

# Making Better Choices

## INTRODUCTION.

- A. Life is filled with choices.
  - 1. Some choices are as benign as whether to eat cereal or to eat eggs for breakfast.
  - 2. Some choices are complex, with great impact upon one's life, such as who a person should marry, or where a person should work.
  - 3. There are also choices which can determine and affect our relationship with other people, our reputation in the world, our income from our job, our relationship with our spouses, etc.
  - 4. Many of the choices within our lives will also have a direct bearing upon our relationship with our Almighty God.
- B. With this lesson, we will first show that man is in control of his life, followed by a look at what the Bible teaches regarding self-control and why self-control is crucial to the life of a Christian.

## I. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT SELF-CONTROL?

- A. Self-control is directly related to righteousness. The apostle Paul reasoned with Felix *“about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come.”* (Acts 24:24-25)
  - 1. One who practices righteousness is righteous. (1 John 3:7-10)
  - 2. Everyone who is born of God practices righteousness. (1 John 2:29)
  - 3. One cannot be righteous, nor can one live righteously, unless he exercises mental and bodily control in the way of righteousness. (cf. 2 Peter 2:21 refers to knowing the *“way of righteousness.”*)
- B. Self-control is part of the fruit of the Spirit which is to replace the works of the flesh. (Galatians 5:16-26)
  - 1. One must choose to *“walk in the Spirit.”* By choosing to *“walk in the Spirit,”* one will choose *“not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”* (vs 16)
  - 2. When a person chooses to walk in the ways of the flesh, he will engage in the works of the flesh. (vs 19-21)
  - 3. However, when a person chooses to *“walk in the Spirit,”* then he will bear the

*“fruit of the Spirit.”* (vs 22-23)

4. Those who *“are Christ’s”* have chosen to crucify *“the flesh with its passions and desires.”* (vs 24-25)
- C. Self-control is necessary to obtaining an imperishable crown. (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)
1. Each Christian must choose whether or not to run in such a way so as to obtain the *“prize”* is up to each Christian. (vs 24)
  2. The Christian must choose to be *“self-controlled in all things”* in order to receive that imperishable crown. (vs 25, ESV)
  3. The apostle Paul exercised self-control, keeping his body in step with the direction and guidance found in God's word. (vs 26-27)
- D. Without self-control, a person is *“blind,”* having *“forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.”* (2 Peter 1:5-11)
1. Self-control is one of several well needed qualities within the life of one who has faith. (vs 5-7)
  2. With these essential qualities, a Christian will be fruitful in the *“knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* (vs 8)
  3. Without these essential qualities, a Christian will become short sighted and live his life, forgetting that he had been cleansed from his old sins. (vs 9)
  4. When a Christian exercises self-control in obedience to the Lord, he will keep himself in the way of the Lord, avoiding the pitfalls of sin. (vs 10-11)

## **II. WHO CAN YOU BLAME WHEN YOU MAKE THE WRONG CHOICE?**

- A. You cannot blame God.
1. God has equipped Christians to live a faithful life. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
  2. God has given Christians all things that pertain to life and godliness. (2 Peter 1:3)
  3. God does not tempt anyone. (James 1:13)
  4. God will not allow Christians to be tempted beyond what they can bear. (1 Corinthians 10:13)
- B. You cannot blame the devil; he the tempter. The devil does not force you to make the wrong choices.
1. You can resist the devil. (James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:9)
  2. You must not give place to the devil. (Ephesians 4:26-27)

## *Extreme Personal Makeover*

3. Prepare yourself to stand against the wiles (schemes) of the devils. (Ephesians 6:10-11)
- C. You cannot blame other people for your wrong choices.
1. Other people may tempt you. (Luke 17:1)
  2. Other people may influence you. (1 Corinthians 15:33)
  3. However, you do not have to follow the temptations and influences of other people. You can say no. The choice is your choice to make. Jesus instructed His followers to choose to fear God and not man. (Matthew 10:28)
- D. You cannot blame your circumstances.
1. Circumstances may lead you in certain directions with various examples and influences. But in the end, the command is for everyone to repent and “come out” of sin and worldliness. (Acts 17:30; 2 Corinthians 6:17)
  2. Consider the apostle Paul, whose circumstances led him against Jesus Christ, but he came out and served the Lord. (cf. Acts 26:9; Acts 22:16; 9:18)
- E. Who can you blame when you make the wrong decisions? You can only blame YOURSELF!

### **CONCLUSION.**

- A. Let there be no misunderstanding. You are in control of your life. You choose what to do and what not to do. It is your responsibility to exercise self-control, making the right choices, as well as the necessary changes, to either enter into fellowship with or remain in fellowship with God.
- B. If your life is filled with poor or bad choices, then do not try to blame other people. Take responsibility for yourself and make the necessary changes in your life today.
- C. Through His gospel, God is calling you today. Choose this day to follow the Heavenly Father. Choose this day to begin making better choices.