

Choices & Character

by Bill Crews

Cunningham Geike, a Scottish preacher of the 19th century, wrote: "Our character is but the stamp on our souls of the free choices of good and evil we have made through life. " I believe his observation was correct.

We are free moral agents. The entire thrust of the Bible, addressed in its various parts and particulars to various individuals in the past and the present, is proof of this. God does not *force* men, but He does *speak* to men; and in speaking to men God instructs, reasons, warns, admonishes, promises, threatens, exhorts, encourages, appeals, pleads and implores. Man ever decides whether to listen or not, and upon listening, decides whether to respond or not, and, upon responding, decides what his response will be. For all of which God will call him to account. But man is indeed a free moral agent. He has volition. He has the freedom to choose.

Over and over man is placed in the position of making a choice (e.g., Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden(**Genesis 2:16-17**) and the Jews on the day of Pentecost (**Acts 2:37-40**). Time and again men are called upon to choose. Moses said to Israel: *"I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse: therefore choose life, that thou mayest live, thou and thy seed; to love Jehovah thy God, to obey His voice, and to cleave unto him; for He is thy life, and the length of thy days; that thou mayest dwell in the land which Jehovah sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them"* (**Deuteronomy 30:19-20**). Said Joshua to Israel: *"And if it seem evil unto you to serve Jehovah, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah"* (**Joshua 24:15**). Said Elijah to the people of the northern kingdom of Israel: *"How long go ye limping between the two sides? if Jehovah be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him"* (**1 Kings 18:21**).

Again and again you and I are placed in the position of making a choice between right and wrong:

1. As children, whether or not we will obey our parents. What does God say? **Ephesians 6:1-3**
2. As students, whether or not we will listen, learn, study, do our assignments, put forth a good effort, be honest, abide by the rules. What does God say? **Romans 12:17; Ecclesiastes 9:10.**
3. Whether we will choose good companions or evil companions. What does God say? **1 Corinthians 15:33.**
4. Whether we will be careful or reckless drivers; whether or not we will obey the traffic laws. What does God say? **Romans 13:1-7.**
5. Whether or not we will be honest and dependable workers. What does God say? **Luke 3:13-14; Colossians 3:22-4:1.**
6. Upon hearing the gospel, whether or not we will become Christians or whether we will serve God or go on serving Satan. What does God say? **Acts 2:41; 24:24-25; 26:28-29.**
7. Upon becoming a Christian, whether or not to really be or live as a Christian. What does God say? **1 Peter 2:11-12; Romans 6:1-2; Colossians 3:1-2.**
8. Whether or not we will be steadfast in prayer. What does God say? **Philippians 4:6; Ephesians 6:18.**
9. Whether or not we will diligently read and study our Bible? What does God say? **1 Peter 2:1-2; 2 Peter 3:18; Colossians 3:16.**
10. Whether or not we will assemble faithfully with our brethren for Bible classes and worship assemblies. What does God say? **Hebrews 5:11-6:3; 10:19-25.**