



HE [ADAM] REPLIED, "I HEARD YOU WALKING IN THE GARDEN, SO I HID. I WAS AFRAID BECAUSE I WAS NAKED." "WHO TOLD YOU THAT YOU WERE NAKED?" THE LORD GOD ASKED. "HAVE YOU EATEN FROM THE TREE WHOSE FRUIT I COMMANDED YOU NOT TO EAT?" THE MAN REPLIED, "IT WAS THE WOMAN YOU GAVE ME WHO GAVE ME THE FRUIT, AND I ATE IT." THEN THE LORD GOD ASKED THE WOMAN, "WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?" "THE SERPENT DECEIVED ME," SHE REPLIED. "THAT'S WHY I ATE IT." GENESIS 3:10-13

TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD & EVIL PRODUCES SHAME AND VICTIMIZATION

SHAME

Shame **BUILDS BARRIERS** and causes us to separate ourselves from God, making it so that we cannot operate in the freedom that Christ has for us. Like a veil, it covers us completely, even our eyes, so that we can see only dimly who and where God is.

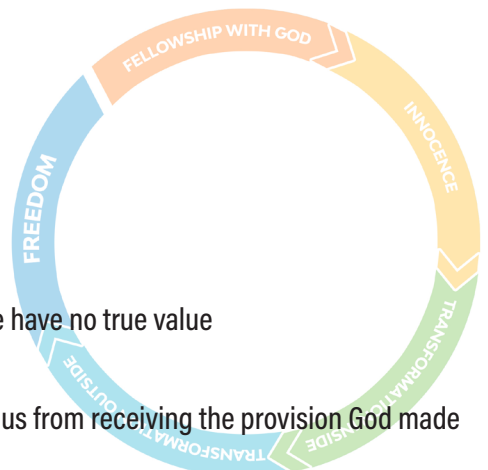
Shame causes us to do all sorts of things that keep us from connecting with God. **Shame makes us want to hide.** Prior to eating the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve were both **naked and were not ashamed** (Genesis 2:25). Afterwards, they came up with the idea of sewing fig leaves together to cover themselves and then tried to hide from God's presence in the trees of the garden.

THE RESULTS OF SHAME

- 1 Covering up with religion and becoming focused on works
- 2 Lying, deception, false pride
- 3 Making promises we can't keep
- 4 Getting our self-worth from the things that we do
- 5 Inability to come to a place of honesty with God because we believe we have no true value
- 6 Concentrating on our sin instead of concentrating on our Savior

Why is shame so deadly? Because *it strips us of the power to change.* It keeps us from receiving the provision God made for our sin through the blood of Jesus.

There is a difference between **guilt** and **shame**. Guilt is about *what we have done*, but shame is about *who we are*. With guilt, we can always get a fresh start. With shame, we are caught in a noose because the problem stays with us. In fact, *with shame we are the problem.* **In order to be free from shame, we must begin to see ourselves as God sees us.** Just as the TKGE produces shame in our lives, it also makes us susceptible to victimization.



VICTIMIZATION

Victimization is a natural response to our sin. Eve responded, "The devil made me do it" and Adam responded, "The woman you gave me made me do it." We blame others by excusing our internal condition and displacing responsibility for our circumstances. We say, "If my husband/wife would just treat me right, I wouldn't be so unhappy and manipulative." "If my family were less argumentative, I wouldn't be so irritable." "If everybody would just live like they are supposed to, everything would work right."

THE RESULTS OF VICTIMIZATION

1. We notice others' sins, but not our own.
2. We excuse and condemn ourselves: "I've just always been this way. I'll never change. I'll never be good enough."
3. We feel rejected.

Whether we victimize ourselves by blaming others or by excusing and condemning ourselves, we are powerless to change. This is why victimization is so deadly!

With victimization and shame, we're either the Pharisee or the woman caught in adultery (John 8). We base our relationship with God and others on behavior and merit, but that's not the perspective God wants us to have. That's TKGE thinking, and it keeps us from changing and connecting with God which is exactly what the devil wants.

We must get to a point where, no matter what happens, we take responsibility for our own lives. We can no longer blame anyone else for the quality of our relationship with God! The fruit of the TKGE lacks the power to transform the heart. It can provide facts and information, but it is powerless to give you life.

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." JOHN 8:12

THE FRUIT OF LIVING IN THE TREE OF LIFE

1. **The Tree of Life results in fellowship with God.** The only way to experience abundant life is truly knowing the living God. He asked us to love Him, but only after His lavish display of love for us through the sacrifice of Jesus.
2. **Fellowship with God results in innocence – not the other way around!** As we spend more time communing with God, we will notice a transformation taking place, not only on the outside, but on the inside as well. We will become transparent and unashamed before Him.
3. **Innocence is a conduit of God's power.** As we seek God and submit our lives to Him, He equips us for every good work.
4. **Innocence results in freedom.** We will sin and fall, but if we sin with the Tree of Life as our perspective, we can easily receive forgiveness and get back up.

FELLOWSHIP W/GOD → INNOCENCE → TRANSFORMATION INSIDE → TRANSFORMATION OUTSIDE → FREEDOM

DISCUSSION:

1. Share examples of ways you've acted and reacted out of *Tree of Life Thinking* throughout the previous week.
2. Do you feel completely innocent before God?
3. What would it be like to have true fellowship with God?
4. Do you live your life as a son or a servant?
5. Do your daily responses and decisions bring life to others? In what tree do you find yourself living in the most?

