

So, What Are My Choices?

Joshua 24:15: (NASB) *If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.*

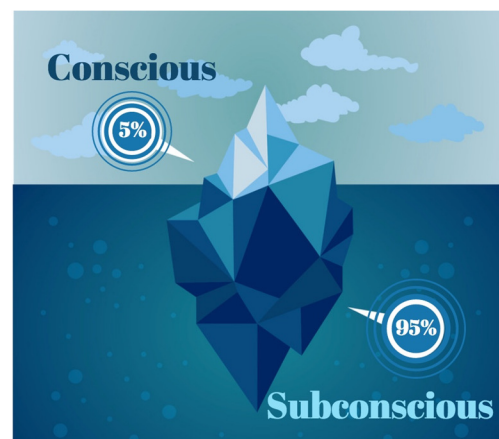


We make choices every day. Some are easy choices that we do not even need to think much about and there are others that require some on-the-fly time and attention. Then there are the choices that can be difficult and even agonizing. These are the choices that can make or break a life or shape a destiny or at the very least alter the near future. These are the biggest choices we face, but they may not necessarily be the most important ones. We probably do not think about how often our big decisions end up being a sum of many small and

seemingly irrelevant choices we have made without thinking. The point is that all of our choices carry a measure of importance! So, what guides us in the choices we make? Are we most often influenced by how we feel about things or by what our friends or family will think? What are the most important factors in successful Christian decision making?

 **5 vs. 95 percent, How Does the Brain Make Subconscious Decisions, James Neuro Success**

- We tend to think that our decisions are a very conscious process; however, they're not. We know nowadays that the conscious part of a decision is about five percent, which means the other subconscious part is 95 percent and that, of course, is because our brain works unconsciously. Every second our brain processes humongous amounts of data. The subconscious mind processes 11 million pieces of data per second. How much do you think the conscious mind processes? Forty bits of data, that's all our conscious mind processes per second.

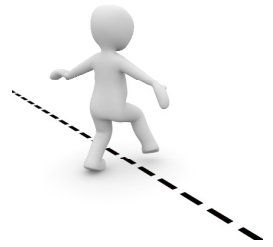


We are told to focus on living that which we profess! This means making the right choices:

James 1:22-24: (NASB) ²²But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. ²³For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.



Prove yourselves doers of the word - step over that "line in the sand." Do not just think it or say it; actually do what the word of God tells you to do. Do not be a hypocrite.



To make a decision - to make a choice - is to employ some kind of process of the mind, even if it is on a subconscious level. Our objective is to identify those things that are parts of this process and to slow down this process so we can be sure the most important decision making elements of our pending choice occupy the most important positions in our actual decision.

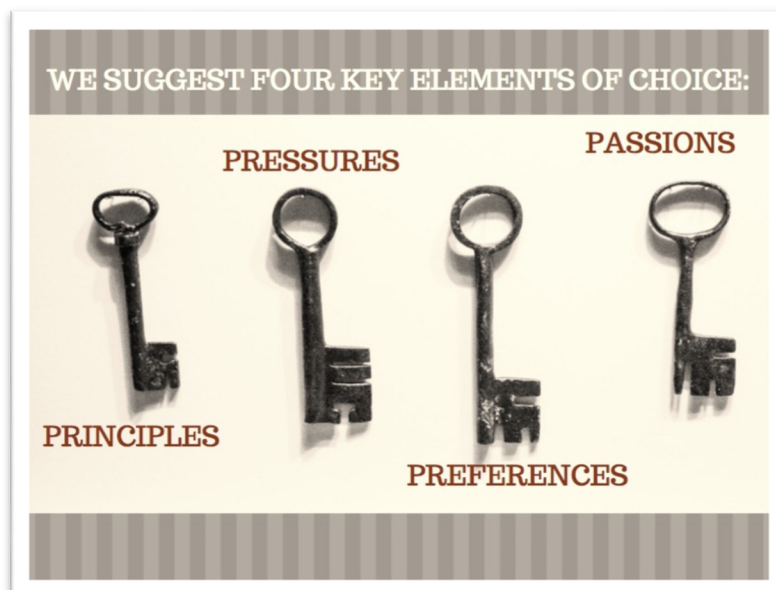
We want to do the most important things first. How do we know what those should be? Making good choices is a challenge, especially for a Christian.

Proverbs 14:12: (NASB) *There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.*

 **Critical thinking introduction, *Five Tips to Improve Your Critical Thinking*, Samatha Agoos**

- *There are many ways to improve our choices, and one particularly effective technique is "critical thinking." This is a way of approaching a question that allows us to carefully deconstruct a situation, reveal its hidden issues, such as bias and manipulation, and make the best decision. If the critical part sounds negative, that's because, in a way, it is. Rather than choosing an answer because it "feels right," a person who uses critical thinking subjects all available options to scrutiny and skepticism. Using the tools at their disposal, they'll eliminate everything but the most useful and reliable information. There are many different ways of approaching critical thinking, but here's one five-step process that may help you solve any number of problems...*

Critical thinking is an important part of the process.





PRINCIPLES: The external fixed points of reference that are built upon integrity, morality and godly righteousness.

Psalms 119:105-112: (NASB) ¹⁰⁵Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.
¹⁰⁶I have sworn and I will confirm it, that I will keep Your righteous ordinances.

PRESSURES: The external factors or people that create a feeling of urgency to move in one direction or another.

¹⁰⁷I am exceedingly afflicted; revive me, O LORD, according to Your word.

PREFERENCES: The internal emotions that bend our desires towards one direction or another.

¹⁰⁸O accept the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD, and teach me Your ordinances.
¹⁰⁹My life is continually in my hand, yet I do not forget Your law.

PASSIONS: The internal fire of our heart that can powerfully override all other elements of choice.

¹¹⁰The wicked have laid a snare for me, yet I have not gone astray from Your precepts. ¹¹¹I have inherited Your testimonies forever, for they are the joy of my heart. ¹¹²I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes forever, even to the end.

A lot of our passions are physical, sensual and far away from what our Christianity should be pointing us towards. How do we put all of this together to make sure our choices are holy, godly and reverent?

PRINCIPLES are the first and hardest elements of choice.
How do we make principles more prominent?

Principles are not emotional, so we might not be as easily drawn to them.



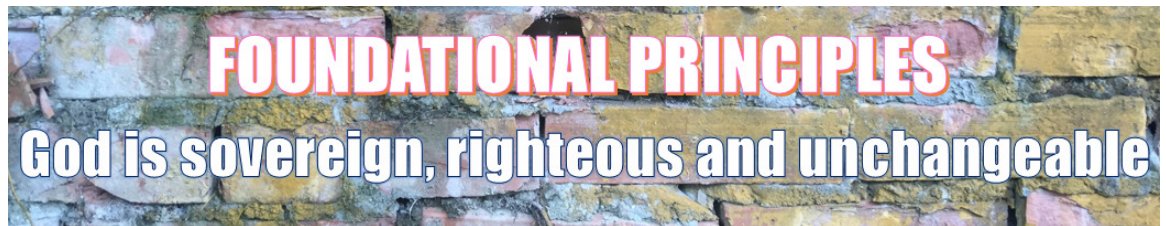
Psalms 119:105-106: (NASB) ¹⁰⁵Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.
¹⁰⁶I have sworn and I will confirm it, that I will keep Your righteous ordinances.

PRINCIPLES are the firm foundation of our belief to build upon when all about us are the shifting sands of social status. They are the anchor that holds us steady in a turbulent sea of restless human behavior.

))) **Formulate your question, Five Tips to Improve Your Critical Thinking, Samantha Agoos**

- #1. *Formulate your question. In other words, know what you're looking for. This isn't always as straightforward as it sounds. For example, if you're deciding whether to try out the newest diet craze, your reasons for doing so may be obscured by other factors, like claims that you'll see results in just two weeks. But, if you approach the situation with a clear view of what you're actually trying to accomplish by dieting, whether that's weight loss, better nutrition or having more energy, that will equip you to sift through this information critically, find what you're looking for and decide whether the new fad really suits your needs.*

What we believe makes up our firm foundation:



Hebrews 6:16-19: (NASB) ¹⁶For men swear by one greater than themselves, and with them an oath given as confirmation is an end of every dispute. (This shows us the value of integrity.) ¹⁷In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, ¹⁸so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us. ¹⁹This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil...

God has a clear plan, and He keeps His promises. Because He is unchangeable, we can have sure hope.

Unyielding faith in the character of God is a foundation principle on which we can build our very existence. This foundation gives our choices a smooth and solid surface on which to be based. We need to continually study the Bible to learn about Him.

Will my choices be in line with the sovereignty of God?



Will my choices be in line with having Jesus as my center?

John 14:6: (NASB) *Jesus said to him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me.*

Hebrews 12:2: (NASB) *Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Jesus' footsteps never falter. Picture being in a blinding snowstorm with a foot and a half of snow on the ground. You are trying to get from point A to point B and have someone in front of you. You know they know where they are going. You, of course, want to walk in their footsteps - a much better choice than blazing your own trail.

The problem is we decide to make our own because we "feel" like this or that. We have to make sure we are following the clarity of the footsteps of Jesus.

Unyielding faith in Jesus as the deliverer of God's plan of salvation is the foundation principle on which we can build the direction of our lives. This foundation gives our choices an ultimate purpose.

God gives us something to stand on. Jesus gives us a direction to go because we follow him.



Sometimes we think it is just "me and Jesus." That may feel good, but it is actually you, Jesus and the rest of the body of Christ. It is so much bigger than you.

Ephesians 4:11-15: (NASB) *¹¹And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, ¹²for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; (Each of us is just one part of the body) ¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; (We can stand strong because our choices are now based in our contribution to the body of Christ) ¹⁵but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into him who is the head, even Christ.*

Unyielding faith in the body arrangement of the followers of Christ is the foundation principle on which we can give our lives perspective. This foundation gives our choices broader meaning because it is about more than just "me."

This bond goes beyond our natural families.



Matthew 25:40: (NASB) *The King will answer and say to them, Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of mine, even the least of them, you did it to me.*

Our fellow Christians are counted as special in the Lord's eyes, so we should also have a special relationship with them. We want to help each other in any way we can.

**So, Christian principles of belief are our foundation.
How does our Christianity provide an anchor?**

If *what* we believe is our decision-making foundation then *how* we believe and apply it is our decision-making anchor. To keep from being tossed about we need to be held steady by the practical application of the foundation principles of our faith. These principles will anchor us in our choices.

Most people generally believe in the basic principles of God, Jesus and the brotherhood - but now we have to *apply* these. This gets tricky! That is why we need anchor principles that are heavy enough to allow us to grab onto something solid.



If principles are God, Christ and being part of the body, why are there so many different churches? Why does Christianity have so many factions?

One reason is not all of Christianity follows Christ. We want to find out what following Christ *really* means based on the principles of godliness in Scripture. We want to follow it as closely as we can *outside* of tradition and feelings. Some of Christianity is based more on emotion than sound scriptural principles.

**Firm and steady
anchor principles:**



**These principles make
our foundation principles
live each day.**

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 explored in sections

2 Corinthians 6:14: (NASB) ¹⁴*Do not be bound together with unbelievers;*

Three pieces - *do not be* (literally the Greek here means "God forbid!") / *bound together/with unbelievers*. We typically apply this verse to marriage, but it has a much broader application for other kinds of relationships. Make sure your anchor is set in something that is based on solid rock principles of scriptural truth.



Anchor Principle:
Seek appropriate "fastening together"
in a long term or permanent relationship.

You might think twice about being in a business relationship with someone who does not share Christian values. On what values are you going to base the business? On what values will they base the business? When there is a contradiction, who wins?

(Side note: If you are already in an unequally yoked marriage, remain in it. The Lord will still bless you. Honor the commitments we have made.)

2 Corinthians 6:14: (NASB) *for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness...*

What participation does righteousness (a state of being made right with God) have with lawlessness (literally, illegality - meaning a state of disfavor with God)? It may be difficult to find common ground in such a relationship. This does not in any way imply that those who are not believers are bad; they are simply out of favor with God.



Anchor Principle:
Seek the highest levels of partnership - in agreements and in action.

When we look at partnerships with others (business, hobbies, etc.) be focused on partnering with those who share the same principles as you whenever possible. Surround yourself with those who are likeminded and have the same Christlike goals.

2 Corinthians 6:14: (NASB) *...or what fellowship has light with darkness?*

Fellowship = Partnership/participation. Light and darkness are two clear opposites. Light is NOT simply "good" or "nice," or even righteous and honest, rather, it means godly! When it comes to a deeper level of communion together - fellowship - what is our basic common ground with those who are not trying to be godly?



Anchor Principle:
Seek the most cohesive fellowship - agreement - in principle.

We come across all kinds of people in all kinds of circumstances, and it would be ungodly to shun those who do not believe like we do. But we want to be careful that when we enter into deeper relationships, we want those relationships to feed us back godliness.

2 Corinthians 6:15: (NASB) ¹⁵*Or what **harmony** <4857> has Christ with Belial (those notoriously scandalous)*

Harmony: Strongs #4857, *sumphonēsis* (soom-fo'-nay-sis) *accordance, concord, agreement*

Notice the Greek word "*sumphonēsis*" is where we get our English word "symphony." We are seeking harmony in our lives with the choices we make and the people we spend time with.





What harmony have we, as those under Christ, with the world as those under Satan's rule? There is discord, as they "play a different tune." Our being under Christ defines our being *in* the world, not *of* it. We are following a spiritual ruler of righteousness and not an earthly one. Ours is a spiritual symphony!

When we choose friends, choose those who are more focused on what you are focused on. You will have more important things in common.



Anchor Principle:
Seek "life harmony" - playing the same piece of music
in the same orchestra.

2 Corinthians 6:15: (NASB) ... *or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?*

In common - a part that is distinct from the whole; a portion, share

The commonality here seems to be along the idea of differing roles under the same overall objective.

The only opportunity for a believer and an unbeliever to play "assigned roles" is outside of the headship of Christ, which must happen in life - the question is - is THAT where I live? Is that where I WANT to live? Sometimes we have a secret desire to be like everybody else, but we have to make hard choices.



Anchor Principle:
Seek sensible common ground - the interlocking principles
upon which we stand.

In our daily Christian choices, we want to assess the people and relationships around us and make sure we are focusing on those things that will bring us to God as sovereign, Jesus as our centerpiece and our being part of the body of Christ. How am I doing with the people I work with? The people I hang out with? Others I associate with? What am I seeking? What am I staying away from?

2 Corinthians 6:16: (NASB) ¹⁵*Or what **agreement** <4783> has the temple of God with idols?*

Agreement - Strong's #4783 in company with, i.e. (figuratively) accord with, agreement

A temple is where religion is kept - to those who believe in any religion (and this includes paganism,) *it is a place of sacred meaning and worship.* We are called a *temple of God*. I am not my own. I must therefore be and do only what is in accord - in agreement with sanctification - with being set aside for a holy purpose. This is upon what I should be basing the choices of my life.



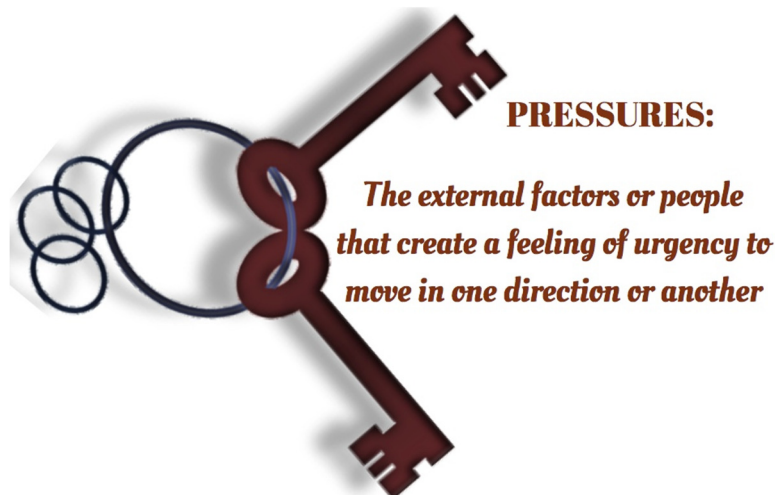
Anchor Principle:
Seek reasonable accord - the general purpose for living our lives.

What are your relationships? Who are they with? Why are they that way? Can you control them? Are they feeding you what you need to be fed, or are they feeding you things contrary to your desire to do the will of God through Christ? We need to be careful because our life decisions depend on the principles we hold onto.

Seven seconds predictable, *How Does the Brain Make Subconscious Decisions, James Neuro Success*

- *When we put people in brain scanners, fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging) scanners, and we watch their brains making decisions, we can predict them. We can predict purchase decisions, we can predict many different types of decisions. Not only can we predict them, we can predict them before the person makes them consciously. How many seconds do you think we can predict a decision before you consciously make one? The answer is about 7 to 10 seconds. Seven to 10 seconds before you make a decision consciously, your subconscious mind has already done it.*

This is why principles are so important! They are external, so if you do not plant them inside your heart and mind, they will not be a part of your subconscious workings. If they are not part of it, they will not be part of the final decision.



Remember, with **PRESSURES**, prayer is a happy companion!



For the young Christian: Choices regarding your friends, the college you go to, activities, career and marriage all exert heavy pressure. Sometimes this pressure feels overwhelming! What do you do? Find those **EXTERNAL PRINCIPLES** and build on them, using them as an anchor to hold you steady!

It can be hard to find your principles when you are in the middle of the pressure, so have them already firm in your heart.

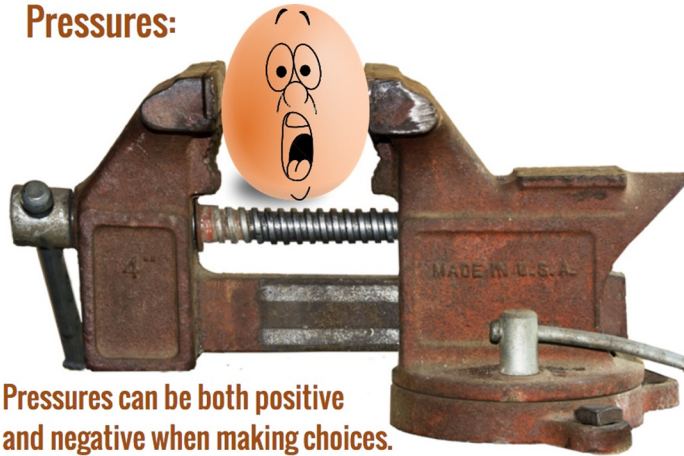
Peer pressure is difficult to manage. You feel exposed and like you have no other choice than to bend towards the will of the crowd.

We normally look back and think, "What do I do now?" We are suggesting by using these foundation principles, you will start to look forward, asking, "What should I be doing now?"

 **Gather your information, *Five Tips to Improve Your Critical Thinking, Samantha Agoos***

- *2: Gather your information. There's lots of it out there, so having a clear idea of your question will help you determine what's relevant. If you're trying to decide on a diet to improve your nutrition, you may ask an expert for their advice or seek other people's testimonies. Information gathering helps you weigh different options, moving you closer to a decision that meets your goal.*

Pressures:



Pressures can be both positive and negative when making choices. We would do well to identify and dwell on the positive pressures that press us towards godliness in our choices.

Pressure can be positive in that it helps us to mature.

2 Corinthians 6:16: (NASB) *Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

There is positive pressure in reminding ourselves that we are the temple of the living God. As a footstep follower of Christ, you have accepted giving up your own will to do the will of God through Christ. You are now given the Holy Spirit - God's power and influence. There is pressure to make use of that in a godly way.

This positive pressure brings us to:

Ephesians 5:1-10: (NASB) *'Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; ²and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma...*



Be imitators of God - We try our best and our intent is what is counted.
As beloved children - We smile when we see a child imitating an adult. Even when they do not do it well, we approve that they are trying. It comforts us that God sees us as children.



Next come the Anchor Principles needed to identify what is truly appropriate for true Christians:

³But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; ⁴and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. ⁵For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Do not let this negative list be a part of you. We should not curse, be rude or be a poor example. Our conversation and actions should be tasteful. Cursing is so common in everyday conversation. If you are a Christian, our language should be above reproach. If you stand for your principles and use better language, people will notice over time and begin to elevate their language to your level out of respect.

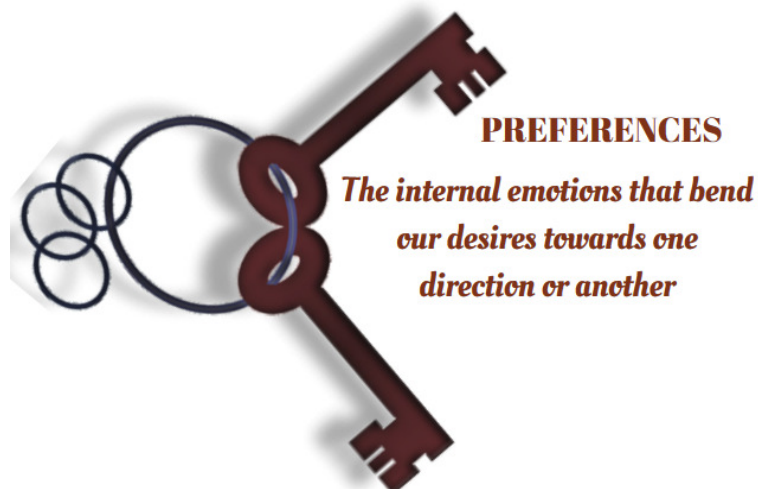
Once we have all of these principles in order we can now more easily see what we are facing:

⁶Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. ⁷Therefore do not be partakers with them; ⁸For you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light ⁹(for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), ¹⁰trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

Do not allow yourself to be deceived with empty words. You have a choice! Pressure comes, bears down on us and makes us want to go in another direction, but we have to ask ourselves if our choices are in accordance with the principles of godliness. If not, what pressures can I exert to make me move towards those principles?

PRESSURE Lesson: We can decide what pressures we will allow to influence us, and once that decision is made, our choices will follow suit.

With life's pressures in order, how do we deal with our own preferences in our decision making?





Prayer needs to be a companion with our **PREFERENCES**. Bring prayer to every part of this process to find a better way. Prayer means looking for God's way in our choices.

As Christians, we have two sets of preferences to deal with:

Romans 12:1-2: (NASB) *¹Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.*

The need to be urged to a different and higher direction indicates that we would naturally prefer another, more convenient way. The fact is, Christianity and Christian choices are inconvenient! They get in the way. They are HARD.

²And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

To be transformed is to be changed, and that means discomfort, not normally our preference. Not only is Christian choice inconvenient, it is uncomfortable! We battle the flesh and its interests. Our preferences will quickly bow to the flesh's decision if we do not watch it! The default is to bow to the desires of the flesh. Unfortunately, much of Christianity is built this way. For example, the whole "Prosperity Gospel" is built upon the desires of the flesh.

 **Apply the information, *Five Tips to Improve Your Critical Thinking*, Samantha Agoos**

3. Apply the information, something you do by asking critical questions. Facing a decision, ask yourself, "What concepts are at work? What assumptions exist? Is my interpretation of the information logically sound?" For example, in an email that promises you millions, you should consider, "What is shaping my approach to this situation? Do I assume the sender is telling the truth? Based on the evidence, is it logical to assume I'll win any money?"

We have to apply logic to what is normally emotional. Decision making is primarily emotional, so if we do not use the basic Foundation Principles, we will be lost.

If our Christianity is genuine, we become living contradictions in our decision making:

Romans 7:21-25: (NASB) *²¹I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. ²²For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, ²³but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?*

We gravitate toward others who like similar things. The problem is, as a Christian, your preferences are not the bottom line of your life. They are often something to be overcome.

...but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war - we battle against earthly preferences and have to establish spiritual preferences.

To manage and overcome the contradiction, we need those Foundation and Anchor Principles to rule in our hearts and our minds.



²⁵Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

All of our earthly preferences are not necessarily sinful, but they can tug us away from the things that are most important. We have to decide how to deal with that.

Using the example of a Christian married to someone who is not a Christian means a contradiction exists. But there is an example of how to apply spirituality in your decision making. Your non-Christian spouse is not going to be interested in reading the Scriptures, meditating upon them and discussing them with you. But you are married, so you need to make conscious choices and decisions to maintain that relationship. God blesses you for taking time with your spouse as you are honoring the promise you made.

Our preferences in our choices need to be tempered with God's will and His preferences:

James 4:13-17: (NASB) ¹³Come now, you who say, Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit. ¹⁴Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. ¹⁵Instead, you ought to say, If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that. ¹⁶But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. ¹⁷Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.

It is good to make plans, but we must live according to the will of God. We do not want our own preferences to get in the way. We need our Foundation and Anchor Principles as a basis for assessing our preferences.



Consider the implications, *Five Tips to Improve Your Critical Thinking*, Samantha Agoos

- **4. Consider the implications.** *Imagine it's election time, and you've selected a political candidate based on their promise to make it cheaper for drivers to fill up on gas. At first glance, that seems great. But what about the long-term environmental effects? If gasoline use is less restricted by cost, this could also cause a huge surge in air pollution - an unintended consequence that's important to think about.*

Preference for the Christian who sees themselves as self-sufficient - just Jesus and I...we can do it!

Romans 12:3-6: (NASB) ³For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. ⁴For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, ⁵so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. ⁶Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given...

We need to remember our role *as a small part of* the unity of the body of Christ - it is not just us. Much of our own growth is related to the input we receive from others following Christ. This is a powerful decision-making tool.

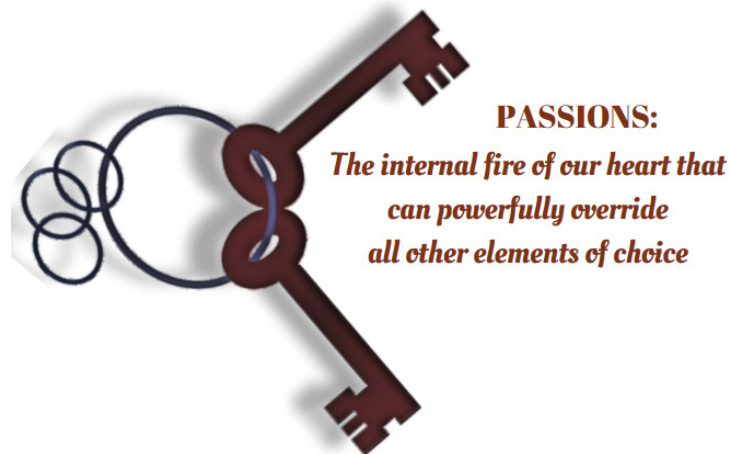
PREFERENCE Lesson: Our personal preferences are engrained, and therefore must be focused on, in order for us to properly align our choices with God's will. Sometimes when we think we are choosing God's will, we may still be siding with our natural preferences to our own detriment.



When it comes to our choices,
how do we manage the most powerful part of life - our passions?

🔊 Explore other points of view, *Five Tips to Improve Your Critical Thinking*,
Samantha Agoos

- 5. *Explore other points of view. Ask yourself why so many people are drawn to the policies of the opposing political candidate. Even if you disagree with everything that candidate says, exploring the full spectrum of viewpoints might explain why some policies that don't seem valid to you appeal to others. This will allow you to explore alternatives, evaluate your own choices and ultimately help you make more informed decisions.*

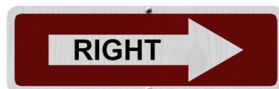


Without prayer, our passions will run wild!

When it comes to choices, our passions are where the rubber meets the road. Even in Scripture, the passions of God's chosen ones through the ages were a source of trial and testing.

The bottom line:
The heart will always try and get what the heart wants.

"That is how I feel, so I must have it."



"That is how I feel, so I must challenge it."



It goes without saying that our Foundation and Anchor Principles must have permission to be made relevant when confronting our passions, for passions always seem to feel like they are above the law. Passions make us rationalize to the point where we do not think clearly. We then act blindly.



Galatians 6:7-10: (NASB) ⁷*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. ⁸For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.*

God is not mocked! Just because your passion says it is true, real, vital and important does not mean your choice is godly.

No matter what choices we make, whether they are driven by passion or not, we are accountable!

⁹*Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. ¹⁰So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.*

Let us do good - Not just be “nice.” This means complying with godly behavior and having godly passion in all things.

Jesus as a man was faced with the passions of his humanity needing to be focused on the will of God:

Hebrews 4:14-16: (NASB) ¹⁴*Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

This proves our passions can be channeled.



A caller from Connecticut suggests: Our Lord Jesus says much about servants, service and serving, and his Apostles all wanted to be a part of it, thinking like “big shots.” He defined service by saying, Matthew 20:27: *Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.* A dictionary defines a servant as “one who exerts self for the benefit of another.”

We can refocus our passions to serving others.

Christian choice is revealed in the Gethsemane experience of Jesus.

We know that as Jesus approached this experience, his principles were crystal clear:

Mark 14:32-38: (NASB) ³²*They came to a place named Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, Sit here until I have prayed.*

Of course at this most pivotal moment, Jesus prayed. What pressures were on his shoulders! Under pressure, we find our principles by praying.

Jesus then reveals the external pressures he is facing which have caused him internal grief:

³³*And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be very distressed and troubled. ³⁴And he said to them, my soul is deeply grieved to the point of death (wow!); remain here and keep watch.*

Jesus prays regarding his deep personal preferences:

³⁵*And he went a little beyond them, and fell to the ground and began to pray that if it were possible, the hour might pass him by. ³⁶And he was saying, Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from me;*



Abba! - means "daddy," a deep, emotional connection between father and child.

Finally, Jesus rehearses and relies upon his deepest and most convicted passion:

yet not what I will, but what You will. ³⁷And he came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? ³⁸Keep watching and praying that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Yet not what I will, but what You will - these were his final words on the matter.

Jesus' greatest passion was to do the will of his Father.

When we look at our own decisions, we can see them summed up in Jesus' Gethsemane experience and the victory of having his spiritual passion override everything else.

PASSIONS Lesson: In any hour of temptation, in any circumstance of choice, we are best served when we have our **PRINCIPLES** in mind, our **PRESSURES** managed, our **PREFERENCES** understood and our **PASSIONS** directed.

We can follow Jesus' example and make decisions that will bring honor to God.

*So, what are my choices?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*

*And now even more to think about...
only in the **Full Edition** of CQ Rewind!*



The bottom line of our choices is that they need to be made with a "be ye separate" mentality. Proverbs 4 walks us through this in a unique way:

Proverbs 4:23-27: (NASB) ²³Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life. ²⁴Put away from you a deceitful mouth and put devious speech far from you. ²⁵Let your eyes look directly ahead and let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you. ²⁶Watch the path of your feet and all your ways will be established. ²⁷Do not turn to the right nor to the left; Turn your foot from evil.

Our "Be Ye Separate" Lesson:

Proverbs 4:23: (NASB) Watch over your heart with all diligence...

Choice - we absolutely have a choice as to whom and what we bind our hearts to! Let it not come to be that we choose to bind ourselves to anyone who is not a follower of Christ!



Our "Be Ye Separate" Lesson:

Proverbs 4:23: (NASB) *...For from it flow the springs of life.*

From the chosen allegiances of our hearts will flow the truest destiny of our lives. Once the beauty of God's plan touches us, our free moral agency is given authority over what we ultimately do with it.

Our "Be Ye Separate" Lesson:

Proverbs 4:24: (NASB) *Put away from you a deceitful mouth and put devious speech far from you.*

What our heart wants, our heart will try to get. When our desires and allegiances are outside the realm of God's light, we rationalize - we explain away true righteousness and co-opt in darkness. If we observe what we are rationalizing, we will see where our heart is.

Our "Be Ye Separate" Lesson:

Proverbs 4:25: (NASB) *Let your eyes look directly ahead and let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you.*

If members of a symphony :

- 1. We must know our part and play our part – there is no room for adding our own music!*
- 2. We must always be focused on the conductor for our direction in tempo, volume and unity.*

Our truest heart allegiance demands our consistent focus and attention!

Our "Be Ye Separate" Lesson:

Proverbs 4:26: (NASB) *Watch the path of your feet and all your ways will be established.*

As we must walk a path in this world, we must be sure that we do not become attracted to the things and people of this world to a point where they become a significant focus rather than Christ.

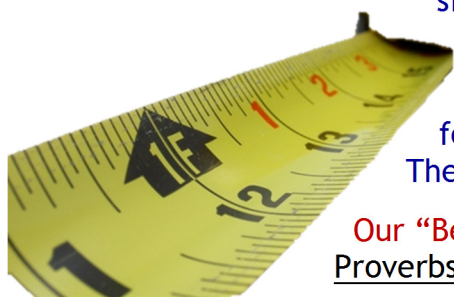
How can we measure this? A pointed answer: How much focus are we giving the world that is necessary for our sustenance vs. how much focus are we giving that is voluntary, for our happiness and pleasure? There is a saying that says: He who chases two rabbits catches none...

Our "Be Ye Separate" Lesson:

Proverbs 4: 27: (NASB) *Do not turn to the right nor to the left;...*

Keeping our heart with all diligence really blossoms here. If our heart is set, then our mind can be set. This, in turn, determines our path and can keep us from turning aside. Move forward - always move forward!

To what and to whom do I focus my primary allegiances? We must answer this for ourselves. Our answer must be Our Heavenly Father and His son, Jesus. If not, then what are we focused on?





Our Final "Be Ye Separate" Lesson:

Proverbs 4:27: (NASB) ...*turn your foot from evil.*

These verses began with a choice. Watch your heart with all diligence! We absolutely have a choice as to whom and what we bind our hearts to! Let it not come to be that we choose to bind ourselves to anyone who is not a follower of Christ! End with the choice to walk away from evil. Wherever possible, choose to walk away!

Decisions are made by those who show up. — Peter Roskam

Ethical decisions ensure that everyone's best interests are protected. When in doubt, don't. — Harvey Mackay

It is hard to imagine a more stupid or more dangerous way of making decisions than by putting those decisions in the hands of people who pay no price for being wrong. — Thomas Sowell

Sometimes, in order to follow our moral compass and/or our hearts, we have to make unpopular decisions or stand up for what we believe in. — Tabatha Coffey