

THE ABC's
of
Becoming
A Better Christian

CHOICES

AND

CONSEQUENCES

Key Passages

Deuteronomy 30:19 (ESV)

19 I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. **Therefore, choose life**, that you and your offspring may live

Matthew 7:13-14 (NLT)

13 “You can enter God’s Kingdom only through the narrow gate.

The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for **the many who choose that way**.

14 But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it.



Introduction

God Has Given All Of Us Free Will To Make Choices

Free will or the *freedom to make our own choices* is a very important issue in our society.

Every day, we make choices that have an impact....

We Have The Freedom To Make Choices ~ But We Do Not Control The Consequences

ALL CHOICES HAVE CONSEQUENCES

Many of our troubles occur because we base our choices on unreliable systems...

The Culture ~ Everyone is doing it

It's Tradition ~ We've always done it

The Reason ~ It seems logical

Emotional ~ It just felt right

*The Bible is a Book of God's Word given to us **for our learning** so that **WE CAN MAKE CHOICES** and **AVOID BAD CONSEQUENCES** so that **we can enjoy the blessings and fellowship of God.***



How To Make Better Choices

Key Factors When Making Godly Choices

*C*onsequences

*H*oly Spirit

*O*bedience

*I*mpact

*C*ounsel

*E*xperiences

*S*oul



Make Choices With Consequences In Mind

Genesis 2:15-17 (NLT)

15 The Lord God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it.

16 But the Lord God warned him, “You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden—

17 **except** the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. **IF YOU EAT ITS FRUIT, YOU ARE SURE TO DIE.**”

Notice The Language ~ You Are Free To Eat From Any Tree

Original Intent ~ My Word Should Be Enough To Guide Your Choices

Genesis 3:1-5 (NIV)

1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made.

He said to the woman, “**Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?**”

2 The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, 3 but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”

4 “**You will not surely die,**” the serpent said to the woman. 5 “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

3 Keys For Making Sound Choices

- 1) **Relationship over Rights** ~ {She had a right to eat...what impact would this have on her relationship with God}
- 2) **Godliness over Greed** ~ {They had more than enough trees to eat from, but greed is a powerful enemy}
- 3) **Eternal Promises over Immediate Pleasure** ~ {The Pleasure of Right Now Was Stronger Than The Promise}

Make Choices With Consequences In Mind

Genesis 3:6 (NIV)

6 When the woman **SAW that the fruit of the tree was good for food and PLEASING TO THE EYE**, and also **desirable for gaining wisdom**, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

Faith Comes By Hearing ~ Hearing By The Word Of God

The Enemy Affects Our Choices By....

Lust of the Flesh ~ Lust of the Eye ~ Pride of Life

Matthew 6:22 (NIV)

22 "**The eye is the lamp of the body**. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light.

Genesis 13:8-10 (NLT)

8 Finally Abram said to Lot, "Let's not allow this conflict to come between us or our herdsmen. After all, we are close relatives! 9 The whole countryside is open to you. Take your choice of any section of the land you want, and we will separate. If you want the land to the left, then I'll take the land on the right.

If you prefer the land on the right, then I'll go to the left."

10 **Lot took a long look** at the fertile plains of the Jordan Valley in the direction of Zoar. The whole area was well watered everywhere, like the garden of the Lord or the beautiful land of Egypt.

(This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.)

The Impact Of Mercy On Our Choices

Genesis 3:20-24 (NIV)

20 Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.

21 The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.

*22 And the Lord God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and **live forever.**"*

Consequences

Separation and Struggle

We Celebrate Because We Live for 80 ~ The Design Was To Live Forever

*Because of God's love and mercy to humanity, most of our choices **do not have immediate results.***

We are all given a time to repent and find the Lord and His ways.

We may all get away with sinning for a while; however, in time we will reap what we have sown.

2 Peter 3:9 (NLT)

9 The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think.

No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed but wants everyone to repent.



God Controls The Consequences

2 Samuel 24:10-16 (NLT)

10 But after he had taken the census, David's conscience began to bother him. And he said to the Lord, "I have sinned greatly by taking this census. Please forgive my guilt, Lord, for doing this foolish thing."

11 The next morning the word of the Lord came to the prophet Gad, who was David's seer. This was the message:

12 "Go and say to David, "This is what the Lord says: **I will give you three choices.**

Choose one of these punishments, and I will inflict it on you."

13 So Gad came to David and asked him, "Will you choose **three years of famine throughout your land,** **three months of fleeing from your enemies,** or **three days of severe plague throughout your land?**

Think this over and decide what answer I should give the Lord who sent me."

14 "I'm in a desperate situation!" David replied to Gad.

"But let us fall into the hands of the Lord, for his mercy is great. Do not let me fall into human hands."

15 So the Lord sent a plague upon Israel that morning, and it lasted for three days.

A total of 70,000 people died throughout the nation, from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south.

16 But as the angel was preparing to destroy Jerusalem, the Lord relented and said to the death angel,

"STOP! THAT IS ENOUGH!"



Holy Spirit's Role In Making Godly Choices

John 14:26 (ESV)

26 But the Helper, *the Holy Spirit*, whom the Father will send in my name, *he will teach you all things* and *bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you*.

It is the *Holy Spirit* who can *guide our choices* even as we have freedom to make them.
He is our Compass in our Decision Making...

Galatians 5:16-17 (ESV)

16 But I say, *walk by the Spirit*, and *you will not gratify the desires of the flesh*.
17 For the desires of the flesh are *against the Spirit*, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

1 Corinthians 2:9-12 (ESV)

9 But, as it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him”— 10 these things *God has revealed to us through the Spirit*. For *the Spirit searches everything*, even the depths of God. 11 For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? *So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God*. 12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.

Ephesians 4:30 ~ And do not *grieve the Holy Spirit of God*....

Acts 7:51 ~ You stiff-necked people, you *always resist the Holy Spirit*. As your fathers did, so do you.

1 Thessalonians 5:19 ~ Do not *quench the Spirit*.

Obedience To The Word Helps Us Make Godly Choices

2 Timothy 3:14-17 (NLT)

14 But you must *remain faithful to the things you have been taught*.

You know they are true, for you know you can trust those who taught you.

15 *You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by **trusting in Christ Jesus**.*

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and is *useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. **It corrects us when we are wrong** and teaches us to do what is right.* 17 God uses it to *prepare and equip his people to do every good work.*

If You Are Not Making Good/Godly Choices

- *Are You Being Taught The Word*
 - *Do You Trust Your Teacher*
- *Have You Noticed Better Judgement*
 - *Do You Trust The Word*
 - *Are You Open To Correction*

Hebrews 4:12 (ESV)

12 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and *discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart*.

Do You Consider The Impact Of Your Choices

Deuteronomy 30:19 (ESV)

19 I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. **Therefore, choose life, that you and your offspring may live**

Genesis 13:10 (NLT)

10 **Lot took a long look** at the fertile plains of the Jordan Valley in the direction of Zoar. The whole area was well watered everywhere, like the garden of the Lord or the beautiful land of Egypt.

Genesis 13:12-13 (NLT)

12**Lot moved his tents to a place near Sodom and settled** among the cities of the plain.
13 But the people of this area were extremely wicked and constantly sinned against the Lord.

Genesis 14:11-12 (NLT)

11 The victorious invaders then plundered Sodom and Gomorrah and headed for home, taking with them all the spoils of war and the food supplies. 12 **They also captured Lot—and carried off everything he owned.**

Genesis 19:1-3 (NLT)

1 That evening the two angels came to the entrance of the city of Sodom. Lot was sitting there, and when he saw them, he stood up to meet them. Then he welcomed them and bowed with his face to the ground.
2 “My lords,” he said, **“come to my home to wash your feet, and be my guests for the night. You may then get up early in the morning and be on your way again.”** “Oh no,” they replied. “We’ll just spend the night out here in the city square.”
3 **But Lot insisted, so at last they went home with him.**

Do You Consider The Impact Of Your Choices

Genesis 19:4-8 (NLT)

4 But before they retired for the night, all the men of Sodom, young and old, came from all over the city and surrounded the house. 5 They shouted to Lot, “Where are the men who came to spend the night with you?

Bring them out to us so we can have sex with them!”

6 So Lot stepped outside to talk to them, shutting the door behind him.

7 “Please, my brothers,” he begged, “don’t do such a wicked thing.

8 *Look, I have two virgin daughters. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do with them as you wish.*

But please, leave these men alone, for they are my guests and are under my protection.”

{In An Ungodly Culture... It Is Only A Matter Of Time Before You Begin To Compromise In Your Choices}

Genesis 19:24-26 (NLT)

24 Then the Lord rained down fire and burning sulfur from the sky on Sodom and Gomorrah.

25 He utterly destroyed them, along with the other cities and villages of the plain, wiping out all the people and every bit of vegetation. 26 *But Lot’s wife looked back as she was following behind him, and she turned into a pillar of salt.*

Genesis 19:30-32 (NLT)

30 Afterward Lot left Zoar because he was afraid of the people there, and he went to live in a cave in the mountains with his two daughters. 31 One day the older daughter said to her sister, “There are no men left anywhere in this entire area, so we can’t get married like everyone else. And our father will soon be too old to have children. 32 Come, let’s get him drunk with wine, and then we will have sex with him. *That way we will preserve our family line through our father.*”

This led to the birth of the AMMORITES AND MOABITES

Wise Counsel Helps Us Make Godly Choices

Proverbs 19:20 (NIV)

20 *Listen to advice* and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise.

Proverbs 15:22 (NIV)

22 Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with *many advisers they succeed*.

Proverbs 12:15 (ESV)

15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a *wise man listens to advice*.

Proverbs 11:14 (NASB)

14 Where there is no guidance the people fall, But in *abundance of counselors there is victory*.

Psalms 1:1 (NASB)

1 How blessed is the man who does *not walk in the counsel of the ungodly*

How Do I Recognize Godly Counsel?

2 Timothy 3:10-12 (NLT)

10 But you, Timothy, *certainly know what I teach*, and *how I live, and what my purpose in life is*.

You know my faith, my patience, my love, and my endurance.

11 You know how much persecution and suffering I have endured. You know all about how I was persecuted in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra—but the Lord rescued me from all of it.



Wise Counsel Helps Us Make Godly Choices

How Do I Recognize Godly Counsel?

2 Timothy 4:3-4 (NLT)

3 For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear.

4 They will reject the truth and chase after myths.

PEOPLE DO NOT DESIRE TO HEAR GODLY COUNSEL

1 Kings 22:5-8 (ESV)

*5 And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, “**Inquire first for the word of the Lord.**”*

*6 Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, **about four hundred men**, and said to them,*

“Shall I go to battle against Ramoth-gilead, or shall I refrain?” And they said,

*“**Go up, for the Lord will give it into the hand of the king.**”*

*7 But Jehoshaphat said, “**Is there not here another prophet of the Lord of whom we may inquire?**”*

8 And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “There is yet one man by whom we may inquire of the Lord, Micaiah,

but I hate him**, for **he never prophesies good concerning me, but evil....

GODLY COUNSEL TELLS YOU WHAT YOU NEED TO HEAR....NOT WHAT YOU WANT TO HEAR!!!



Past Experiences Shape Our Present Choices

What Did You Learn From Previous Choices

God can send clear messages through past experiences...

A Memory is a good motivator to make better choices

1 Corinthians 10:11-12 (ESV)

*11 Now these things happened to **THEM AS AN EXAMPLE**,
but they were written down for our instruction....*

*12 Therefore let anyone who **THINKS** that he stands take heed lest he fall.*

*Humans tend to make individual choices based on
a series of **past experiences**, **decisions**, and **outcomes**.*

Moses Struck The Rock and Water Came Out ~ Desired Outcome

Moses Was Commanded To Speak To The Rock

He Chooses To Strike The Rock Because It Worked Last Time!!!



Soul Choices

3 John 1:2 (NKJV)

2 Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.

God Created Man In His Image

Genesis 2:7 ~ Man Became A Living Soul...

*The soul of man is comprised of the mind, the will, and the emotions.
Summarized as “The Thinker”, “The Doer”, and “The Feeler”*

*Many People Make Choices On How They Feel
Many People Make Choices Like NIKE... Just Do It
Many People Overthink Their Choices*

A Healthy Soul Allows Us To Make Good Choices

I feel anger, bitterness, jealousy, discouragement....

My Mind which has been renewed and transformed, says, you will not act upon your feelings

The Will Responds With What The Mind Instructs

Then I Make Sound CHOICES Because I Have A Healthy Soul

In Conclusion.....

How To Make Better Choices

Key Factors When Making Godly Choices

*C*onsequences

*H*oly Spirit

*O*bedience

*I*mpact

*C*ounsel

*E*xperiences

*S*oul



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