

## Health and Healing Lesson 2 2Q 2010

### The Power of Choice

#### SUNDAY

Read third paragraph, "One thing, though,..." thoughts?

Why is the freedom of choice critical? What would be lost if we didn't have choice?

The dark section asks us to read Genesis 2:16,17:

And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

And then read next paragraph, "In Genesis 3:1-6..." thoughts?

What is God telling them? Why is the tree there? What purpose was there in putting the tree there?

Was it to tempt them? Have you ever heard it was there as a test of their obedience?

"Your eyes shall be opened," the enemy had said; "ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Genesis 3:5. Their eyes were indeed opened; but how sad the opening! The knowledge of evil, the curse of sin, was all that the transgressors gained. **There was nothing poisonous in the fruit itself, and the sin was not merely in yielding to appetite. It was distrust of God's goodness, disbelief of His word, and rejection of His authority, that made our first parents transgressors, and that brought into the world a knowledge of evil. It was this that opened the door to every species of falsehood and error.** {Ed 25.2}

**There was nothing poisonous in the fruit of the tree of knowledge itself**, nothing that would cause death in partaking of it. The tree had been placed in the garden to test their loyalty to God.--ST Feb. 13, 1896. {Truth about Angels 56.2}

Remember last week our discussion of the “genomic” theory, this author shoots that theory down. I agree with the quote above.

Our first parents, though created innocent and holy, were not placed beyond the possibility of wrongdoing. . . . They were to enjoy communion with God and with holy angels; but before they could be rendered eternally secure, **their loyalty must be tested**. At the very beginning of man's existence a check was placed upon the desire for self-indulgence, the fatal passion that lay at the foundation of Satan's fall. **The tree of knowledge, which stood near the tree of life in the midst of the garden, was to be a test of the obedience, faith, and love** of our first parents. While permitted to eat freely of every other tree, they were forbidden to taste of this, on pain of death. **They were also to be exposed to the temptations of Satan;** but if they endured the trial, they would finally be placed beyond his power, to enjoy perpetual favor with God. . . . {CC 13.2}

Is this true? How do we reconcile this with James 1:13:

When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone;

If God doesn't tempt anyone then how do we make sense of the purpose of the tree?

One purpose, pointed out by some, was to protect them from Satanic assault, as long as they stayed loyal Satan could only access them at the tree. He could not follow them all over the Garden.

But is that the most important reason? What happens when we make choices? Are we changed by the choices we make? Would it be important for Adam and Eve to exercise their own minds to think through the temptations of Satan and choose to say no?

Parents think of your children, is there a difference in preventing your children from being in a situation in which they could be tempted and therefore you keep your child from choosing to sin, and your child being faced with the temptation and your child choosing to say no?

The very next paragraph from the quote above states:

**God might have created man without the power to transgress His law;** He might have withheld the hand of Adam from touching the forbidden fruit; but in that case man would have been, not a free moral agent, but a mere automation. **Without freedom of choice, his obedience would not have been voluntary, but forced. There could have been no development of character.** . . . It would have been unworthy of man as an intelligent being, and would have sustained Satan's charge of God's arbitrary rule. {CC 13.3}

God wanted mankind to grow and advance and it is only by the exercise of their own power of choice that could develop. Therefore the tree was not placed there to trip them up, but as the most simple opportunity for them to exercise their own individuality and say no and thus solidify their own characters in righteousness! In other words, the tree was for their blessing.

Let's talk a little brain science. Your brain, both white cells and neurons, make proteins called Brain Derived Neurotrophic Factor BDNF. This protein, and others like it, are like fertilizer for your neurons. But BDNF doesn't come off the DNA as BDNF it comes off as a precursor protein called pro-BDNF. While BDNF is like fertilizer to the neurons, pro-BDNF is like weed killer. What determines whether a neural circuit gets BDNF or pro-BDNF is the presence of an enzyme which will cleave pro-BDNF into BDNF. What determines whether that enzyme is present is the activity of the neural circuit

itself. If the circuit is active, the enzyme is produced and the circuit grows stronger, if it is dormant the enzyme is not produce the brain prunes back the neural connections.

Our choices, even in what we think, alter our brain development and gene expression.

## WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “The consequences...” Thoughts?

How do we affect our children?

- Interview with AH
- How we live our lives changes us, changes our genetics, our gene expression and we pass along our genetic expression to our children.
  - What the parents are, that to a great extent the children will be. The physical conditions of the parents, their dispositions and appetites, their mental and moral tendencies, are to a greater or less degree reproduced in their children.--MH 371 (1905). {1MCP 138.5}
  - The nobler the aims, the higher the mental and spiritual endowments, and the better developed the physical powers of the parents, the better will be the life equipment they give their children.... {1MCP 139.1}
  - Children born to mothers in the Netherlands during WWII when the average daily caloric intake was 500 calories per day, had their gene expression compared to their siblings from the same parents but who were born during times of normal food availability. Those who were born during the war had gene expression differences which increased their risk of obesity and metabolic illnesses.

## **You are what your grandmother ate**

22:00 13 November 2006  
NewScientist.com news service  
Roxanne Khamsi

A mother's diet can change the behaviour of a specific gene for at least two subsequent generations, a new study demonstrates for the first time.

Feeding mice an enriched diet during pregnancy silenced a gene for light fur in their pups. And even though these pups ate a standard, un-enriched diet, the gene remained less active in their subsequent offspring.

The findings could help explain the curious results from recent studies of human populations – including one showing that the grandchildren of well-fed Swedes had a greater risk of diabetes.

The new mouse experiment lends support to the idea that we inherit not only our genes from our parents, but also a set of instructions that tell the genes when to become active. These instructions appear to be passed on through “epigenetic” changes to DNA – genes can be activated or silenced according to the chemical groups that are added onto them.

### **Gene silencer**

David Martin at the Children's Hospital Oakland Research Institute in California, US, and colleagues used a special strain of genetically identical mice with an overactive version of a gene that influences fur colour. Mice with the *AVY* version of this gene generally have golden fur.

Half of the mice were given a diet enriched with nutrients such as vitamin B12 and zinc. These nutrients are known to increase the availability of the “methyl” chemical groups that are responsible for silencing genes. The rest of the mice received a standard diet.

The pups of mice on the standard diet generally had golden fur. But a high proportion of those born to mice on the enriched diet had dark brown fur.

Martin believes that the nutrient-rich maternal diet caused silencing of the pups' *AVY* genes while they developed in the womb.

### **Passed down**

Intriguingly, even though all of the pups in this generation received a standard diet, those that had exposure to a high-nutrient diet while in the womb, later gave birth to dark-coated offspring. Their control counterparts, by comparison, produced offspring with golden fur.

This shows that environmental factors – such as an enriched diet – can affect the activity of the *AVY* gene for at least two generations, the researchers say.

“The results make it clear that a nutritional status can affect not only that individual, but that individual's children as well,” says study member Kenneth Beckman.

### **Skin colour**

Beckman notes that the AVY gene is linked to weight and diabetes risk. He adds that there is some evidence that a related gene in humans might affect skin colour – but it is unknown if it also affects weight.

Even though humans may have a similar gene, they should not make dietary changes based on the results of the mouse experiment, researchers stress. “It would be irresponsible to make any prescriptions about human behaviour based on these findings,” says Martin.

An earlier Swedish study which used historical data of harvests in Sweden, found that a youngster had a quadrupled risk of diabetes if their grandfather had good access to food during his own boyhood (see [Grandad's diet affects descendants' health](#)).

Journal reference: *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* (DOI: 10.1073/pnas.0607090103)

- Children who are abused have alteration in gene expression, particularly genes that code for stress response and cannot calm their amygdalas normally

#### **Child Abuse Alters Brain Gene**

By PSYCH CENTRAL NEWS EDITOR

Reviewed by John M. Grohol, Psy.D. on February 23, 2009

Childhood abuse can lead to lasting psychological problems in a person’s life, increasing the risk of depression and even suicide later in life. New research suggests that these problems may be traced back to a change in a brain gene as a direct result of the childhood abuse.

The study, led by researchers from McGill University, found that child abuse modifies a gene called NR3C1. This gene in the brain is one thought to affect a person’s ability to deal with stress.

The researchers studied the brains of 24 suicide victims, 12 who had suffered severe childhood abuse, which included physical abuse, neglect or sexual contact, and 12 who had not been abused.

Those who had been abused had lower levels of expression of the gene NR3C1, which is critical for the stress response pathway.

The changes observed in the gene suggests that the trauma associated with child abuse may permanently alter a person’s ability to deal with stress.

The researchers hypothesize that because of the changes in this gene’s expression, people might have trouble turning off their stress response. This could result in a person’s body being in a constant stressful state, leading to future problems with depression, anxiety and possibly even suicide. Further research is needed to confirm this finding.

This finding helps shed light on the gene/environmental interactions and could lead to a future procedure for identifying the gene change. It also suggests that a gene change brought about by environmental influences may also be potentially reversible.

The findings will be published in the journal *Nature Neuroscience*.

Source: Nature Neuroscience

- Children of mothers who suffer from depression have higher rates of mental illnesses, if the mother's depression is untreated or fails to be treated to remission, however, if the mother's depression is treated to remission then the children don't experience the same increased risk of mental illness. And the faster the mother is treated to remission the better the children do.
- Animal studies show that pups whose mothers are attentive and lick them frequently have altered brain development such that they have calmer fear centers, less anxiety, socialize better, than pups who didn't get this grooming and attention from their mothers. But, when pups from mothers who were not attentive were reared by mothers who were attentive their brains developed the same as the offspring of the attentive mothers. This means that early childhood experiences changes neural development and gene expression.

## Thoughts?

The lesson asks us to read DT 30, let's start with verse 11 and read through verse 19:

<sup>11</sup> Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. <sup>12</sup> It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, "Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" <sup>13</sup> Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, "Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" <sup>14</sup> No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it.

<sup>15</sup> See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. <sup>16</sup> For I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess.

<sup>17</sup> But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, <sup>18</sup> I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess.

<sup>19</sup> This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live

Thoughts? What do you hear being described? Is their fate in their hands? Will health and life be determined by what they choose? Is this true for us? Is it true only for our earthly existence or for our eternal existence? Then why do so many people teach that God judges us and determines our destiny if it is up to us to choose?

## MONDAY

The lesson asks us to read Genesis 3:7-13:

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.

<sup>8</sup> Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. <sup>9</sup> But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”

<sup>10</sup> He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

<sup>11</sup> And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”

<sup>12</sup> The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

<sup>13</sup> Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?”

The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”



The lesson asks to define, in one word, what they experienced – what would you say?

What emotion became the primary emotion in their hearts? Fear and selfishness, survival of the fittest? Do we experience the same thing today?

Read last paragraph, “Sure, we sometimes...” thoughts? What is the source of our greatest temptations? Is it not from within? From self?

When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; <sup>14</sup> but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. <sup>15</sup> Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. James 1:13-15

Is it true we are all tempted from within? Is it true we should blame ourselves for this problem? No!

How many of you chose to be born a sinner? How many in this room had a choice to live a sin-free life? We were born in sin conceived in iniquity – it wasn’t our fault we were born this way and therefore we don’t need to blame ourselves for being sinners. But, if we reject free remedy, do we need to blame ourselves for that?

## TUESDAY

Read top paragraph, “However much...” thoughts? What choice do we have? Why do we have choice? After Adam fell did Adam, still within himself retain the power to choose against Satan? Do we have the power to choose against our carnal nature by ourselves?

The Lord says, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman." **The enmity does not exist as a natural fact. As soon as Adam sinned, he was in harmony with the first great apostate, and at war with God; and if God had not interfered in man's behalf, Satan and man would have formed a confederacy against heaven,** and carried on united

opposition against the God of hosts. **There is no natural enmity between evil angels and evil men;** both are evil through transgression of the law of God, and evil will always league against good. Fallen men and fallen angels enter into a desperate companionship. {ST, July 11, 1895 par. 5}

Why do we have a choice at all? Because of God's grace, because of God's interference – what is another word for God's interference? Intercession, God intercedes with the powers of evil, with the process of sinfulness in order to bring cure and remedy and restore us to righteousness!

Read the next paragraph, “Polygamy...” thoughts?

- Did Abraham make the choice to take Hagar before or after God called him to follow Him?
- Before or after Abraham followed God by faith and was considered righteous?
- Did the sin in taking Hagar disqualify Abraham as God's friend?
- Do we have a record of God chastising Abraham for taking Hagar as his wife?
- We have a record of God informing him that the promised child wouldn't come through Hagar, but did Abraham get chastised or punished by God?
- Did it disqualify Abraham's salvation?
- How do we make sense of being in a saving relationship with God and choosing to sin?
- Does choosing to sin cancel our salvation?

Is the key to salvation perfect performance, or having a perfect heart attitude toward God and a longing for healing, a heart that when we do fall short is grieved, like Paul, “what a wretched man that I am who will save me from this body of death”?

Read last paragraph – thoughts?

The lesson makes an excellent point that God does not turn away from us, we turn away from Him. Like Adam and Eve we get deceived by our own feelings and false think no one, including God

could love us, and therefore, feel so bad about ourselves we won't allow God into our lives. We must recognize this lie and see the truth as revealed in Jesus, that God so loved us He sent His Son, that while we were sinners Christ died for us!

What about obedience? Does God want us to obey because He commands us? Is this God's desire?

One Sabbath Christie and I attended a church and as the pastor offered the opening pray he prayed:

“Dear God, we come here today not for the special music, not for the friends or fellowship, not even for the sermon, no, Lord, we come here today for one reason and one reason only, because you have commanded us to.”

Do you think this is God's ideal? Does God want us to come to church for such a reason?

- **The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely--because he is required to do so--will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey.** When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across **human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness,** the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right--because right doing is pleasing to God. {COL 97.3}
- **A sullen submission to the will of the Father will develop the character of a rebel.** By such a one service is looked upon as drudgery. It is not rendered cheerfully, and in the love of God. It is a mere mechanical performance. If he dared, such a one would disobey. His rebellion is smothered, ready to break out at any time in bitter murmurings and complaints. Such service brings no peace or quietude to the soul. {ST, July 22, 1897}

Thoughts?

#### THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “Though all have....” Thoughts?

Read second paragraph, “God knows...” thoughts? Does this help?

Read last paragraph, “According...” thoughts? Will God take control of our will, even if we ask?

#### FRIDAY

Read second paragraph, “God does not compel...” Does this sound like God takes control of the will? Why the weight of evidence?

Read Questions 1,3,4 and discuss