

## The Choices We Make

Man, as God created him, is not a robot; he is a free moral agent, a creature capable of making choices or decisions. That this is so was necessarily inferred in the very beginning when he was placed in the garden of Eden, and when God commanded, saying, *“Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die,”* Gen. 2:16-17. Yes, man was informed of the consequences if he made the wrong choice, or decision, with regards to the trees from which to eat, but he nonetheless was able to make that choice. Being tempted by the devil, Gen. 3:1-6, Eve was *“deceived,”* and ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, whereas *“Adam was not deceived,”* I Tim. 2:14. But for whatever reason he ate of its fruit. He had a choice to make, and he made the wrong choice, and he suffered the dire consequences of that terrible choice.

That man is a free moral agent and is capable of making choices, both good and bad, is inferred in Matt. 7:13-14, wherein Jesus said *“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”* In these verses two different gates, two different ways, and two destinies are mentioned. If one chooses the *“wide”* gate and travels in the *“broad”* way, the consequences will be tragic, but each person is enabled to make his own choice as to which *“gate”* he chooses to *“enter.”* Moreover, the fact that man is a free moral agent and capable of making choices, or decisions, is especially inferred in Deut. 30:19, wherein God had this to say to the Israelites: *“I call heaven and earth, as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessings and cursing, therefore **choose life**, that both you and your descendants may live.”* Yes, they were given a choice between *“life and death,”* and *“blessing and cursing,”* and God told them what to *“choose,”* but nonetheless the choice was theirs to make. And Old Testament history proves that they made the wrong choice! Perhaps one of the clearest verses which proves that we are creatures of choice, is set forth in Josh. 24:15, wherein Joshua had this to say to the all the people who were then gathered together: *“And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, **choose for yourselves** this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”*

As is indicated by the preceding scriptures, each accountable person is a free moral agent, capable of choosing which *“gate”* to enter, which *“way”* to travel, and *“whom”* they are going to *“serve.”* However, no person can choose **the consequences** of their choice, or decision! With this in mind, please consider Gal. 6:7: *“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.”* “The bottom line” is this; **we** make the choices; **God** determines the consequences! No person, and no group of persons (however large) can alter God’s law of sowing and reaping! Hence, it is imperative that we make the right choices in life.

**Realms in Which it is so Important that we make the Right Choices:**

**1. Who we are going to serve — whether it be God or Satan.** Like Joshua of old, each one of should boldly declare, *“for me and my house we will serve the Lord,”* Josh. 24:15. Sadly, however, the majority of people prefer to “do their own thing” as opposed to choosing to *“seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,”* Matt. 6:33; 7:13-14.

**2. Which guide book to follow religiously.** The Bible, and the Bible alone, was *“given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work,”* 2 Tim. 3:16-17. But alas! Multitudes are not content with just the Bible, and choose instead such uninspired, man-made creeds as The Catholic Catechism, the Book of Mormon, the Koran, The Baptist Manual, The Methodist Discipline, etc., etc., etc.

**3. Whom to marry.** Someone has well said that “when a child of God marries a child of the devil he will likely have problems with his father in law.” It is unwise for Christians to become *“unequally yoke together with unbelievers,”* 2 Cor. 6:14. One person advised, saying, “choose your life mate carefully. From this one decision will come 90 percent of your happiness or misery.”

**4. Our profession.** From the very beginning, God intended for man to work, Gen. 2:15; 3:19. The apostle Paul pointedly said, *“If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat,”* 2 Thess. 3:10. But one should choose his profession carefully — by asking such questions as: (1) “is this an honorable profession, or does it force me to bid ‘god speed’ to conduct and action which is sinful?” (2) “What kind of company will I be forced to keep?” (3) “How will this profession affect my influence as a Christian?” Etc., etc.

**5. Our Friends.** Please note I Cor. 15:33: *“Do not be deceived; Evil company corrupts good habits.”* What kind of people do we choose to “hang out” with? The answer to that question may well affect the nature of the choices we make in life

**6. Our Entertainment.** It is not wrong to enjoy life. Please note I Pet. 3:10. *“He who would love life and see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit. Let him turn away from evil and do good...,”* I Pet. 3:10-11. Sadly, however, many people’s concept of a “good time” involves “boozing it up with the boys,” getting “high” on drugs, and pursuing the condemned *“works of the flesh”* as identified in Gal. 5:19-21. Admittedly, sin offers many *“pleasures,”* but we should be like Moses by *“choosing to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin...,”* Heb. 11:25. Yes, the *“pleasures of sin”* are *“passing;”* they are short lived, but the consequences thereof can be both miserable in nature and forever in duration! No slavery imposed by man upon others is as painful, or shameful, than the self-imposed slavery experienced by those addicted to pornography, to alcohol, to gambling, to drugs, etc.

### **Principles by Which We Can Make Wise Choices**

**1. Allow God’s Wisdom to Prevail over Human wisdom.** Jeremiah said *“the way of*

*man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps,” Jer. 10:23. Inasmuch as God’s “understanding is infinite,” Psa. 147:5, and our understanding is so limited, it pays to seek God’s wisdom (as revealed in the Scriptures) to govern the choices we make in life.*

**2. Make choices which values relationships over rights.** This should be self-evident when we call to mind the fact that the “*second*” commandment is “*You shall love your neighbor as yourself,*” Matt. 22:39, and how this commandment was so clearly demonstrated in the Parable of the Good Samaritan, Luke 10:25-36.

**3. Make Choices which values God’s eternal promises over pleasure.** Jesus said “*seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,*” Matt., 6:33. Earthly pleasures, at best, are temporal, whereas eternity is forever! Each person is facing death, the judgment, and the eternity which follows (Heb. 9:27; 2 Cor. 5:10; Matt. 25:46).

**Conclusion:** Someone has well said, “we make our choices; our choices make us.” Multitudes, in life, feel as if they are enduring a “living hell” because of the terrible choices they have made. And what is even worse is the fact that if they remain both unconverted in their relationship with God, and unchanged in their conduct, they will one day be sentenced to an **eternal** hell! Rev. 21:8. Heaven, however, will be eternally blissful. Let us therefore choose wisely and carefully!

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“The teeth may be false, but let the tongue be true.”

“To be true to God, one must be true to God’s Word!”