

CHOICES HAVE CONSEQUENCES

In the beginning, when God created Adam and Eve, He created them to be creatures of choice and not robots that had to do His will. In the Garden of Eden, Adam was told: *“Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it”* (Genesis 2:16-17a). That Adam was able to make to make a choice is clearly seen in that God set forth a consequence if he violated that restriction: *“: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”* (Genesis 2:17b). Eve was also aware of the restriction that God had made and the consequences of making a wrong choice. When she was confronted by the serpent, she stated: *“We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die”* (Genesis 3:2-3).

We all know of the choice that Adam and Eve made when the serpent (Satan) was able to convince Eve that God didn't really mean what He said. She was able to convince Adam and both made the choice to partake of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Now, Adam might try to say it was Eve's fault and Eve might try to place the blame at the feet of the serpent but those excuses would not fly. They both made the choice and thus both bore the consequences of that decision. They might have felt like the consequences of eating the fruit where good based on what they saw and the immediate results. However, the real consequences came later when, true to His Word, they died, spiritually, and were thrust out of their home in Eden. Other consequences followed for them, as we read from Genesis 3:15-24. However, that was not all for all men and women have suffered the consequences of the sin of Adam and Eve. All men are not guilty of the sin of Adam and Eve, only they are guilty of that sin but the consequences of their sin is their lot (Romans 5:12-14; I Corinthians 15:22).

One lesson all need to learn, in every area of life, is that each choice that we make brings consequences. When one makes a good choice, there can be good consequences. Bad choices can bring bad consequences. Note I did not say that every good choice brings good consequences or vice versa. Paul made a good choice when he was obedient to the Gospel of Christ but, as we read some of the consequences were not good. However, it is clear that the eternal consequences, as Paul teaches, were all good. Sometimes people make bad choices and, the immediate consequences may be good. For example, one may choose to rob a bank. The initial consequences are good – they have lots of extra money. However, the good consequences do not last. Often they end when the bank robber is apprehended and he has to give up his loot and also will probably lose his freedom. Further, if the robber is not repentant, there will be eternal consequences that are not good.

All are called upon to make a choice – whether or not to serve God and be obedient to His will. God has told us of the consequences of that choice. What is your choice? Will you choose to serve God and be obedient to His will? That choice brings eternal consequences with respect to Heaven and Hell. God does not want any to perish but desires all to come to repentance and be saved (II Peter 3:9). However, each individual has to make that choice bearing in mind the eternal consequences.

Ken Chumbley

NEWS AND NOTES

Keep in your prayers the following: Helen Culpepper, Pam Gossett and mother, Lavonne McClish, Linda Chumbley, and Rachel Fitzpatrick's aunt (Eula Baker) who has cancer, Maomi Aaron' sister who has having health problems, and Tim Smith.

Parys Mitchell has a hairline fracture in her knee as a result of a fall.

Lanny Niver was unwell and had to go home Sunday. He has been diagnosed with a bleeding ulcer.

Rachel Fitzpatrick and Myrtle Grimsley were out of town on Sunday.

Susan Arnold was sick and not able to be out Wednesday.

On Not Allowing the World to Dictate to Us What the Standards Should Be

Too often people are affected by what the world says (or thinks). Even in the church some allow **the thoughts of the secular confidant to carry greater weight than that of biblically informed brethren**. Often what we think of as the “greatest” (idea, investment, plan) is not based upon what truly has affected us as great (salvation), but what society as a whole pressures us to think of as “great.” The “great” must be someone who has achieved fame, is above average, esteemed highly, accomplished some outstanding achievement, or attained special academic status. And while some may attain such levels in this life, the majority of the earth's population simply will not measure up, at least, **according to the world's standard**.

How comforting then is it (for the faithful) to know that God does not have the same standard as the world? There was one occasion in the life of Jesus when his disciples took up this very question: “Who is the greatest?” (Mat. 18:1). The next few verses read:

And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven (Mat. 18:2-4).

Another example was when some disciples were arguing over who would sit on the right hand and left of Jesus in the kingdom. We read Jesus response in Matthew 20:25-28:

But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

It is not the “great” who will be the “greatest” in God's kingdom, but the one who humbles himself and becomes everyone else's servant.

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