

CREATION FOR KIDS

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By Russell Grigg

DO YOU have rules in your home, like keeping your room tidy or being on time for meals? Do you think rules are a good idea?

God had just one rule for Adam in the beautiful garden He had given him to be his home. He told Adam that he could eat the fruit from any of the trees in the Garden of Eden, except one, which God called the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. He also warned Adam that if he did eat from that tree he would die (Genesis 2:8-9; 15-17).

Why did God give Adam a rule like that? If you have a computer, you could program it to display the words 'I love

you' on the screen. Or if you are playing with a puppet, you can make the puppet say, 'I love you'. But would that mean that the computer or the puppet loved you? No, of course not. Why not? Because neither the computer nor the puppet has a choice. They can do only what they are programmed to do or made to say.

God wanted Adam, and Eve too, to *choose* to love and obey Him. But for this to happen, they also had to be free to disobey Him, if they wanted to. Otherwise they wouldn't have had a choice! God didn't want them to be like a computer, or like puppets, when it came to loving Him.

God made it very easy for Adam and Eve to choose to obey Him by giving them lots and lots of lovely trees to eat the fruit from. He made it quite hard for them to choose to disobey Him, because there was only one tree in the whole garden that God had said they couldn't eat from.

You might wonder why the tree had such a weird name. Well, we are not suggesting that there was anything magical or funny about the tree. Up until that time, neither Adam nor Eve had done anything wrong. So there was no sin in the world. Adam and Eve knew only about things that were good. Now, God was letting them know that, if they ate the fruit from that tree, they would be disobeying Him, and so

they would find out what 'evil' was.

So the name, 'the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil', was a very good one. The tree was a test of their obedience and love for God. It wasn't poisonous. It was 'very good', like everything else that God had made. Death was the penalty Adam and Eve would pay if they disobeyed God and did what He had told them not to do.

Did God have the right to give them this rule, and set such a huge penalty if they disobeyed Him? Yes. Do you like to play



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Monopoly? Well, the creator of the game of Monopoly had the right to decide the rules and penalties of the game he created. As Adam and Eve's Creator, God had the right to set any rules He chose for them to obey. In the same way, God has the right to set the rules of life for us to obey, too.

Nowadays you may hear some people say, 'There is no difference between right and wrong,' or 'Whatever you want to do, if it feels good, do it.' God says that there *is* a difference between right and wrong, and He is the One who decides what that difference is. When we do wrong things it is called 'sin'. So sin is anything we think, or say, or do, in disobedience to God.

God didn't make up His rules to keep us from enjoying ourselves. God loves you, and He wants you to love Him, and to obey Him, and to trust Him. So His rules are for our protection, like 'Don't murder', 'Don't steal', 'Don't lie', and so on.

God does not want us to find out what evil is like by experimenting with it. If we do, we

may soon find out that we can't stop thinking, or saying, or doing that thing. Do you know of someone who decided to experiment with cigarettes, and now can't stop smoking? They have become a slave to their habit. It's like that with sin generally.

When you are tempted to do something you know is

wrong, God is giving you the opportunity to choose either to obey Him or to disobey Him. However, you can't easily do this by yourself; you need God's help. When you receive Jesus as your Saviour and Lord, God gives you the Holy Spirit to live in you and to help you choose to obey God and not to sin.

