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Choices

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My apologies to our readers. This is late because we had a flood event that included both our offices, meaning cleanup and repairs. The computer died in September and went to the shop. We replaced the hard drive. We finally got it home and started reloading software programs that don't work right. It's a major challenge. I pray you enjoy this very late issue.  
Beth Beall, Editor

### Making Wise Choices

By: Amanda Stephanus

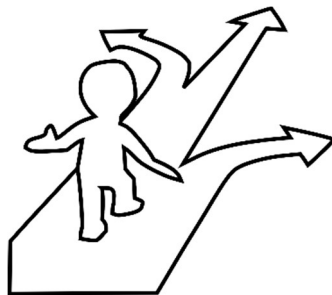
We make choices every day, some insignificant and some that have a greater impact on our lives. In order to not lead thoughtless, or reckless, lives (Mark 7:22), there are some biblical principles we can use in our decision making. **1) How will this affect my character?** When we became Christians, we put off the old man and put on the new man (Colossians 3:9-10). By doing this, we began to live for Christ, following after those things which build moral character, e.g., the fruit of the spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). Will this decision bring you closer to God or farther way from who He desires you to be? Will it help you pursue those things Paul told the Philippian brethren to mediate on in Philippians 4:8? **2) How will this affect my service to God?** Our whole life is to be spent fearing God and keeping His commandments (Ecclesiastes 12:13). Sometimes, we are given a choice about a job, and we want to take it because of how good it will be, or how well we can help support our family, etc. Yet, what if it is something that will take time away from your ability to serve God? Just because something is not inherently sinful does not mean it is wise for us to pursue. **3) How will this affect my influence?** We have been commanded to be a light in a dark and dying world and to influence those around us (Matthew 5:13-16). Our lights become dim when we start to look and sound like the world around us, and we lose the ability to influence others for good. However, it is not just how we influence others

but the influence of others that impacts us. The Proverbs writer tells us those who keep company with fools will be destroyed yet those who walk with the wise will be wise (Proverbs 13:20). I'll never forget the illustration we learned as youth – it is far easier to be pulled down off of a chair than it is to pull someone up onto the chair with you. Those who insist they can be around individuals or things which God has warned us against are playing with fire and making choices that are not in their best interest (1 Corinthians 15:33). **4) How will this affect my ability to withstand temptation?** This world is full of sin because of the free will of man. However, James tells us we are tempted by our own desires (James 1:14). If we continue to make choices that put us in the path of temptation, of those things we know we struggle with, we are setting ourselves up for failure whether now or later. While this is not an exhaustive list, it is a good place to start when making decisions. May we all apply the wisdom found in God's word to make decisions that will help, not hinder, us in our daily lives.

Questions/Application:

1. What are some other questions you can ask before making decisions?

Spend time in prayer asking God for wisdom in making whatever decisions you might be facing and then set aside extra time to meditate on His word to gain



Decisions Already Made  
by Elizabeth Turner Beall

Many choices we make each day are not life-changing and rarely have consequences:

What to have for breakfast;

What to wear that day;

Whether to brush your teeth once or twice;

What color car to buy;

What music to listen to;

Whether to eat hamburger or pizza for lunch;

Other choices bring on life-long responsibilities:

To marry that certain someone;

To have children or not;

In choosing careers.

But of all the choices we make, to become a Christian is the most important choice and decision we can make because it results in our eternal destiny—forever and ever without end. Once that choice is made, life then should become a series of Decisions Already Made. What do I mean by that? Becoming a Christian means God has forgiven ALL our sins of the past because we have repented of them and changed our lives. We came up out of that water of baptism “a new creature” (Romans 6:1-11, especially 4), clean and pure. The decision is (should be) already made to

- attend ALL worship services, Bible studies, plus any other meeting times

  - set by the elders of the local congregation, unless we are sick;

- find our place in the congregation according to our abilities;

- learn to teach others;

- teach our children every day something about God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit;

- make a point to get to know ALL our church family;

- example our lives for co-workers, friends, family;

- find places to attend when on vacation or away from our church home;

- keep our eyes open to help those in need anywhere, any time;

- to make and keep our lives as close as possible to God as we can, with His help of course, and to study and pray daily;

- leave visiting family and friends at home if they choose not to attend with us;

- quit ALL bad/addictive habits (yes, this may take a while even with concentrated effort, including bad language;

- be careful to dress modestly;

- never put yourself in questionable situations so we won't be tempted to sin, and so those who know we are Christians won't be tempted to sin as well.

Yes, the list could go on and on, but you get the idea. Being a Christian is a lifetime of Decisions Already Made, and when those times arise, with the Decisions Already Made, there is no need to question or having to decide. Have I been perfect in keeping these Decisions Already Made? Of course not. I am only human, and I have had my weak moments. However, yes, for the most part I have kept those Decisions Already Made. Life has been easier because I did not have to wrestle with any of those decisions. I love God the Father and God the Saviour. I wanted to please them, and I want to go to Heaven. Let's all evaluate our lives and make the appropriate changes—repentance, confessions— that puts us closer to God (Deity) and on track with Him. Then let us also encourage our Christian sister (and brothers) around us to do the same. Lives lived FOR God with these Decisions Already Made at baptism keeps us on the road to our Eternal Home in Heaven with God.

See you in Heaven!



Choices

By Wilburta Arrowood

In I Chronicles 21 we are told how King David chose to have the people counted—more specifically he chose to have the men who drew a sword counted. He wanted to know how secure his nation was based on his military power. Joab tried to dissuade him by reminding the king of God's ability and willingness to help. After the deed was done, David realized his error and confessed to God. He asked for forgiveness, but God gave him 3 choices. <sup>11</sup> So Gad sent the prophet Gad to David and to say to him, "This is what the Lord says: 'Take for yourself <sup>12</sup> three years of famine, or three months to be swept away before your foes while the sword of

your enemies overtakes *you*, or else three days of the sword of the Lord: a plague in the land, and the angel of the Lord destroying throughout the territory of Israel.' Now, therefore, consider what answer I shall bring back to Him who sent me." There was forgiveness later, but there were also some severe consequences. Seventy thousand men died because of David's sin.

Sometimes we seem to think our choices aren't that important. We make "snap" decisions and go our way. May I suggest there is a criteria for every decision we make. That decision-making rule book is the Bible. We can and should consider each choice we make based on Bible principles. Years ago there was a fad involving bracelets and other items with the motto WWJD, what would Jesus do? It is still a valid question to ask oneself when making decisions.

Did you consider WWJD when you chose who you would date? Did you choose the Christian, or the blatant atheist, or maybe even someone neutral, but certainly not a support to your faith? Was WWJD in your mind when you took a job? Are you in a work environment with moral people, or with people who brag about their ungodly activities? Not everyone has the option to work with only Christian coworkers, but we do have the choice to not work in the alcoholic beverage industry or such. We have the choice to not participate in immoral or illegal acts.

When Sunday morning comes around, do you choose to get up and attend worship every week, or are there some weeks that you are too tired, or the kids have a soccer game you want to attend? Which choice do you make on Wednesday evening when it is time for Bible study? Do you choose to get a good night's rest the night before so you are not too tired for Sunday worship? That seems like a small choice, but it can have an important consequence, both on your attendance and on your eternal resting place.

David's choice to number the people doesn't sound like such a big deal, but to God it spoke volumes about David's faith. It was a very big deal. Our decisions are just as big a deal to God. Think about it.



Find the following words in the puzzle below:

GOD	PLACE	FORGIVEN
SIN	STUDY	LIFETIME
FIND	CHRIST	CHARACTER
HOLY	CHOICES	CHRISTIAN
PRAY	DESTINY	ENCOURAGE
READ	ETERNAL	IMPORTANT
DEITY	SERVICE	INFLUENCE
GIVEN	WORSHIP	CONFESSION
HUMAN	DECISION	REPENTANCE
MORAL	EVALUATE	TEMPTATION

R E T C A R A H C H R I S T  
E N C O U R A G E O E N T E  
P I H S R O W O R L A D U M  
E A U I F I N D T Y D T D P  
N L M N E I D E S T I N Y T  
T I A B T O E C E K N A N A  
A F N N E V I G R O F T A T  
N E O L R E T R V E L R I I  
C T I A N F Y G I H U O T O  
E I S R A P L A C E E P S N  
P M I O L R Q H E Z N M I E  
R E C M S E C I O H C I R V  
A I E E T A U L A V E M H I  
Y X D N O I S S E F N O C G



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