

**“Choices”**  
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You have a choice.

*Deut. 30:19, I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life.*

Are you ready? Are you anxiously awaiting the future, ready to open door of life transformation? Life is all about choices. I have a list of 10—really five sets. Four of the choices are foundational, six are maturity issues (identity—loved/forgiven, authority—Christ/Bible, actions—forgive/trust, priority—relationships/authenticity, destiny—serve/stand.)

The first four foundational choices deal with who you are before God; they are identity and authority questions. The identity choices answer the question: Who am I? I choose to believe God loves me and is able to forgive me. The authority choices answer the question: Who is in charge? I choose Jesus Christ as Lord and the Bible as God’s word. These are the foundation that holds up the house. Today, I assume the foundation; I will talk about the next two most important questions in your life.

Two things you can choose to do, these are related to the past and to the present/future. We are not invincible. As we learn that, we get discouraged, see our limited capacity. This requires us to grasp two immensely important choices related to the past and the future. I cannot fix that, I cannot change that, I cannot settle that, not now, not today, not with the current strength I have. We have to learn/admit our limited capacities.

*Matthew 6:33-34*

**FIRST CHOICE**

Related to the past, I choose to forgive.

I do not have the ability to carry forward all the residue of the negatives of my past. It is like toxic trash or radioactive waste—unstable, explosive.

Forgiveness frees me from the weight of relational failure. Forgiveness disposes of the sludge of hurts, betrayals, disappointments. Forgiveness is God’s solution to keep us from getting weighted down/burdened down beyond hope. The older I get, the more I have seen the need to become skilled at forgiveness.

I can choose to forgive, Matt 6:14-15, God makes a big deal of forgiveness, and conditions his forgiveness of us on our forgiveness of others. Wow!

Forgiveness is a decision. Raise your right hand! Some do, some don’t. Why? Thinking it is fun, thinking it is crazy, rebelling, playing along. You made a choice. Forgiveness is just like that. No need to glamorize it, forgiveness is a choice to release a person, at times our own selves.

**Unforgiveness**

You owe me  
You are going to pay  
I will recruit others to my bitterness  
I will get revenge  
I will make you regret your actions

**Forgiveness**

you don’t owe me  
I am not looking for payment  
I am not trying to even the score  
I am writing it off; letting it go  
God did not create me so I could carry all this

People are shocked when we forgive.  
Some Christians think they can be forgiven by God and not forgive others.

Forgiveness is a crisis, and a process. If you don't go through the process, you go back to the crisis. It can become an endless cycle.

*Matthew 18*, forgiveness has no limits: (1) No limit to what we forgive, (2) on whom we forgive, (3) how often we forgive.

*Matt 18:23-35*

- I forgive because I have been forgiven.
- I forgive because unforgiveness destroys other people
- I forgive because unforgiveness destroys me

## **SECOND CHOICE**

I choose to trust, I trust God with my future, because I can and because he invites me to and because there is really no other option that works.

I wish my mind were smart enough to work only on the things I can change and affect. Not so. I sometimes dwell on all kinds of perceptions of possibilities of the future, all sorts of uncertainties. God did not design us with a DNA capable to carrying the future.

*Matt 6:33-34*

Three channels—past, present, future

When you camp out on channel three, you experience three dangerous emotions: worry, fear, anxiety.

I cannot control the future, and worry keeps me from doing today what I can to affect a better future. I cannot control health, family, finances, environment, work, church, neighbors.

Why is it so hard for us? When God says "don't" he means "don't hurt yourself." When we choose to sin we choose to suffer.

Life is filled with uncertainties.

I choose to trust. I can bring my burdens to the Lord. Trust is the antidote to anxiety; it resolves worry and destroys fear.

Trust is the act of my will to give my burdens to God.

*Matthew 6:25-34*

You can choose to trust.

## **CONCLUSION**

Two choices are extremely difficult for many Christians. Let God handle the past—choose forgiveness. Let God handle the future—choose trust.