Two Trees in the Garden of Eden and the choices which Eve and Adam made.

The issue of dependent or independent life was a choice not just made by Adam but one which we face day by day in relation to the issue of our standing before God and in choosing the source of that which meets our everyday needs.

Many of us come to God acknowledging our spiritual poverty and need of Christ’s work on the cross for our salvation. We then live our everyday lives with a world view, which excludes the supernatural, independently of God and drawing most our resources from human and earthly reason.

Two Trees

The two trees were literal trees with literal fruit, after all Adam and Eve both ate the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge and possibly even from the Tree of Life. We find a fuller description of the Tree of Life in the Book of Revelation.

“And he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. And on either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”

Revelation 22:1-2

The Tree of Life was and will be an extraordinary tree unlike anything we know today. In the Kingdom it will bear twelve different fruits on the same tree, fruiting twelve times in the year. It will also have leaves with the ability to heal the nations. We don't know whether the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden was to be eaten on an ongoing basis, as is implied in the passage from the Book of the Revelation above. If this were so then Adam may have been eating from that tree. In either case banishment from the Garden cut him off from its life sustaining fruit.

The Significance of the Trees

On another level the trees symbolise two principles of living. The first, the Tree of Life, symbolises a dependent relationship with God as the source of all things and Him in control. The Tree of Knowledge, symbolises independent life with human resources as the source of all things and man in control. The Tree of Life points us to God, the Tree of Knowledge points us towards Satan.

From the beginning Satan has attempted to sell the lie that, “We can achieve our full potential apart from a relationship with the Creator.” Ultimately all our choices for salvation and in living our day to day lives are between these two sources; Life or Knowledge, God or Satan.

The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil

Each of the trees represents a principle of life by which we live. To eat from one of the trees implies that we act with that tree, and all it stands for, as the source of our action.

The underlying principle involved in the Tree of Knowledge is “INDEPENDENCE.” It symbolises life which is independent of God and His revelation, it ultimately draws its resources from Satan.

The Tree of Knowledge represents knowledge gained through the senses, through the human intellect, it is natural wisdom. This is the human knowledge which would lead to Babel where God said . . .

“Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them.”

Genesis 11:6

To the degree that we act independently of God we eat from the Tree of Knowledge.

The fruit represents the principle by which we live life, there is only one fruit on the tree, 'independence.' The fruit is everything we do, the basis of our lives - how we live, that which brings meaning to life.

The knowledge of good and evil focuses our attention on **personal performance** and causes US to grade the fruit from 100% bad through to 100% good on the basis of culture, experience, society, upbringing, what others have told us, the flesh, our own sin, the Law. In reality 'Evil' stands for unrighteousness and 'Good' stands for self righteousness.

The basis of acceptance with God is not graded, it is PASS or FAIL, nothing in between. The test is are we in Christ or not? There are 90 occurrences of the phrase "in Christ" in the NASB and about 67 for the phrase "in Him," 30 "in Me,"

*"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are **in Christ Jesus.**"*
Romans 8:1

*"Therefore if any man is **in Christ**, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."*
2 Corinthians 5:17

*". . . and may be found **in Him**, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith **in Christ**, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith . . ."*
Philippians 3:9

If we ask, "Are evil deeds acceptable to God?" The answer is, "No," not because they are evil but because they are not 'In Christ.' If we ask, "Are good deeds acceptable to God?" The answer is still, "No," for the same reason, because they are not 'In Christ.' Neither this sort of good nor evil is acceptable to God because both stem from independent life. This is why our self righteous deeds are like filthy rags in God's eyes.

"No matter how good, in worldly terms, the life of an individual is that person is not acceptable to God if the life they lived was independent of Him."

"No matter how good our actions and motives are they are only acceptable to God when they are, 'In Christ,' and God is the source."

The only life or behaviour which is acceptable to God is that which stems from Himself.

*"Beware of practicing **your righteousness** before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven."*
Matthew 6:1

Thus the "Source" determines acceptability with God.

The Consequences of Adam's Sin

Mankind came under the domination of the Law.

Mankind came under the domination of Sin.

Mankind came under the domination of Death.

Mankind came under the domination of Satan

In Scripture we find examples of those who were legally under the Law, blameless i.e.. 100% good but Jesus condemned them because their behaviour was external to be seen by men. These same legally blameless men at the same time were guilty of the most heinous sin of all by crucifying the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Their Fruit

Source

Praying on the street corners

Tree of Knowledge

Fasting in public

Tree of Knowledge

Giving alms

Tree of Knowledge

The Impostor

In Philippians 3 we find Paul clothing himself in those things in which he found meaning and personal value only to realise that they were worthless and that being in Christ was all that really mattered.

The Pharisee

“Everybody will admire us but nobody will know us.” Brendan Manning in *Abba’s Child*

The Tree of Knowledge reeks of the flesh. It is what ‘I am’ in human terms. John in his epistle writes of the three main areas which characterise life based on the Tree of Knowledge.

*“For all that is in the world, the **lust of the flesh** and the **lust of the eyes** and the **boastful pride of life**, is not from the Father, but is from the world.”*

1 John 2:16

The Tree of Life

Symbolises a life lived in **dependence** on God Himself. God Himself being the source of salvation, sanctification and the power and enabling for service.

Fundamental to this lifestyle is **faith**. Paul says in Galatians 2:20 . . .

*“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live **by faith** in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.”*

The teaching of the Beatitudes summarise the fundamental nature of Kingdom living . . .

Brokenness, mourning, meekness, hunger and thirst for righteousness, etc..

If choosing the Tree of Knowledge brought Adam and hence mankind under the domination of death, sin, Satan and the Law. **Grace** through **faith** restores us to a dependent lifestyle through what Christ had done on the cross for us.

No longer under condemnation.

“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

Romans 8:1

We have become a new creation with a spiritual being, acceptable to God, dwelling within a body of flesh - for the moment.

"Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."

2 Corinthians 5:17

The veil has been removed opening our eyes to see Him as He is and to understand spiritual truth which the unbeliever is unable to understand.

". . . but whenever a man turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away."

2 Corinthians 3:16

Placed into one Body, the Body of Christ and filled with His Spirit.

"For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit."

1 Corinthians 12:13

Inwardly transformed and participating in the life of God which is eternal life. God is our source on knowledge, wisdom, insight, understanding and power. He is our shield and our guide, our protector and Abba Father.

Forgiven, redeemed, born again; accepted, loved, secure in God.

Our works, done in dependence on Him, are 'in Christ' and are acceptable to God. (Ephesians 2:10)

We are The Beloved, Abba's Children.

Many Scriptures Contrast the Two Life Principles

When we understand this fundamental distinction between the only two lifestyles we find many, many Scriptures contrast them.

In John 15 Jesus contrasts the Abiding Life, life lived with the Tree of Life, Himself, as the source, with life lived independent of Him. Christ is the source of life for the vine. We are the branches utterly dependent on the Vine for life. With the Vine as our source and answered prayer a key element, we are expected to bear fruit for the glory of the Father.

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight."

Proverbs 3:5-6

"For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, The fountain of living waters, To hew for themselves cisterns, Broken cisterns, That can hold no water."

Jeremiah 2:13

". . . and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith. . ."

Philippians 3:9

“Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behaviour his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”

James 3:13-18

As we live our lives ‘In Christ,’ we should expect persecution for the Isaacs are always persecuted by the Ishmaels.

“But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also.”

Galatians 4:29

There is responsibility to live a godly, obedient life.

“And Abraham stretched out his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.”

Genesis 22:10

Sin no longer suits the person whom we have become.

Christians and the Tree of Knowledge

The Christian may have resolved the issue of his salvation by turning to God in faith through Christ, yet he may live his life with a large dependence on the Tree of Knowledge. He may, in many area of his life, live independently of God, drawing his resources for daily living and even ministry from the wrong source. Is it any wonder we so often fail to see God’s power at work.

We may find our values and meaning in life from, our position, our job, our status, our possessions, what we have done. We may find our meaning and identity in the fact that we are NOT one of these.

“I man find my meaning and identity in my wealth.”

“Another may find his meaning and identity in the fact that he is poor.”

In each case the source is wrong, it is the Tree of Knowledge. Christ highlights the uselessness of a Christian drawing from the Tree of Knowledge when, in John 15, He speaks of a branch taken from a vine. It is utterly useless, He says, for as wood you can use it for nothing except to burn on a fire and since it is no longer drawing sap from the vine it is totally unable to bear any fruit which was its primary function.

Are we Carnal Christians?

In what ways might we be drawing from the wrong tree? We may live our lives . . .

Without spending time with Him.

Without seeking His agenda for our daily life.

Trying to solve problems through our own intellect and human earthly wisdom.

Turning to the world for solutions to situations.

Living by feelings or the flesh.

Under the control of the enemy to the degree that we believe and act on his deceit and lies.

Ministering from an intellectual knowledge of the Word.

Eating from the Tree of Knowledge when we think, speak or act independently of Him.

Ignoring His Word in which He has revealed His will to us.

Like a Pharisee, focussed on external behaviour and the rewards of men.

In our attitudes we may . . .

Say, "I can."

Hide from God and fail to face issues in our lives He wants to deal with.

Refuse to yield control to Him in 'private' areas of our lives.

Fail to listen to His Spirit.

We believe our faith is supernatural and that God is working in power in us to make us more like Christ and through us to touch other lives.

What is going on in our lives which only God can do?

If God removed the candlestick from our lives or our church would we or they notice?

Summary

Tree of Life

“Dependence”

“Faith”

Matthew 5 . . .

Brokenness, mourning etc.

In Christ - Rom. 8:1

His life - Gal. 2:20

A new creation - 2 Cor. 5:17

Placed into the Body of Christ

Filled by His Spirit

The veil removed - 2 Cor. 3:16

Inwardly transformed

Eternal life is participating in the life of God.

God the source of guidance, wisdom, insight and power.

God as our source of salvation, sanctification and service.

Good work, in Christ, are acceptable to God. Eph. 2:8-10

“The Beloved,” Abba’s Child

John 15 - The Abiding Life . . .

Persecution expected (Gal. 4:29)

There is responsibility to live a godly life.

Sin does not suit who we are, obedience does.

“Each tree represents the life principle by which we live.”

They were literal trees with real fruit.
Rev. 22:1-2

The Basis of Acceptance with God

Test = pass/fail

“In Christ”

(90 times in NASB)

Rom. 8:1

2 Cor. 5:17

Phil. 3:9

The source determines acceptability,

“In Christ?”

⇐ **Grace** ⇐

through

Faith

Eph 2:8-10

Tree of Knowledge

Of Good and Evil

“Independence”

The unbeliever

Only one fruit on the tree

Good = Self righteousness

Evil = Unrighteousness

The fruit is everything we do, how we live, the basis of our lives, that which brings meaning to us.

We grade the ‘fruit,’ on the basis of culture, experience, society, upbringing, what others have taught us, the flesh, our own sin, the Law.

By implication since the basis of judgement is ‘human knowledge’ good is, as men perceive it, acceptable and evil, as men perceive it, is rejected.

Evil fails THE TEST

Good works fail THE TEST

Neither good nor evil is acceptable to God because both stem from independent life. For me this is the clearest explanation as to why ‘good works’ are not acceptable to God.

The Christian and the Tree of Knowledge

To the degree that we act independently of God we eat from the Tree of Knowledge, of independent life.

We may eat from and even try to minister from the T. of K.

A Pharisee in today's church

What is going on in our lives which only God can do?

If God removed the candlestick from our lives, our church would we/they notice?

Could the ways we use to change be duplicated by those of other religions?

“The Impostor” - Abba's Child

That with which I clothe myself. Phil. 3

“The Pharisee” - Abba's Child

“Everybody will admire us but nobody will know us.”
Dave Johnson