

Freedom to choose in the context of God's will

- 25 different kinds of Oreos
- 13 kinds of Cheerios
- 18 kinds of Coca Cola (Main Brand)
- 18 flavors of Quaker Oatmeal in the US

Genesis 2:15-17 The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. (16) And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; (17) but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."

- Free will could not exist without the opportunity to choose
- So along with the freedom to eat - there is a restriction on the one tree
- God asserts His will with a command - "not to eat from the tree"
- He describes the consequence of disobedience - "you will certainly die"

Application

In life - God has given us a free will to choose. Along with that freedom He has revealed His will / His commands as well as the consequences of our choices.

Freedom to choose should be understood and exercised within the context of responsibility and in the context of God's revealed will.

- 1Pe 2:16 Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves.
- Gal 5:13 You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.

Example:

- You can drive a car [freedom] - but you must stop at the stop sign...or...
- You can play in the yard - but you can't go in the street...or...
- You can use these crayons to color the page, but you can't write on the wall or eat them...or...

There are wise and foolish choices

- **A wise choice** = exercising our freedom within the limits of God's will
- **A foolish choice** = exercising our freedom without regard to God's will

The attack on our resolve to make wise choices

- It is where tension exists between My Freedom and God's Command
- Satan likes to exploit this
- We too participate by exalting our own perspective or point of view

How I become vulnerable to foolish choices

1) When I question or twist God's word

Genesis 3:1-3 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.'"

- To make God's word out to say something it doesn't say
- To agree with something the word of God does NOT say

2) When I question God's character or motive

Genesis 3:4-5 "You will not certainly die." the serpent said to the woman. (5) "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

- When I am convinced that God didn't mean what He said
- When I am convinced that God has a hidden agenda to hide the good
- When I am convinced that God does not have my best interest at heart

3) When my perspective or point of view takes precedence over God's

Genesis 3:6-7 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. (7) Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

- When my point of view outweighs God's wisdom on a matter
- When I let others convince me to do that which I know is wrong

Choose wisely - because...

1) Our choices have power - we contribute to our own destiny - reap what I sow

Gal 6:7-9 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. 8 Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. 9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

2) I can't control the consequences - Other people close to me are affected

Deuteronomy 30:19-20 This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live (20) and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the LORD is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Critical choices we make

We all make choices that are not that critical

- What color socks should I wear today?
- Should I have soup for lunch?

But there are other choices that are critical because they will affect us for the rest of our lives and in some cases for eternity

- In these we must choose wisely
- We must not allow Satan or our own point of view exploit the tension between freedom and limitations

1) Choosing our friends

- Pro 22:24-25 Do not make friends with a hot-tempered person, do not associate with one easily angered, 25 or you may learn their ways and get yourself ensnared.
- 2Co 6:14 Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?
- 1Co 15:33 Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character."
- Proverbs 3:31 Do not envy the violent or choose any of their ways.
- Proverbs 12:26 The righteous choose their friends carefully, but the way of the wicked leads them astray.

2) Choosing who we will serve - me and my house

- Joshua 24:14-15 "Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. (15) But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."
- Eph 6:4 Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

Parents are making a serious error in judgment and choosing foolishly to lay aside the word of God and adopt principles regarding the training and discipline of children that go directly against the word of God. The internet is rife with advice about training children and much of it is a direct contradiction to what God says in His word.

3) Choosing a spouse

Choose wisely or foolishly (What is EXCELLENCE?)

An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, But she who shames him is as rottenness in his bones (12:4).

Top 10 Things What Boys Like About Girls - (Excellence?)

1. How girls smile
2. How girls always smell so good
3. How girls laugh
4. How girls take so long to get ready
5. How girls dress up
6. How girls put their make-up on
7. How girls say "I love you"
8. How girls hands fit perfectly in theirs
9. How girls have perfect waist where they wrap their arms around
10. How girls can be naturally sweet

Top 10 Things What Girls Like About Boys - (Excellence?)

1. When guys smell good.
2. When a guy has a good sense of style, and doesn't look like a mess.
3. A great smile is always a good thing.
4. Girls hate it when a guy is so high maintenance on their hair (obsessed)
5. When a guy is taller than she is
6. Someone who can make her laugh
7. A guy who can understand and listen to her.
8. A mature guy who acts their age.
9. Someone who will respect her
10. A sweetheart

What about these?

1. Does the person love Jesus?
2. Does your relationship with him/her move you closer to Jesus?
3. Do you desire Jesus more with this person in your life?
4. Does the person believe and follow the words of Jesus – the Bible?
5. Is the person in communication with Jesus through prayer?
6. Does the person want to become more like Jesus?
7. Does the person like to serve Jesus?
8. Does the person worship Jesus?
9. Is the person surrendered to the will of Jesus?
10. Does the person talk about Jesus?

FIRST CONCEPT

A prudent wife is from the LORD - and you should want it this way

Prov 19:14 House and wealth are an inheritance from fathers, But a prudent wife is from the Lord.

SECOND CONCEPT

The Lord has a different value system than the world

Luk 16:15 He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of others, but God knows your hearts. **What people value highly is detestable in God's sight.**

Isaiah 66:2 **This is the one I esteem:** he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.

THIRD CONCEPT

He gives you the desires of your heart

Psalms 37:4: "Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart."

- Set your focus on following Him
- Set your heart to be obedient to Him
- Set your primary focus on BECOMING a man or woman of God

FOURTH CONCEPT

Take your time - marriage is lifetime commitment

Prov 20:25 It is a snare for a man to say rashly, "It is holy!" And after the vows to make inquiry

Prov 21:19 It is better to live in a desert land, Than with a contentious and vexing woman.

FIFTH CONCEPT

The key is that God is involved in this institution

- He brought Eve to Adam
- He brought Rebekah to Isaac (see Gen 24)
- He can bring you a prudent wife - a godly man

4) Choose to remain in covenant

Isa 56:4-5 For this is what the LORD says: "To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who **choose what pleases me and hold fast to my covenant**-- 5 to them I will give within my temple and its walls a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that will endure forever.

Simply put, the stability of marriage is a by-product of an iron-willed determination to make it work. If you choose to marry, enter into that covenant with the resolve to remain committed to each other for life. Never threaten during angry moments to leave your mate. Don't allow yourself to consider even the possibility of divorce. Calling it quits must not become an option for those who want to go the distance!

What if Marriage is designed to make us HOLY more than to make us HAPPY

Gary Thomas writes, What if God had an end in mind that went beyond our happiness, our comfort, and our desire to be infatuated and happy as if the world were a perfect place? *What if God designed marriage to make us holy more than to make us happy?*"

In his book, Thomas explains that marriage helps to transform us and make us become more holy because marriage teaches us truths about God, it teaches us how to love and respect others, it exposes our sins, it helps build the spiritual discipline of perseverance, it builds our character, it teaches us how to forgive, it can build in us a servant heart, and in good marriage, it can foster good prayers, make us more aware of God's presence, and help us develop our spiritual calling, mission, and purpose.

5) Choosing between heaven and hell

- Joh 3:16-18 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

