

13.04.2019 THE CHOICES WE MAKE

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 that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” Joshua 24:15

All human beings have the power of choice. It is of utmost importance to understand **why** we have the power to choose, and what that tells us about the God we worship.

1. We have the power of choice because God gave all humanity **free-will (the freedom to use our will to choose whatever we desire)**.
2. **By giving humanity free-will, the omnipotent God has chosen to limit Himself.** He is limited by our choices. He refuses to force us to do His will. It must be entirely our choice.
3. Before Satan rebelled in heaven, the whole universe was in harmony with God’s will.
4. Satan chose to live in enmity against the will of God.
5. When God created Adam and Eve, they (and subsequently, all humanity) were created with free-will. They were given the power to choose whether they would live in accordance with God’s will, or whether they would choose to disobey God’s will.
6. Before the Fall, Adam and Eve’s wills were in harmony with God’s will. In following the will of God, they were holy, happy and healthy.
7. When they chose to follow Satan’s appeal to their own desires, their wills became self-centred and fallen. Henceforth all their progeny (humankind) would be born with sinful natures and instead of choosing God’s desire for them, they would choose to live selfishly, following the dictates of Satan and their own sinful, self-indulgent natures.
8. So on earth, the Fall of Adam and Eve has had consequences:
 - a. Consequences to God - On earth, His will is no longer done.
 - b. Consequences to Mankind - Satan became the prince of this world, and men now follow his will. And in following Satan, they receive guilt, disease and death.
9. **But though God has chosen to be limited by our free-will, His good-will to us has no limits.**

What If...?

Let us imagine for a moment that there was no plan of redemption in place when Adam sinned. Mankind would then have no choice at all. Everything man chose to do would be selfish and self-centred and he would have no destiny but eternal death.

Free Will, Free Choice

But God in His great mercy chose to redeem mankind. Jesus, the second Adam came to this earth as the Son of Man. Where the first Adam failed by making a choice that was against God’s will, Jesus the second Adam always did God’s will here on earth.

He said, *“Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.” Hebrews 10:9* and *“My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.” John 4:34.* At the end of His ministry on earth, this is what He said:

“The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.” John 8:29

*“I have glorified You (His Father) on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.”
John 17:4*

We praise God that through His Son, Christ Jesus we can choose between eternal life and eternal death.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Ephesians 1:3, 4

Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began. Titus 1:1, 2

God has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began. 2 Timothy 1:9

All who believe in Him receive new life and a converted mind that seeks to do God’s will in everything. Now that Christ has come, mankind truly has a choice again: to live by God’s will or live outside of God’s will.

Therefore, when a Christian makes choices, his one question should be, “Is my choice consistent with God’s will?” Every choice that is in accordance with God’s will gives God the glory He deserves and is a witness to His character.

Making Right Choices

The Bible gives us principles by which we make right choices:

1. We must want to do God’s will

If any man desires to do His will (God’s pleasure), he will know (have the needed illumination to recognize, and can tell for himself) whether the teaching is from God. John 7:17 (Amplified)

Lead me, O LORD, in Thy righteousness...make Thy way straight before my face. Psalm 5:8

2. We must know the Word and seek instruction from it

How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You;

Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You. Psalm 119:9-11

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. Psalm 119:105

All Scripture is 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...2 Timothy 3:16, 17

3. We must recognise our lack of wisdom to choose rightly and seek God for wisdom

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. James 1:5

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. Proverbs 3:5, 6

4. Prayer

Pray without ceasing. 1 Thessalonians 5:17

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6, 7

5. Advice from spiritual counsellors

Without counsel, plans go awry, but in the multitude of counsellors they are established. Proverbs 15:22

6. Ask for the Spirit's guidance

Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it," Whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left. Isaiah 30:21

7. Obedience

"I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision." Acts 26:19

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. 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. Hebrews 11:8-10

8. Faith

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Hebrews 11:6

Specific Choices - marriage and a career

We sometimes come to crossroads in our lives, where we have to make decisions with far-reaching consequences. Decisions such as the choice of a career and a life-partner affect our entire future. How are we to decide at such times? We know nothing of the dangers and the hidden pitfalls along each path. We know nothing of the snares Satan has laid for us. And yet - we have to decide which path to take.

It would therefore be not only desirable but necessary for us to have someone beside us at such times whom we can trust fully, who knows the entire future. In the Lord Jesus Christ, we have just such a Person, and He is more than eager to guide us along the safest and best path.

The Bible teaches that God has a specific plan for each of our lives (*Ephesians 2:10*). He has planned a career for us, chosen a life-partner for us and even planned where we should live and what we should do each day. In every case, His choice must be the best, for He knows us so well and He takes every factor into consideration. It is wisest then to seek His will in all matters - major as well as minor.

It is not only foolish but dangerous to follow the reasoning of our limited intellects and the dictates of our emotions alone. Unless we are gripped by the conviction that God's plan is indeed the best, we are not likely to be in earnest about seeking it. *Zac Poonen: Knowing God's Will*

Conclusion:

Man's greatest honour and privilege is to do the will of God.

This was what the Lord Jesus taught His disciples. He once said that only those who did His Father's will would enter the kingdom of Heaven (*Matthew 7:21*). He also said that His true brothers and sisters were those who did the will of God (*Matthew 12:50*).

This emphasis was duly passed on by the apostles to their generation. Peter declared that God sets men free from sin so that they can do His will (*1 Peter 4:1, 2*). Paul asserted that believers are created anew in Christ Jesus so that they can walk in a path God has already mapped out for them. He therefore exhorted the

Ephesian Christians not to be foolish, but to understand what the will of the Lord was for their lives (*Ephesians 2:10; 5:17*). He prayed for the Colossian Christians that they might be filled with the knowledge of God's will. He told them that his co-worker Epaphras was also praying for them that they might fulfil all the will of God (*Colossians 1:9; 4:12*). The apostle John taught that only those who did the will of God would abide forever (*1 John 2:17*).

This emphasis is unfortunately rare in our day and generation. Hence the shallowness and powerlessness of the average believer today. Men are urged to come to Jesus merely to receive forgiveness. In apostolic times, people were told that forgiveness of sins was to be only a prelude to a life dedicated to the fulfilment of the whole will of God.

Acts 13:22 seems to imply that David was called "a man after God's own heart" because he desired to do the will of God alone. David himself tells us elsewhere that he delighted in doing God's will (*Psalms 40:8*). He was not a perfect man. He committed many sins, some very serious ones, for which God had to punish him severely. Yet God forgave him and found pleasure in him because basically David wanted to do all of God's will. This encourages us to believe that in spite of all our imperfections, we too can be men and women after God's own heart - if only our hearts are set on doing His will.

The New Testament urges believers to walk as Jesus walked, following His example. The guiding principle of Jesus' entire life and ministry was to do the will of His Father. He never moved until His Father told Him to. And when He did move, neither the threats of His enemies nor the pleadings of His friends could stop Him from doing what His Father required of Him. His daily food was to fulfil His Father's will (*John 4:34*). As men crave for food to nourish their bodies, He craved to do the will of the One Who had sent Him.

Every believer should have a similar hunger to fulfil all the will of God. How easy it is to pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven," and then to do just as we please, without seeking God's guidance in our daily lives. *Ibid*.

Are you in darkness and know not how to find the light? Follow the light you have. Set your heart to obey what you do know of the word of God. His power, His very life, dwells in His word. As you receive the word in faith, it will give you power to obey. As you give heed to the light you have, greater light will come. You are building on God's word, and your character will be built after the similitude of the character of Christ.

Christ, the true foundation, is a living stone; His life is imparted to all that are built upon Him. "Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house." "Each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord." 1 Peter 2:5, R.V.; Ephesians 2:21, R.V. The stones became one with the foundation; for a common life dwells in all. That building no tempest can overthrow; for 'that which shares the life of God, with Him surviveth all'. Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing: p.150
