

DEEPER

Daily Bible Study

Adult Sabbath School Lesson
Podcast, Study Notes, and Teacher Helps

The Choices We Make

2019, Quarter 2, Lesson 2

Sabbath (April 6): The Choices We Make

We begin this week's lesson on choices by looking at Lucifer's decision to turn away from God in heaven. This choice, obviously, has resulted in untold misery and woe for us on earth, as well as for God and the angels in heaven as well. Let's see what we can learn about God's love and character by reviewing what happened in heaven as sin began.

Discussion Questions:

- Read Ezekiel 28:12-15. How did God create Lucifer? (Perfect, without sin.) Did God know that this angel would eventually sin? (Yes.) What job did God give Lucifer? (This angel stood as a covering cherub beside God's throne.)
- Read Exodus 25:19-22. What, specifically, was Lucifer's duty as a covering cherub? (To stare into the law of God, represented by the tablets of the testimony, and to stare into the glory of God, represented by the shekinah glory above the mercy seat.)
- Read Psalm 19:7. Why do you suppose God gave Lucifer this specific job? (So that as he stared into God's law he would recognize the sin developing in his heart and turn to God for deliverance and salvation.)
- The book *The Desire of Ages* points out that "Lucifer in heaven had sinned in the light of God's glory. To him as to no other created being was given a revelation of God's love. Understanding the character of God, knowing His goodness, Satan chose to follow his own selfish, independent will. This choice was final. There was no more that God could do to save him" (DA 761). What does this tell you about God's character? (God will do everything in His power to give us every opportunity to make the right choices.)

Sunday (April 7): Free Will, Free Choice

One of the fundamental aspects of God's character and His government is that He allows His creatures to exercise freedom of will. This, of course, is why God allowed sin to emerge in the first place. Knowing its disastrous effects, God still chose to allow Lucifer, the fallen angels, and so many of us to travel down the path of sin. However, the Bible is clear that even while allowing us freedom of choice, God calls us to choose to follow Him.

Discussion Questions:

- Read Matthew 22:14. Jesus said many are called but few are chosen. What did He mean? (Answers will vary.)

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- Read Matthew 22:1-13. Some refused the king's wedding invitation immediately, while the man without the wedding garment accepted initially but not fully. In the end, was there any difference in their situation? (No.) How many of these people did the king call? (All of them.) Who was responsible for their "unchosen-ness"? (They were.) What lesson does this parable hold for us today? (God's calls all people to salvation, but whether I am ultimately chosen depends on my response to God's invitation.)
- Read Ephesians 1:1-4. What God has called all people to? (God has called all people to stand before Him holy and without blame.) Is this possible on our own power? (No.) Have you ever noticed that God calls us to be and to do things that are impossible on our own? Why do you think He does this? (Answers will vary.)
- Read 2 Timothy 1:8,9. According to this passage, for what reason does God call us to "impossible" things? (So that His purpose and grace can be displayed before the world.)

Monday (April 8): Making the Right Choice

Making the right choices in life can be confusing, but God promises to give wisdom to all who ask (James 1:5). Consider also the following words of advice:

Those whose hearts are fully surrendered to God, and who take His word as their guide, will know how to conduct themselves in all the duties of life. They will learn of Jesus, who is meek and lowly of heart; and in cultivating the meekness of Christ, they will close the door against innumerable temptations (AH 380).

Several "P's" of Bible study can help us understand its counsel to us when making decisions. These include precepts, principles, prophecies, and parallels.

- Precepts are direct commands from God, such as the Ten Commandments. No decision should ever lead us to break a precept from God.
- Principles are guidelines of behavior that are adaptable to different situations.
- Prophecies are specific instructions for certain times and places and people. For example, consider Christ's warning to flee from Jerusalem when the "abomination of desolation" appeared (Matthew 24:15,16). Paying heed to the prophecies can save our life, as it did for those Christians that obeyed Christ's prophetic warning when the Roman armies surrounded Jerusalem (see *The Great Controversy* pages 26 and 30).
- Parallels between earlier events and our day can give us wisdom to make the right choices. Jesus drew a parallel between Noah's day and our day in Matthew 24:37-42.

Discussion Questions:

- What experience can you share from your life when following a precept of God resulted in blessings, protection, etc.? (Answers will vary.)
- What prophecies in the Bible have provided guidance for you in decisions you have made in your life? (Answers will vary.)
- What lessons and guidance can we draw today from Jesus' comparison of Noah's time? (Answers will vary.)

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Tuesday (April 9): Choosing Friends

Our friends exert tremendous influence on us in the choices we make throughout our life. How important it is, then, that we choose friends that will enable us to make the best decisions possible. “Everyone will find companions or make them. And just in proportion to the strength of the friendship will be the amount of influence which friends will exert over one another for good or for evil. All will have associates and will influence and be influenced in their turn” (AH 455).

Discussion Questions:

- Read the following statement: “The teaching of Christ was the expression of an inwrought conviction and experience, and those who learn of Him become teachers after the divine order. The word of God, spoken by one who is himself sanctified through it, has a life-giving power that makes it attractive to the hearers, and convicts them that it is a living reality. When one has received the truth in the love of it, he will make this manifest in the persuasion of his manner and the tones of his voice. He makes known that which he himself has heard, seen, and handled of the word of life, that others may have fellowship with him through the knowledge of Christ. His testimony, from lips touched with a live coal from off the altar, is truth to the receptive heart, and works sanctification upon the character” (DA 142). What principles in regards to attracting and making good friends are brought out here? (Answers will vary. If we are walking in the light, those will be attracted to us that desire the same thing. The opposite, of course, is also true.)
- Read the following statement: “God’s providential care had been over Samson, that he might be prepared to accomplish the work which he was called to do. At the very outset of life he was surrounded with favorable conditions for physical strength, intellectual vigor, and moral purity. But under the influence of wicked associates he let go that hold upon God which is man’s only safeguard, and he was swept away by the tide of evil. Those who in the way of duty are brought into trial may be sure that God will preserve them; but if men willfully place themselves under the power of temptation, they will fall sooner or later” (AH 460). What warnings should we take from Samson’s life? (Answers will vary.)

Wednesday (April 10): Choosing a Life Partner

Choosing a life partner is, of course, very important for those that choose to make this decision. The Bible provides crucial guidance in this decision as well.

Discussion Questions:

- Read Genesis 2:23,24. What important principle about marriage is brought out here? (Marriage is a permanent union that brings two individuals into “one.” Even divorce can never really undo this union.)
- Read Ephesians 5:30-32. What spiritual application does this passage make in regards to the marriage institution? (God designed marriage to be an example for us of the spiritual union that Christ wants with us.)
- Read the following statement: “God made from the man a woman, to be a companion and helpmeet for him, to be one with him, to cheer, encourage, and bless him, he in his turn to

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be her strong helper. All who enter into matrimonial relations with a holy purpose—the husband to obtain the pure affections of a woman’s heart, the wife to soften and improve her husband’s character and give it completeness—fulfill God’s purpose for them” (AH 99). What principles are brought out here in regards to choosing a life partner? (Answers will vary.)

Thursday (April 11): Choosing a Course

Another major decision that faces each of us is the course that our life will take. Frequently, we think of this in terms of our job or career. The Bible, of course, also provides guidance for this decision. Jesus said, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33). Rather than choosing a job or career based on the income it will provide, or the status or lifestyle it will enable, the Christian will seek to honor God first in this choice as well. Hebrews 11 contains many examples of people that chose to seek first the kingdom of God, and their stories provide important lessons for us today when choosing a course in our life.

Discussion Questions:

- Read Hebrews 11:4. What choice did Abel make? (To obey and serve God, even in the face of persecution and opposition from a family member.)
- Read Hebrews 11:5-6. What choice did Enoch make? (The purpose of his life was to please God, and to have as close of a relationship with Him as possible. See Genesis 5:24.)
- Read Hebrews 11:7. What was the focus of Noah’s life? (The salvation of others.)
- Read Hebrews 11:8-10. What can we learn about choosing our course from Abraham? (Abraham allowed God to interrupt his plans for his life. He was willing to follow even when he did not know exactly what that would mean for him.)
- Read Hebrews 11:24-26. What choice did Moses make? (His focus was on working for God, not for money and prestige.)
- Read Hebrews 12:1-2. What final principle about choosing a course do these verses reveal? (We should choose a course in our life that enables us and others to better keep our eyes on Jesus.)

Friday (April 12): Not My Will, But Thine

The ultimate example of how to choose a course in our life is, of course, Jesus Christ. While on earth He said, “For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me” (John 6:38). Imagine what our lives could and would look like if our mindset and focus was consistently the same as Christ’s!

Today, as always, God calls upon His people to make sacrifices so that they can help spread the gospel. Consider the following words of counsel:

If there was ever a time when sacrifices should be made, it is now. Those who have money should understand that now is the time to use it for God. Let not means be absorbed in multiplying facilities where the work is already established. Do not add building to building where many

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interests are now centered. Use the means to establish centers in new fields. Thus you may bring in souls who will act their part in producing. {6T 450.1}

Practice economy in your homes. By many, idols are cherished and worshiped. Put away your idols. Give up your selfish pleasures. Do not, I entreat you, absorb means in embellishing your houses, for it is God's money, and it will be required of you again. Parents, for Christ's sake do not use the Lord's money in pleasing the fancies of your children. Do not teach them to seek after style and ostentation in order to gain influence in the world. Will this incline them to save the souls for whom Christ died? No; it will create envy, jealousy, and evil surmising. Your children will be led to compete with the show and extravagance of the world, and to spend the Lord's money for that which is not essential to health or happiness. {6T 450.3}

Do not educate your children to think that your love for them must be expressed by indulgence of their pride, extravagance, and love of display. There is no time now to invent ways for using up money. Use your inventive faculties in seeking to economize. Instead of gratifying selfish inclination, spending money for those things that destroy the reasoning faculties, study how to deny self, that you may have something to invest in lifting the standard of truth in new fields. The intellect is a talent; use it in studying how best to employ your means for the salvation of souls. {6T 451.1}

Practice economy in the use of your time. This is the Lord's. Your strength is the Lord's. If you have extravagant habits, cut them away from your life. Such habits, indulged, will make you bankrupt for eternity. And habits of economy, industry, and sobriety are, even in this world, a better portion for you and your children than a rich dowry. {6T 452.1}

Discussion Questions:

- Read Matthew 26:39. What decision did Jesus make, and re-confirm, here in the Garden of Gethsemane? (To do God's will, not His own will.) In what ways have you been faced with this same decision in your life? How did it work out?
- Read Romans 12:1. What principle of action in our lives is brought out in this verse? (Our lives are to be living sacrifices to God.) What does this mean? (Answers will vary.)