

Ecclesiastes Resumed (Part Twenty-Seven)

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We will begin in Ecclesiastes 7, and God willing today we will finish chapter 7 and get on into chapter 8. Just a personal opinion here, but I personally consider this chapter to be the most significant that I have ever studied into in the Old Testament regarding Christian religion. There are so many truly intriguing concepts within it, and a little bit later we are going to be looking once again into the concluding verse 29, which is very interesting.

First we will have a bit of review since it has been a month since I spoke. I will give you a string of truly significant concepts that Solomon touched on in this jam-packed chapter. He did not go into these in detail concerning most of them, but he reminded us of the elements of life that we need to pay attention to. It almost seems as though he put these in a 1, 2, 3 order. I am not saying that the order that he put them in are particularly significant, but they certainly are significant enough for us to learn from.

The first one comes up in the first verse—a good name is better than precious ointment. This particular saying, that we have a good name, is quite important. His concern is not so much for one's reputation with people, but one's reputation before God. We should know, it should be at the forefront of our mind that God is searching for those who will be faithful to Him. You want to have a good reputation with God, then be faithful to Him.

I will try to give you at least one other confirming scripture that touches on the same principle that is involved in each one of these important points.

Proverbs 22:1 A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, loving favor rather than silver and gold.

Having a good reputation with God, it may be said, excels all other blessings, because it means we are returning to Him in submission and that in turn makes Him very pleased because it is going to be well for us in life because we are submitting to His desires.

Proverbs 15:30 The light of the eyes rejoices the heart, and a good report makes the bones healthy.

That principle also ties in with having a good reputation before God. God's desire for faithfulness in us is shown by the many reminders for us to keep His commandments. A good continuing relationship is established upon trust, dependability, and responsibility in people who keep their word. That will earn a good reputation with both God and man. When people know you can be trusted, God knows you can be trusted too.

The second is also in verse 1, of chapter 7. Another thing for us to remember—the day of death is better than the day of one's birth. This second principle is this: one must prepare for his death. We sometimes get caught up in the life that we are living in the present, but it is not good at all for us to get so caught up in the present that we forget about preparing for the future.

God is reminding us here right at the beginning of this meaningful chapter that we should be always remembering the end of our life, not with any kind of a feeling of desperation, not with a feeling of dread in any way, but keeping on the ball, preparing for that.

There is a reason for this. It takes effort for us to make sure that we never lose sight of the end. It is always in our mind, again not with a feeling of dread at all, not with apprehension.

Hebrews 2:14-15 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

I think you know from your personal experiences in life that is our responsibility that we believe, that we are prepared for that, we do not hold any fear about carrying through doing that responsibility.

These two important points significant right at the beginning: a good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death is better than the day of one's birth. If we are taking care of those then we are going to live life in a fairly confident manner. It is not that we will not have any problems at all, but we will be taking care of things that are of primary importance to God, and therefore of primary importance to us.

Psalms 68:19-20 Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with benefits, the God our salvation! Our God is the God of salvation; and to God the Lord belongs escapes from death.

These first two significant teachings at the beginning of this chapter are instructing us to take care of things of the first order. One, is preparing a good reputation before God. Second, never forget what life is about, and be preparing for the end. Again it does not have to be an attitude of desperation about death, it is simply a matter of doing first things first, and that comes at the very beginning.

Solomon probably just put this in the order as they came in his mind,

Ecclesiastes 7:3-4 Sorrow is better than laughter, for by a sad countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.

The third point that he has here is that we learn more from difficult times than we do from what we normally consider as good times. We may not enjoy the days of difficulty, but if we seriously consider the final results, the day of our death, it forces us to search out our way for correction.

II Corinthians 7:10 For godly sorrow produces repentance to salvation [salvation means deliverance, deliverance from death, deliverance from a fiery hell, deliverance from a trial that we are going through] not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

The fourth point is a reinforcement of the third. By changing the illustration, Solomon does this: he reminds us that the heart of the wise disciplines themselves to make profitable use of the times of difficulty. All too often we go through difficulty and we are feeling sorry for ourselves all of the time. That is natural but we have to somehow break that and get away from that and approach the real solution to our problems. One of the things that will do this is to discipline ourselves, and make the best use of the time that we possibly can.

Those in the house of fools—he mentions that in verse 4, the house of mourning—are consistently looking for fun, fun, fun. They want to escape. It is natural to want to escape, but all too often God is waiting. He will produce the deliverance when we begin to discipline ourselves to accomplish something and even though we may not think we are making any progress, it is impressing Him positively, because He sees we are doing what we can.

We will turn back to a very familiar scripture in I Corinthians. Do you know of anybody besides the apostle Paul who went through all the difficulties that he went through? He was working for God. How many times did he get whipped and beaten? It is possible that at least on one occasion he actually died and God resurrected him from the beating that he took. He did not have an easy time.

I Corinthians 9:24-27 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. [The day of death, it is over, any preparation is done, we have to make use of our time.] Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

From a man who went through difficulty even though he was employed by God, and had a very high position, he nonetheless considered that he had to discipline himself to get through the difficulty that God allowed to be before him.

The fifth piece of wisdom is, we must not let pride get the better of us by allowing ourselves to reject correction from a person we know has experience in what we are going through. If we do, we are very likely to regret our passing off the correction as being nothing more than sour grapes.

Ecclesiastes 7:5 It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise than for a man to hear the song of fools.

Proverbs 9:7-9 “He who corrects a scoffer gets shame for himself [a person gives you good advice and in return he gets rebuffed], and he who rebukes a wicked man only harms himself. [When we reject good advice that comes from a brother or sister who was going through a similar situation that we are going through, and we scoff at them, will not make God happy with us.] Do not correct a scoffer, lest he hate you; rebuke a wise man, and he will love you. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.”

Do not let pride get the better of us by allowing ourselves to reject correction from a person who we know has experience in what we are going through.

The sixth piece of wisdom arises in verse 8, where he reminds us to not let impatience get the better of us.

Ecclesiastes 7:8 The end of a thing is better than its beginning; and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit. Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry, for anger rests in the bosom of fools.

Impatience and anger often go together. We want a thing to be over with before we have reached the place where we actually gaining from the correction that we are going through. When a trial is finished, if we do not allow ourselves to become impatient, we will be glad that we stuck with it when it is finally over. It is so easy to get frustrated and angry because things do not seem to be going our way. There are some things that we have just got to endure.

As we go into chapter 8, we are going to find that Solomon remarks about this very fact. There are some things we do not know what caused it and we just have to stick it out.

Romans 2:4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

Eventually we are going to come upon the paradox. It is one of those circumstances that we just cannot seem to get rid of, it is there, we are suffering, we do not know why. Paul is showing us here do not despise the riches of His goodness. God is with us regardless, we have to have faith in that.

Romans 2:5-11 But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each one according to his deeds: eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also the Greek. For there is no partiality with God.

He is not beating the tar out of us in a difficult trial, just because He wants to have fun. He wants us in His Kingdom and sometimes He has to hold our feet to the fire in order to bring us to repentance. Do not give up!

Do you realize that there was so much in here? This is good common sense advice. It is wisdom, real wisdom, practical wisdom that we are reading here, and all I did was reshape the verses so that you would see clearly what Solomon was getting across here in a practical way.

Here is the seventh piece of wisdom advice.

Ecclesiastes 7:9-10 Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry, for anger rests in the bosom of fools. Do not say, "Why were the former days better than these?" For you do not inquire wisely concerning this.

The piece of sound advice here is, do not look back, be moaning that you ever committed yourself to this. Solomon says this is not wisdom. The wisdom is to keep plowing forward, it is one's best defense, and it will pay off handsomely in the end.

Luke 9:62 But Jesus said to him, "No one having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

Keep your eye on the day of your death. God has given us so much time, we have the brass ring, but we do not have forever. We have to make the best use possible of the time that we have right now. Our time is limited and God holds the strings, so make the best of it that we can. Do not look back and say the former days were better.

The eighth piece of wisdom is in verses 13 and 14. These verses are really important.

Ecclesiastes 7:13-14 Consider the work of God; for who can make straight what He has made crooked? In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: Surely God has appointed the one as well as the other, so that man can find nothing that will happen after him.

God blesses and God can also pull the rug out from under us. If He pulls the rug out from under us, He did it for our well being so that things work out at the end.

This eighth piece of wisdom is, to never allow yourself to lose sight of God. He is still with us during our times of adversity, He is the same one who previously gave us the day of prosperity, and now He calls upon us to use our faith even though the time right now may appear to be quite dark. There is a better day coming.

The two most significant concepts that we touched on within this chapter are somewhat related aspects of the same subject. The first of these two is accepting and surviving the verse 15 paradox that anyone of us might be drawn into as we endure a difficult trial. Some trials indeed are more difficult than others. The paradox clearly seems to be the initial motivation for the second of these two concepts.

The second concept is Solomon's diligent and extensive search for wisdom that he describes all the way until the end of the chapter. The chapter also includes a few broad conclusions that are helpful for some direction. Those two big ones were: the paradox, then his search for wisdom.

He concentrated his explanation of his search for wisdom in just a few verses, but I think you understand that from the time that he was an adult when God gave him the gifts, that he had been searching for wisdom almost constantly. It was not just a six month affair with him, he went at it and he kept at it.

Just understanding what you know from Ecclesiastes as far as we have gone through it, what would you say that Solomon was really looking for? He calls it wisdom, and it is, but I think what he was really looking for was answers to why we have problems like this. One thing is for sure, he was partly successful, because he admits in verse 23 that a complete answer was far from him. He remained unsatisfied. He got some answers, but overall he did not get what he was really looking for, and that is, why is life so difficult? Why are there so many problems?

He came up with a partial answer, and we will get to that before we leave this chapter. It will be broad and general, but nonetheless, it is an answer. Solomon found out there is nothing you can do about it. We will see in chapter 8 that one of his conclusions was wisdom is not the only answer. Wisdom is only part of an answer, it is not the answer to all of life's problems because we cannot control life. It is beyond us, there are forces at work that are forcing themselves on us and all we can do is react. The wisdom may be in the reaction that we make.

Those of faith, those who really believe God, have the greatest, highest percentage of hitting the right answer, and many times all it is is to hold on for dear life. Do not give up, do not get impatient, do not get angry. That is what he is doing here, one thing after

another, do not allow yourself to lose control of yourself and your faith in God.

He was only partly successful. He admits there in verse 23 that the complete answer was far from him. I want you to notice that Solomon did not give up, he kept plugging away, and eventually he actually began in his thinking all the way back to the creation of Adam and Eve, and the introduction of sin into the world, into mankind.

The danger inherent within the paradox—we will repeat this because I do not want us to lose it—is for the Christian to judge that what is happening to them is unfair. What is happening to you *may be* unfair, but it is happening. Do you get the point? We just cannot throw it away. The first thought ought to be that God is allowing this to happen to me.

The problem in the paradox is the way we react, that is why he showed us in the paradox that there are two extremes: go to the right, go to the left. Go to the right and become super-righteous and it may kill you, because God will not accept that, salvation is by grace through faith. The super-righteousness has a way of producing pride within us and it destroys the relationship with God and we begin to think that He owes us salvation.

The other way is to give up. That is the other extreme, just quit, give in. So you go to the right we become super righteous, we go to the left we become a super sinner. Neither extreme is the right answer. The Christian who has faith in God is going to hang on for dear life to his faith in God. God promised that He will provide us an escape out of the problem, so the solution is to keep faithful to what you understand, keep on obeying God to the best of your ability under the circumstance, and He will do His part, and we will learn from it.

Either way can turn the paradox into a failed experience. The partial solution is to understand that rarely is the difficult trial that is the paradox punishment, rather it is a test that God is seeing that we must endure. So one must endure its stresses through much prayer, drawing upon one's faith in God and fear of God, believing His promise to never allow us to be tempted above what we are able to handle, and putting our trust in His faithfulness. Always remember Psalms 73. It has the solution of a person who went through the paradox.

Before we move on from Ecclesiastes 7, I think it best to look into a few things Solomon concluded before we move on to chapter 8. What I will give you Solomon does not give in a neat one, two, three order. It simply is my compilation of what we have picked up along the way as we have gone through Ecclesiastes 7.

There is not doubt that Solomon was sadly impressed that so much sin exists as compared to so little righteousness. This is the thought that leads us right into the subject of verse 29.

Ecclesiastes 7:29 Truly, this only I have found; that God made man upright but they have sought out many schemes.

We will turn all the way back to verse 19.

Ecclesiastes 7:19 Wisdom strengthens the wise more than ten rulers of the city.

That gives us a succinct reason for why anyone should seek wisdom, any child of God should seek wisdom. It is because it strengthens a person for living life. Wisdom strengthens the wise—you are wise if you are looking for wisdom. That is why Solomon was looking for it, he wanted to get stronger than he already was.

He cautions us to not be overly concerned about what people say about us. First of all, the concern is not worthwhile, and in addition to this, we are guilty of the same sin ourselves. Then he gives us a running account of the difficulty involved in accumulating wisdom. It is much hard, mental work, it involves a great deal of meditation, maybe writing notes, keeping track of the order of our thinking, and the conclusions that we might reach.

Solomon was driven by the desire to know why things happen in the way that they do. In other words, what are the causes? Why is the world this way? That is what he was looking for, he wanted to get down to what caused it.

Ecclesiastes 7:27-28 “Here is what I have found,” says the Preacher, “adding one thing to the other to find out the reason, which my soul still seeks but I cannot find; one man among a thousand I have found, but a woman among all theses I have not found.”

Here is where we reach a conclusion in his search. What he found was that the world has much alluring wickedness within it. He also found that he could not truly zero in on what the sum of all this information he was finding. What he did find was this, he made the statement that he found only one man in a thousand that he felt was actually what

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he considered living a righteous life. He added that from his experience he had not found one woman out of a thousand living as the one man did.

We can give his conclusion I think more clarity by restating it this way: he is saying that he found that righteousness is rare, it hardly exists, very few people are living life before God as they should. Following that declaration in verse 29, it gives us a very clear concluding statement regarding his search. He is calling what he is looking for by means of his term wisdom.

What he is looking for is the answer to why did God create all of this, and why is life so difficult and puzzling? He is expressing the thought that if I knew these things it would help my way. I am talking as if I was Solomon—it would help my way a great deal.

I will give you some suggestions as to one reason why Solomon could not find some answers to what he was looking for. Please turn to the book of Deuteronomy. This scripture comes from Moses, and it comes from Deuteronomy (which we will get into at the Feast, God willing).

Deuteronomy 29:29 “The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

In one way Solomon was looking for things that were secret—at least they were secret to him. It is one of the reasons why he had such difficulty. I want to assure you that some of the things that Solomon was looking for, that he could never find, have been revealed to *you*. You have things that Solomon did not have available to him.

How has God revealed to you and possibly did not reveal them to Solomon? First of all he did not have the whole Bible. Solomon lived roughly around 1000 B.C. He had the first four books, he did not have any of the New Testament that he could look to for pointers, the book of Psalms was not written, and he had not written wisdom yet. You understand the principle I am getting at here. And that is, you have had things given to you that he did not have available to him. Why? Because in our calling God began to personally and individually reveal things to us that maybe were written in His Book, but on the other hand maybe they were not, but because he opened our minds the revelation began to become clear to us and Solomon did not have that.

We do not know for sure that he was ever called. Maybe he was, maybe he was not, I am not real sure. This is why the verse in John 6, is so important. Jesus said that no

one, no man, can come to Me unless the Spirit of the Father draws that person. As that person is being drawn God is beginning to reveal things to that person that He has not revealed to the world, and maybe did not reveal to Solomon even at this time and that is why he was having such a problem. We have to consider that.

If they were not revealed to Solomon, how many other people did not have them revealed to them because it was not God's time to lead them to Him, through Jesus Christ? I know every one of you have had experiences with people and they are blind as a bat regarding spiritual things. It simply had not been revealed to them.

The revealed stuff is to us wisdom that we need for our life within God's Family, and within His church, to fulfill the purpose that He has for calling us. We may very well have revelation that he never had.

Back to Ecclesiastes. We are going to notice that Solomon straightens some things out. At least one thing so that we know very clearly that God is not responsible for the way things are. Solomon had this revealed to him, and he put it in the book. What did he say there, "Truly, this only I have found." Just a few verses before what did he say? I have not found very much. The word 'only' is there to draw attention to something that he wants to emphasize that he felt God really had revealed to him.

First, it is in all of us carnally to blame God for all of the trouble that is going on on earth. That is the direction that Solomon was headed in in his thinking. God, why is there all of this trouble? Men are this way and they are doing it. Did You create him that way?

God revealed it to Solomon and Solomon then was used to reveal to you and me that God is not responsible for the way things are on earth, God made us upright, but we have created many devices or schemes, we sought them out. That indicates God created Adam and Eve upright but right from the very beginning Adam and Eve sought out a way to sin.

Eve was deceived and in her deception she was led into sin, so she does not have the deliberateness in her sin that Adam did. This is why God singled him out. God said, you would rather please your wife than to please Me. That was deliberately done. He had the choice of going one way or the other—he chose to please his wife. We have sought out, we have *deliberately* sinned.

Mankind still wants to blame God. The Catholic Church does this. They say that sin came from Adam and Eve. That is not the way God made them. He made them upright, they chose to sin.

Genesis 1:31 Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and morning were the sixth day.

This includes Adam and Eve, they were very good. We cannot honestly challenge God's judgment of what He just created. Adam and Eve were already created at this point in time, and God judged that what He had made was very good—not flawed, not created to live fractured sinful lives, but created to live upright righteous lives. God created man upright.

The responsibility for the way the world is shifts to us, we made it the way it is. God permitted it for His purposes to go in that direction. Please turn to Genesis 6. There is a frame work of deliberateness shown in the early chapters of the history recorded in the book of Genesis.

Genesis 6:5 Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

There is an interesting relationship between the word devices, or schemes (in Ecclesiastes 7:29), and the word thoughts or intents here in Genesis 6:5. Even though the two words are not exactly the same word they both are exactly from the same root. That is evident because both terms indicate thinking and/or planning and within the context each appears is being done with evil intent. In both contexts, the one doing the devising are planning on deliberately sinning.

Genesis 3:5-6 [the serpent is speaking] “For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her and he ate.

She listened to Satan's sales pitch and indeed she was deceived. However, she was thinking right along with him about how wonderful it would be to be wise. She was getting sucked in. God clearly said, do not eat any fruit from that tree. That is as plain and clear as could be.

That shows you that she was being drawn in to his way of thinking, and the fact that she

looked at it and the desire began to rise she gave herself over to it, not fully realizing what death meant or anything of that nature.

They then reaped the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil, and they experienced the pains of suffering and death. Adam deliberately thought it would be better to be loyal to his wife rather than to God, and his scheme to sin was more deliberate. He saw through what Satan was saying, so what he did was more deliberate than Eve's so he gained the greater condemnation.

I will give you a brief history that tends to show man's deliberate sinfulness.

Genesis 4:17-22 And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch [notice the pattern of thinking here]. And he built a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son—Enoch. To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad begot Mehujael, and Mehujael begot Methushael, and Methushael begot Lamech. Then Lamech took for himself two wives; the name of one was Adah, and the name of the second was Zillah. And Adah bore Jabal. He was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. His brother's name was Jubal. He was the father of all those who play the harp and flute. And as for Zillah, she also bore Tubal-Cain, an instructor of every craftsman in bronze and iron. And the sister of Tubal-Cain was Naamah.

What are they doing here? They are scheming to gain further control of their own destiny. Just like Adam and Eve did, they decided they were going to be wise and so they schemed to grab control. They schemed to build a city, then they start developing agriculture, art, and technology. That scheme also failed because it culminated in every thought being evil.

God destroyed what they built before, but right after the Flood, a couple of generations later, in Genesis 11 they are scheming again.

Genesis 11:4 And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth".

They are scheming to circumvent what God had just done in destroying the lives of everybody but Noah's family.

Genesis 11:9 Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of the all the earth.

Whatever God does man schemes to find a way around it. That is the point here.

Isaiah 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

This pretty much summarizes the theme of mankind's devising wicked things. It begins in Genesis and then builds to a consistently larger and larger scale, but within this large scale each individual is also devising self-centered plans to advance himself despite what God may have said.

I want to give a brief reminder of the means by which we became so self-centered and sinful, even though God did not create us with sin already dwelling within us as a part of our nature. Sin is a spiritual matter, a matter of the heart, and it becomes part of us through contact with it. This is why so many warnings are in the Bible about the world. God created us with a human spirit and spirit possesses the power to influence one's attitude and conduct. The desire to sin can be resisted. We have to know that, and we have to believe it.

If we follow God's direction the desire to sin can be resisted. That is what Adam and Eve did not do. However if one's guard is not up we can allow sin to enter us and become a part of us. As long as Adam and Eve were in the presence of the holy and righteous God, sin was not a problem in any way, shape or form, but when the personification of sin showed up they did not resist his appeal to join with him in sinning against God's Word.

This seems like a simple process, but it is nonetheless true. Sin comes from contact with a sinful source, which we yield ourselves to. Can you see where mankind got the urge to sin? It came from contact with Satan, it was not in us. God did not create us that way, but He created us with the means by which it could get into us if we did not make the effort to block it. Adam and Eve did not block it.

Adam and Eve's innocence prevailed within the righteousness they lived in, in the Garden of Eden with God their Creator as their Companion. What about us?

I John 5:18-19 We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself [guards himself], and the wicked one does not touch him. [We can resist sinning.] We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.

The whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one. This world is flooded by the spirit of Satan and his demons, this is why we must be alert to his negative influences. His influences are always moving us toward breaking our loyalty to God and His ways. There is no need to be terrified but the world is an ever-present reality.

Adam and Eve did not sin until the very personification of sin was allowed into their presence and they metaphorically rubbed shoulders with him, and they became subject to his spirit's influence. They became infected and their nature immediately began changing and they began sinning.

What changed was that, as they were thinking, as he wove his deception, they began becoming more self-concerned, self-centered in their hearts. Their desires were shifting and they were then motivated to satisfy their personal desire rather than what God had instructed them to do, so they sinned. It is such a simple process.

I Corinthians 15:33 Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."

I Corinthians 15:33-34 (Revised English Bible) Make no mistake: bad company ruins good character. "Wake up be sober, stop sinning, some of you have no knowledge of God. To your shame I say it to you."

When the spiritually myopic Adam and Eve were communicated to by Satan, their spirit honed in on his spirit and succumbed to his influence. Even though instructed they did not put up their defenses to resist his communication. In this world we are surrounded by and almost swimming in the influence of his mind. This may seem unfair, but it is nonetheless what we have to face. It is what God has dealt us.

God willed in His creation of mankind that we must deliberately and voluntarily choose which way we shall go—will it be Satan's, or will it be God's? Which way will we be loyal to? Our loyalty must be demonstrated by the manner in which we live our life, even though faced by the wayward influence.