



Standing at the Tree

Reflecting the glow of recovery from Starlight at Tamassee

By Jon Holland, CEO of Tamassee DAR School

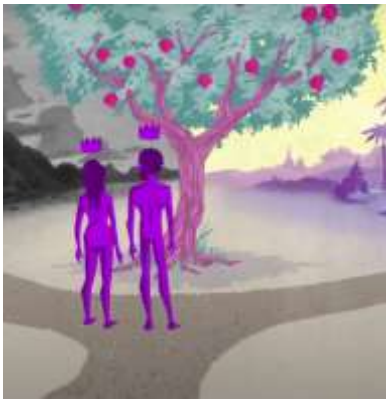


The tree of life has become popular in recent years. You can find it in the wall art section of Hobby Lobby and in an incense clouded shop of new age spirituality. People wear it as jewelry, cast in silver rings, engraved on bracelets, or dangling as a necklace pendant. The tree of life is iconic.

For me, it's iconic because it's an icon – a window into a deeper, spiritual reality. The roots of the icon are in the story of Genesis chapters two and three. God instructs the first humans not to eat from the tree of knowing good and bad. The implication is God wants to teach them wisdom to live well; he doesn't want them deciding on their own and for themselves what is good and bad. If they do, it will lead to death, and he has a tree of life for them instead. The man and woman listen to the deception of the serpent, doubt God's goodness, deny their identity, and choose to eat – all independently of God. Death comes in the shape of shame, isolation, blame, pain, and exile.

It's a tragic story, but it describes the choice we all have every day. Will we allow God to teach us what is good and bad and how to live

day by day, or will we choose for ourselves what we think is good and bad? The choices amount to life or death, sometimes very slowly but on occasion very suddenly. There is no escaping this reality. It is written into the very fabric of the cosmos and the human heart. It's why Step 3 of the 12 Steps encourages us to "make a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understand God."



I remember a conversation I had with someone in early recovery a few years ago. Something unexpected had happened, and this friend was very upset. They had decided it was bad, and because it was bad, they had to take control. Out of that fear and anxiety, they were making choices that were likely to be harmful. During our conversation, they asked with exasperation, "What do you want me to do?" I replied, "Stop standing at the tree, deciding what is good and bad on your own. Ask God. Trust his goodness and plan. Let him guide you."

When we live in addiction, we make a mess of our lives. We decide that what is bad for us (using an addictive substance or behavior) is good, and we court death in small and eventually big ways. When we are honest, we know this is true. Then we come to believe a caring God can restore us, and as we allow him to start leading us, life comes.

At Starlight at Tamasee, we believe moms can choose life by turning their wills and lives over to the care of God. To learn more about Starlight, visit www.starlight.tdarschool.org, or contact us at starlight@tdarschool.org or 864-944-1390. If your church or civic group is interested in a presentation on recovery, contact Jon Holland at jholland@tdarschool.org.

Starlight
MIRACLES AWAIT AT TAMASSEE