

Genesis 3:1-6

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 certainly die, the serpent said to the woman.

For God knows that when 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 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.

Psalm 91

- 1 Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.**
- 2 I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust.**
- 3 Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare
and from the deadly pestilence.**
- 4 He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find
refuge;
his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.**
- 5 You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day,
6 nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness,
nor the plague that destroys at midday.**
- 7 A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand,
but it will not come near you.**
- 8 You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the
wicked.**
- 9 If you say, The Lord is my refuge,
and you make the Most High your dwelling,
10 no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent.**
- 11 For he will command his angels concerning you
to guard you in all your ways;
12 they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.**
- 13 You will tread on the lion and the cobra;
you will trample the great lion and the serpent.**
- 14 Because he loves me, says the Lord, I will rescue him;
I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.**
- 15 He will call on me, and I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him.**
- 16 With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation.**

Romans 12:1-2

1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God. this is your true and proper worship.

2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is -- his good, pleasing and perfect will.

John 14:23-27

23 Jesus replied, Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.

24 Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

25 All this I have spoken while still with you.

26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

World War Zero ... The War Within the Mind

A young 19 year-old man has had an argument with his girlfriend, and leaves in a huff to go driving with his mates. One of his mates is a bad egg who decides to rob a store, and unbeknown to the rest, he pulls a gun in the store and a man is killed. The 19 year old is driving the now getaway car. They all are eventually caught, arrested, and charged. The shooter already has a police record and is charged with murder. The others are charged as accessories after the fact, and they all receive life sentences. (This happened back in the 1970's when sentencing laws were quite strict.)

The prisoner is eventually released on licence after 12 years confinement, lands a very good job, and is sent to the USA for training. On his return, he is shot and killed by his mother for bringing shame on the family.

A young man was about 11 or 12 when his mother suddenly died at the age of 39. His father re-married to a woman who had children of her own. As the young man entered his mid teenage years, the relationship with his step-mother was dramatically deteriorating to the point where he was told to get out and fend for himself. He did that but also carried a lot of rejection baggage with him. This led to alcohol abuse and relational issues. At 18, he came home drunk after a fight with his girlfriend, put on a record of AC-DC playing their hit "Shoot to thrill", picked up a loaded .22 rifle, and shot himself in the head.

This is starting to sound rather depressing.

Another man, in his 40's rented business premises next to me. He was an angry man with a very short fuse. He liked his grog, was an army man very accurate with weaponry, and a man skilled in martial arts. Nevertheless some Christians who knew him were praying for him.

He also, as the other 2 men, had a crash point in his life where he could have easily died. BUT, people had been praying for him. Long story short, he committed his life to Jesus, and is now one of my dearest friends. He still gets stirred up by people and actions at times, but instead of lashing out, he knows where his peace comes from and yearns that so many people in this world do not

know the peace that comes from a life with God. He has served in a support role to missionaries in Australia amongst first nation people, and also in Africa.

What I want to bring out of these examples is our reading from Romans 12 ..

"Therefore I urge you brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God. This is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - His good, pleasing, and perfect will.

When we look at this passage in the Greek, the verbs to conform and transform are both imperative (a command) present continuous (now and continuing) middle voice (a grammatical construct of some languages - it performs an action and is also affected by that action)

This means that we are commanded to NOT conform to the pattern of this world (John17:16 Jesus says we are in the world but not of it). This is a direct command to us, acting upon us, and the extent of action determined by our response and willingness.

We are also commanded to BE TRANSFORMED in the same way. The word used here is metamorphosis which is the process of a caterpillar becoming a butterfly. This also is a direct command to us, acting upon us, and the extent of action determined by our response and willingness.

The commonality is the mind which is the main entry point to the soul in the human sense. The Greek word used to indicate the soul is psyche of which the dictionary definition is mind, but medical definition is mind, will and emotions.

Our experiences impact the mind (eg the 19yr old, the 18yr old, and to 40yr old - plus you could add so many others who are impacted by daily living, by bullying, by social media, by bullying on social media .. the list is endless).

In the carnal mind (ie pattern of this world), the response to the mind is the emotions (with very little to control them), then affecting the will which results in actions.

In the mind that has been / is being transformed, the response to the mind is emotions under control by God, leading to will, and then actions.

These actions will be evidenced in the fruit of the Spirit ... Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

The first two of the examples given demonstrate the results of a carnal untransformed mind .. I'm sure we all know many in that category ... still conformed to the pattern of this world.

The 3rd example is a mind that had become responsive to God because others had been praying.

Let us be constantly saying to God .. "You loved me before anyone else knew me. You have commanded me to escape the pattern of this world, and be changed by the renewing of my mind. Father I give you permission to change me into the person YOU want me to be."

And let us be interceding in prayer for those who need a change of mind but are trapped.

Amen.