



## Outer Growth - Environment

**Defile not, therefore, the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell: for I the Lord dwell among the children of Israel**

*Numbers 35:34*

**Eyes** ----- Matthew 6:22-23

**News** ----- Psalms 112:7, Proverbs 25:25

**Voice** ----- Mark 7:18

**Interests** – 2 Kings 17:12

**Relatives** - 1 John 4:1

**Opinion** — Job 32:10, 17

**Neighbor** - Exodus 20:16, Romans 15:2

**Music** ----- Luke 15:25

**Ears** ----- Col. 2:4, 2 Timothy 4:3-4,

**Nose** ----- Job 27:3

**Touch** — Colossians 2:21

The environment can be easily overlooked and ignored. However, our surroundings are equally important as the air we breathe. Why? The simple reason is that we are living in it. The atmosphere that we dwell in contributes to the character of who we become.

*Believers in Christ, who claim to live holy lives, should have similar surroundings. Otherwise, then how can God continue to be in our midst? Where God dwells, believers should take precautions to strengthen their environment and a reason why care should be taken not to pollute it. Actions speak louder than words. The activity sends a message to society along with the surroundings that mold our personality.*

All of us will encounter different environments, such as our place of work, where most of us have to deal with others at least one-third of the day. Then there is the family atmosphere

where we dwell or meet other members, which is normal, where we grew up from childhood until now. There is our social and neighborhood environment, whether good or bad, we sometimes have to encounter. The result contributes to our daily living to become who we are, whether for or against it. The point is the experience of those moments is a part of the environment in our life.

*The environment begins with the eyes in what we see. The desire for something we visually focus on is an invitation to attract other people or things that could directly affect us. In the Garden of Eden, Eve gave attention to the tree of good and evil. Even though her attention was on the tree, her curiosity made her not realize the serpent. Therefore, Eve got more than what she expected which led her to do the wrong thing: eat the forbidden fruit.*

Our surroundings may contain good and bad news that will inform us to be more vigilant. However, the approach to that information will determine how we handle and use it to help or hurt ourselves. In the Garden of Eden, Eve gets visited by the serpent with a deceitful question. The misstate inquiry, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" The response from Eve is informative: "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God said neither eat it nor touch it lest we die."

*Eve did receive the good news regarding the surroundings of the Garden of Eden from God about the trees to eat fruit. Eve also did get the bad news of the tree in the middle that she or Adam are not to touch or eat. The response from her to the serpent's question made him fully aware that the woman did get instruction from God and that she did understand. However, the enemy uses the reptile to undermine Eve to corrupt her environment by enticement with lying to lure her into sinning against God.*

Today in society, whether a believer or non-believer, why is it that when people recognize another person who aims to live free from wrongdoing, they attempt to disrupt that? The simple reason is that it bothers them so much that they before did live that way and now see themselves heading in a different direction. Righteousness is right doing, and

that represents God. Every person starts off good and innocent until they reach maturity to know the difference. From there, all humans must decide the way they want to go.

*Our environment will depend on the voice we decide to listen to and follow. In the Garden of Eden, if Eve did not respond to the serpent, would we be in the situation we are in today? Only God knows that answer. The old saying, "there is a potential danger when people respond to a question from a stranger." The reason being is it opens the door of opportunity for them to sell their pitch.*

Today, the voices in our lives that we consider listening to have led us to the environment where we are now. In the Garden of Eden, the serpent speaks to the woman with a question. The reply from Eve to the reptile is that God instructed them what to eat and what not. The voice of God enabled Adam and Eve to carry out the command of the Lord. However, the question from the serpent, with the mix of deception, makes Eve think and reconsider. The voice of influence gives her a situation now to make a choice.

*Every one of us could reflect on something we heard in the past from others that steered us on the path we are on now. We listen to that voice of persuasion, the voice of reasoning, or the voice of compromise that made us change direction even though that was initially not our intention. We allow language to form ideas and influence us to change our plans and lead our flesh in a way we did not expect. Instead, we should have been listening to that still, small voice that was speaking to our inner person, trying to get the attention of our spirit.*

The environment that we create also may come from our interests. Sometimes people can get carried away with their attraction until it puts them in danger. Those interests could eventually become an idol if the person is not careful. The passion may be the admiration of someone, hanging out at a specific place, eating at a restaurant, or spending money on something that may be addictive. The point is our interests can be idols that could consume so much of our lives that we do not realize or recognize it.

*In the Garden of Eden, after the deceptive comments from the serpent to boost Eve's interest in the tree of good and evil, verse six*

*of Genesis chapter three, "the woman saw that the tree was good" and "pleasant to the eyes." The same tree God told her and Adam not to eat or touch suddenly becomes attractive. Why? Eve's interest in the tree and the serpent telling her enticing things made her see it differently than God said.*

Relatives can influence our environment simply because they are related, and they expect you to follow them. In the Garden of Eden, Eve initially made the first move to go against what God instructed, and when she did, she gave it to her husband, Adam. The focus here is Eve's husband. Before the compromise, no mention of Adam until the forbidden fruit.

*Eve's husband partakes in the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil without any indication of resistance when Eve offers. The example shows how much of an impact a relative could have on another. Trust without asking questions is not the norm. However, the resemblance can influence us to be careless instead of assessing the situation. The last time we hear about Adam is from verse twenty-three of chapter two in Genesis, where he states, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." this makes you wonder if he trusts her judgment concerning the forbidden fruit.*

Our environment can be the result of the viewpoint of others. In the Garden of Eden, Eve declares to the serpent what God said concerning the fruit they could eat there. However, the snake gives his version to Adam's wife. The serpent roughly states, "You shall not die. For God knows in the day you eat thereof your eyes will open and be as gods knowing good and evil."

*Today, many people are living under the shadow of others. The complaint from the victims is the lack of freedom and attempting to please everybody. The focus is not on the younger kids under the guardian's or parents' care but on the pressure of the neighborhood environment where they expect you to follow them or vice versa. There is an old saying, "monkey-see, monkey-doo," which is the person copying what others do. People nearby constantly look over their shoulders to keep updated on the latest, which can be annoying sometimes.*

The sounds and lyrics of music and what we listen to can change the environment and our approach to life if we are not careful. Words and the lyrics of a song with the beat have the potential to sanctify or corrupt life. Music today only has two categories from a Biblical standpoint: it is either godly or ungodly. The music either honors God or consecrates the temple. Or, the lyrics do the opposite: corrupt the body and dishonor Him.

*The elder drew nigh to the house and heard music and dancing in Luke fifteen verse twenty-five. Music is rewarding because it can uplift a person who may have had a bad day or is feeling down. The choice of the melody of what comes into the body from listening is the concern. The significance is the result of the music and how it affects the person. The bottom verse of Mark seven fifteen firmly expresses, "but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile a man."*

The things we hear can draw us into a pernicious environment. Especially believers should be careful not to be fooled by convoluted arguments from non-believers. In other words, the ears could hear things that will tempt us into a trap of *deceptive* verbal fights that seem believable but which are false.

These arguments could contain human philosophies, events, or worldly news that are not worth debating over, which can start from mild to severe. Human squabbles may appear wise, but they are foolish to God's wisdom.

*Eyes, Ears, and mouth can put us into trouble with others. However, the ears can lead us to an environment contrary to God and His Word. Human knowledge often sets itself against God. True wisdom comes from God and His Word, not human tricks. We have to be careful in what we listen to those who minister God's Word.*

Today, many people have experienced an environment that wants to hear nice things and enticing words to please the ears instead of receiving the solid truth. First, people would grow tired of the true gospel and reject it. Instead, they would turn in other directions, looking to replace sound or healthy teaching. The expectation is evident when the gospel begins with a humbling, challenging thought: we are imperfect and in need of saving. The

ears could lead us away and astray from God if we allow the flesh things to consume us.

*Second, instead of following godly teachers, people would follow teachers who tell them what they like to hear rather than what is true. The idea of "itching ears" may be ears that desire something different from the traditional gospel message. The ears of the flesh will opt to look for alternatives because human nature is simply that way: born of the world. Third, those who fall away will specifically be avoiding the truth. In addition to not enduring sound teaching and finding teachers of their liking, these unfaithful people will turn the other direction from reality.*

Fourth, these unfaithful people will stumble through false ideas and myths. If the truth says to go right, these people go left. They will not live by the truth or even listen to it. Instead of responding to reason and conviction, they will rebel against it.

*In the Garden of Eden, Eve's ears hear the question from the serpent regarding what God said. Then she briefly explains to the snake what God said. The serpent replies, "You shall not surely die" to Eve in verse four of Genesis chapter three. The fact she received the message and did not reply and allowed the snake to continue shows she accepted what was said. The ears contributed to turning Eve's heart away from God's way to the serpent's deceptive idea causing her to sin against God.*

The nose is where life begins because Genesis two seven states, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." However, the nose could put believers into trouble in environments of smell, such as food or fragrances that would entice and could lead us down the wrong path of unrighteousness. Nothing wrong with that, right? True. However, it is not the item that should concern us, but the person who presents it.

*Touching things should not lead us into ungodly environments, should it? Wrong! Touching has led many into adultery, stealing, and destroying life. Commandments six, seven, and eight in verses thirteen through fifteen of Exodus chapter twenty make it clear. Touch leads to taste and handle and creates predators and victims of the laws mentioned.*

In the Garden of Eden, the second part of verse six of genesis chapter three, "she took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and her husband, and he did eat." Eve touched the fruit, tasted it, handled it, and gave it to her husband, Adam, and ate. How quickly sin germinates once a person makes contact with an unclean thing. The environment changes from godly to ungodly, light to darkness, and sinless to sinful. Touch not, taste not, handle not.

*The environment is so vital in a person's life. We are either on the right side of God or the wrong side. We can determine our destiny by the atmosphere that evolves around us. We have the opportunity to make it better spiritually or remain carnally. We must incorporate the resources God has given us, which include His Word, prayer, and godly fellowship with those who serve God in spirit and truth.*