

Are You In Control Of Your Choices?

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By Peter Meyer



Romans 8:13 says, “For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.”

Our daily lives are full of making decisions and choices, with them comes responsibility and consequences, but often when choices turn out bad, we try shift that responsibility and consequence by blaming someone else as the cause for that decision.

(Genesis 3:12-13... Adam blamed Eve... Eve blamed the Serpent... Historically, the greatest bad decision ever!) How often we use the phrases, or hear our children say; “I had to” or “She (he) made me” or “He (she) told me to” or “Everyone else does it!” or “It’s on YouTube” as a reason why we did or did not do something?

Out of necessity we, including myself, tend to use these statements as an illusion that we are not the responsible active agent in many of our own choices so endeavour to claim someone else or media is in control, thereby relieving us of our basic responsibility and guilt. 2 Corinthians 9:7 - “Let each man do according to what he intends in his heart. Not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”

To make sure we avoid making choices to give “reluctantly or under compulsion”, we need to realize that we are in control of our choices, no matter how we feel or how we are influenced by outside media or peer pressure.

Paul would not even accept a gift that he felt was given because the giver felt he “had to” give it. He once sent a gift back so “that any favour you do will be spontaneous and not forced” (Philemon 1:14). Jesus

said a similar thing of the worker who was angry about the wage for which he had agreed to work: "Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius?" (Matthew 20:13). The man had made a free choice to work for a certain amount and was angry because someone who had worked fewer hours had gotten the same wage.

Throughout the Scriptures, people are reminded of their choices and asked to take responsibility for them. Like Paul says, if we choose to live by the Spirit, we will live; if we choose to follow our sinful nature, we will die (Romans 8:13). Making decisions based on others' approval or on guilt only breeds resentment, a product of our sinful nature. We have been so trained by others on what we "should" do that we think we are being loving when we do things out of compulsion.

With choices comes great responsibility and, as we are the ones who makes them, we ultimately have to live with their consequences. More often than we realize, we forget to involve God in our decisions and don't stop to think "is this in His will or does our decision honour the Lord?" We are the ones who may be keeping ourselves from making the choices we could be happy with and the blessings that follow.

1 Corinthians 10:31 says, "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

In conclusion, the Word of God is given to us for instruction and learning in order that we may be able to make good decisions and choices according to God's will and avoid bad consequences so that we can enjoy His blessings and fellowship.

As believers, there are two main choices:

Trusting Christ as our Saviour and learning to become like Him by following the leading of the Holy Spirit. Both have eternal consequences. Therefore, we must remember that every choice has a consequence.

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