

CHAPTER 1

ONE WRONG BITE

WHAT WRONG REALLY IS

Let's start at the beginning and work from there. From the beginning, we have much to learn. In the beginning, we have the foundation of our existence, as well as the foundation of the Gospel in the revelation of what went wrong between the Creator and His creation. We see there the first and only restriction He gave to His creation, the first people. We see the first sin in their disobedience, and we see the cosmic cost as a result of their fatal fall—a cost that has reached and affects us all, as a rolling tidal wave crashing through all space and time, only to be halted and reversed by Jesus Christ at His return.

THE 1ST CLEAR, CONCISE, AND GENEROUS RESTRICTION

The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it. And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree of the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die.” (Genesis 2:15-17)

How would you gardeners like to have a divine green thumb—not merely the ability to get just the right mixture of dirt, nutrients, and plant types, but also the ability to

create literally whatever you wanted to grow? How would you like to have the full-time task of taking care of a garden specially planted by One with that ability? Adam was placed in a heavenly garden planted by the Heavenly Gardener: *The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there He placed the man He had formed. The LORD God caused to grow out of the ground every tree pleasing in appearance and good for food, including the tree of life in the midst of the garden, as well as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* (Genesis 2:8-9). Then he received the joyful job of cultivating and keeping that garden in all of its perfection. “Adam, here is this whole garden I have planted especially for you. In this garden, you will find every beautiful and bountiful thing you want and need [except one, and she was just around the corner].”

There was just one stipulation—one rule, not a list of several. “Do not eat from that tree.” Does that sound vague—too demanding—too restrictive? As Dr. Henry Morris notes,

There was only a single, minor restraint; but it would be this restraint that would test man’s love for God, giving him an opportunity to reject God’s Word if he wished...

Thus the one restriction placed by God on Adam (and, a bit later, on Eve) was singularly appropriate for its purpose... This was the simplest imaginable test of man’s attitude toward his Creator. Would he ‘trust and obey’ because he loved the one who had shown such love for him; or would he doubt God’s goodness and resent His control, rejecting and disobeying His Word on even such an apparently trivial restriction as one forbidden fruit in a whole paradise of

abundant provision? (Morris, Henry M.: *The Genesis Record*, p. 93. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, c1976)

Which was boxed in—Adam or the tree? Was the boundary drawn around Adam or around the tree? God did not draw a circle around Adam and tell him not to go outside his circle; He drew a circle around the tree. How big do you think the space of that tree might have been—four feet—ten feet—twenty feet—fifty feet—one hundred feet? Adam had the thousands (if not tens of thousands) of miles of the rest of the garden to roam freely in and enjoy. “Just stay away from that tree.” (By the way, in case you might be thinking that I am adding to God’s Word, think about something. Do you think God wanted him focusing on what they were not to partake of?) All he had to do was leave it alone, living, working, and exploring everywhere else. He had a perfect home—no death, no sickness, no decay, no loss, no grief, no weeds, no bad dirt, no grub worms, no worry of too much sun versus not enough—everything was perfect in paradise.

God gave Adam a smorgasbord buffet. “Adam, you can eat freely from every other tree in the garden.” He didn’t have to count calories. He didn’t have to calculate carbs. He didn’t have to worry about preservatives. “Eat all you want.” God is not a kill-joy. From the outset, He gave His creation every good and perfect gift to enjoy (James 1:17 & 1 Timothy 6:17). He surrounded Adam with unimaginable perfection, beauty, and nourishment with one, simple stipulation: “Just leave that one tree alone. Eating from it will kill you.” Talk about hazardous to your health.

Yet, Adam ignored God’s generous provision, instruction, and warning, and the same is going on today. God generously provides, instructs, and warns, and people turn their faces away and ignore Him (we can debate

“unique circumstances” or “changing times” all we want—when God has spoken and people knowledgably do otherwise, they are ignoring Him), as an extension of what Adam and Eve first did in the garden.