

CHOICES --- AND CONSEQUENCES

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We have free choice ... free will. Free will is the ability to choose, will and act ... voluntarily. To act at one's own discretion. This is a God-like characteristic. This is very different from animals who act on instinct or training.

There are consequences from our choices. Our lives are made up of all of our choices ... all of our decisions.

Some decisions are much more serious ... should we get married? Should we get divorced? What career? Should I stay in a particular group or fellowship? We may not always be conscious of our decisions.

Decisions determine direction and direction determines destiny. Are our decisions taking us toward our ultimate destiny? Are we aware when we are making choices what the outcome will be?

We are free to choose but we are not free from the consequences.

We can learn from people in The Bible ... the decisions they made and the outcome ... and that can help us.

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

"See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess. **I call** **heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set**

before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."

YOU CHOOSE!! Life or death. You choose! Blessings or cursings. You choose!

How are we doing by comparison? Choices have consequences. This choosing began right back at the beginning in The Garden of Eden.

Genesis 2:15-17

Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, 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." (Hebrew: dying you shall surely die)

A fairly simple instruction ... not a hard test ... a very simple one and Adam could have passed it.

Genesis 3:1-7

Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"

And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.' "

Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (Which choice will Eve make?)

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of

its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

They weren't free from the consequences. They could have chosen life or death. The choice was plain and clear ... and they chose death. We make similar decisions.

1 Samuel 8:1-6

Now it came to pass when Samuel was old that he made his sons judges over Israel. The name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba. But his sons did not walk in his ways; they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice.

Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, and said to him, "Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. **Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.**" (A wrong decision by the people)

But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." So Samuel prayed to the Lord.

There's a major decision coming along ... it was God that was being "pushed out of the picture".

1 Samuel 8:7-18

And the Lord said to Samuel, "Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day—with which they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also. Now therefore, heed their voice. **However, you shall solemnly forewarn them, and show them the behaviour of the king who will reign over them.**"

So Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who asked him for a king. And he said, "This will be the behaviour of the king who will reign over you: He will take your sons and appoint them for his own chariots

and to be his horsemen, and some will run before his chariots. He will appoint captains over his thousands and captains over his fifties, will set some to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and some to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers, cooks, and bakers. And he will take the best of your fields, your vineyards, and your olive groves, and give them to his servants. He will take a tenth of your grain and your vintage, and give it to his officers and servants. And he will take your male servants, your female servants, your finest young men, and your donkeys, and put them to his work. He will take a tenth of your sheep. And you will be his servants.

And you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, and the Lord will not hear you in that day."

Despite the warnings:

1 Samuel 8:19-22

Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, "No, but we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles."

And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he repeated them in the hearing of the Lord. So the Lord said to Samuel, "Heed their voice, and make them a king."

And Samuel said to the men of Israel, "Every man go to his city."

A few years later ... not only have they got a bad king ... but also a contaminated religion.

1 Kings 18:20-24

So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel. And Elijah came to all the people, and said, **"How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him."** But the people answered him not a word. Then Elijah said to the people, "I alone am left a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Therefore let

them give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it; and I will prepare the other bull, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it. Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord; and the God who answers by fire, He is God.”
So all the people answered and said, “It is well spoken.”

1 Kings 18:36-40

And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, “Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that You are the Lord God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again.”

Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, “The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!”

And Elijah said to them, “Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!” So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there.

Let's look at some bad decisions made by King David:

2 Samuel 11:1-5

It happened in the spring of the year, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the people of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem. **(David made a wrong choice)**

Then it happened one evening that David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king's house. And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to behold. **(Yet another bad choice about to be made by David)** So David sent and inquired about **the woman.** And someone said, “Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?” **(Now what should David do?)**

Another wrong choice coming up!!) Then David sent messengers, and took her; and she came to him, and he lay with her, for she was cleansed from her impurity; and she returned to her house. And the woman conceived; so she sent and told David, and said, "I am with child." **(How is David going to deal with this? He decided to murder Uriah)**

The consequences of David's choices were massive. A decision can take a moment or two ... and the ramifications ... a lifetime. He wasn't immune from making wrong choices.

Hebrews 11:8-16

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. **(Abraham made a right choice)** By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. **(Abraham made another good choice)**

By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude—innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them. **(Abraham and Sarah made a far better choice!)**

Moses had a big choice to make:

Hebrews 11:24-26

By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.

He chose to walk the way of the spirit rather than the way of the world.

Choices are just part and parcel of being human beings.

Here's another choice that Abraham had to make:

Romans 4:18-22

who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be." And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. **(Abraham didn't look at his circumstances ... didn't consider the physical surroundings)** He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness."

2 Corinthians 5:7

For we walk by faith, not by sight.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while **we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. (How do we do that? By making a choice!!)** For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Paul had a choice. Where did he choose to focus? We, like Paul, can choose what to focus and meditate on all day long.

Matthew 7:13-14

“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.

This suggests that there are two gates ... a narrow way and a broad way. Narrow is the gate that leads to life. The broad gate leads to destruction. **There is a choice here. One way to life ... one to destruction.** The broad gate is the popular one ... the one that most people choose ...the one that leads to death.

Matthew 6:24

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

Make a choice ... you can't have two masters. You can't halt/dance between the two. Here's the right choice:

Matthew 6:33

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Seek God's way as your priority!!

There's a big decision for us to make in the near future:

Revelation 14:6-12

Then I saw another angel (messenger? ... heavenly satellite?) flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—saying with a loud voice, “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment

has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.”

And another angel followed, saying, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”

Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, “**If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.** And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.”

Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

Don't worship this being ... don't take his mark. Compare this to the saints:

Revelation 14:12

Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

Proverbs 14:12

**There is a way that seems right to a man, (that's why people choose)
But its end is the way of death.**

Here are 4 reasons that people often use for their choices.

1. Everyone else is doing it
2. We've always done it this way ... tradition
3. It seemed the right thing to do ... human reasoning
4. It felt like the right thing to do ... human emotion

A wiser course of action is to choose to go God's way. If God has spoken ... the best choice is to go with that.

Proverbs 3:5-8

Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
And lean not on your own understanding;
In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He shall direct your paths.

Do not be wise in your own eyes;
Fear the Lord and depart from evil.
It will be health to your flesh,
And strength to your bones.

Psalms 25:12

Who is the man that fears the Lord?

Him shall He teach in the way He chooses. (The person still has to make the choice ... but ... it is good to have the help of God)

James 1:5-8

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

We still have to make the choice.

Galatians 6:7-10

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. (OUR CHOICE!!) And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

We can't avoid making decisions. We can certainly try to be aware of the choices we are making ... and remember that big choices have big consequences. We should know the true, real values.

Let's be aware! Let's see how we do!