

Impossible To Choose

Introduction. Americans love their freedom of choice. This country was founded on the premise of freedom. We have grown quite accustomed to having the right of choice, and whenever that right seems to be threatened, we are willing to lay down our lives for its preservation.

The history of the quest for control is essentially the history of the world. Human beings seem hard-wired with the desire to control everything. It is fashionable today to be in control, in charge, to plan and manage. Striving to control our emotions, our appetites, and our habits is good and praiseworthy. But the good idea to set goals and have plans and control oneself gets expanded into the false idea that we should be able to control everything around us.

While a Christian has freedom from sin and its condemnation (Galatians 5:1; Romans 8:1), they must live with what is impossible to choose. We cannot have everything and we cannot control everything, so it is essential to understand what we cannot control and that God has given us choice so that we can exercise it in becoming more like Him, and following His eternal plan for us.

I. You Cannot Choose To Not Be Born

- A. Job and Jeremiah wanted to not be born (Job 3:3-13; Jeremiah 15:10; 20:14-15), but we know this is impossible. The most primal moment of our existence is birth, but we cannot even control it.
- B. No matter how your life has unfolded, you cannot go back on being born. All you can do is make the most of your life (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). Learn how to live it abundantly (John 10:10), but remember that you will give account of what you do in your life (Romans 14:12; 1 Corinthians 4:5).

II. You Cannot Choose The Consequences Of Your Choices

- A. The law of gravity is a fixed law of nature. You may jump from a building or from a plane without a parachute and regret the choice in mid-air, but you cannot do anything about it. You can change the decision, but not the consequences! Consider the following examples:
 - 1. Adam and Eve made the choice to disobey God, but they could not change the consequence of being banished from Eden (Genesis 3:22-24).
 - 2. Nadab and Abihu chose to offer strange fire to the Lord and they could not change the consequence of being struck down by God (Leviticus 10:1-2).
 - 3. Ananias and Sapphira made the choice to the Holy Spirit about the price of land that was sold and could not change their consequences (Acts 5:1-11).
 - 4. Elymas chose to stand against Paul and the truth and he suffered the consequence of being struck blind (Acts 13:10-12).
 - 5. But if you choose to partake of what harms the body such as tobacco use, drug use, and drinking, you must pay both the spiritual and physical consequences.
- B. Paul stated an unalterable law of sowing and reaping (2 Corinthians 9:6; Galatians 6:7-8). This law will never change so long as the world stands. It would do a Christian well to understand this law and live accordingly.

III. You Cannot Choose To Change God's Commandments

- A. We sometimes hear people say, "My God would do this, or My God would not do that ..." However, we cannot change God to fit us (Isaiah 55:8-9). There is no reason to fear, though, for His ways are perfect (Psalm 18:30; Revelation 15:3).
- B. In Matthew 15:7-9, Jesus condemned the Pharisees because they were trying to make God fit their viewpoint. Respecting the commandments of men changes God's nature (Colossians 2:8, 22; 1 Timothy 4:3; Titus 1:14).

IV. You Cannot Choose Your Own Terms Of Pardon

- A. The Scriptures teach that the end of a Christian's salvation is Heaven, but no one can set their own terms of pardon (Luke 6:46; Hebrews 5:9). In 2 Kings 5:10, Naaman had to dip seven times in the Jordan River. After the sixth time, he was still a leper. He could not set his own terms of pardon. This principle is illustrated in the judicial system as no criminal can name his or her own sentence.
- B. In Hinduism and Buddhism, salvation is not the forgiveness of sins, but the attainment of an enlightened, transcendent state in a graduated fashion. Islam teaches that life is weighed in a balance. Good is on one side and evil is on the other, and whichever is greater determines your destiny. In short, you must do enough good to earn enlightenment or your place in paradise.
- C. God's terms of pardon include believing (John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6), repenting (Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 17:30), confessing (Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:10), being baptized (John 3:3, 5; 1 Peter 3:21), and continuing in the faith (Matthew 25:31-36; Colossians 1:21-23).

V. You Cannot Choose How To Live As A Disciple

- A. Have you ever heard someone say, "I would become a Christian but I would have to give up too much?" People who say that do not realize that they have to give up much, much more by not becoming a Christian!
- B. Jesus never promised that being a disciple would be easy. In fact, it is a life of servitude and self-denial (Matthew 10:37; 16:24-25; Romans 6:16). It is a life of following God's commandments (John 12:26; 14:15), which do not weigh us down (1 John 5:1-3; cp. Romans 14:17; Galatians 5:22-23).

VI. You Cannot Choose Whether Or Not To Live Eternally

- A. All men must die (Hebrews 9:27). No one can ever escape this destiny. But some people wish their existence to end at the grave, but it is impossible for them to do this.
- B. How foolish to think that we could outwit God who made us in the first place. A spirit lives forever (Ecclesiastes 12:7). Once death overtakes us, we are bound to spend eternity in reward or punishment (Matthew 25:46; Luke 16:22-23). But God wants us to choose Heaven and spend eternity with Him (2 Peter 3:9).

Conclusion. We will always have the choice to become Christians or not. Likewise, we will always have the choice to live faithfully as Christians or not. But there are a lot of life's deepest parts that we will never be able to choose. The only remedy is to make the best choices that we can based on God's righteousness standard.