

LIFE QUESTIONS



Elim Church, Clapham

Choices

We make choices every day, on a whole range of matters. What are we going to do? Where do we have to go? What shall we eat? How am I going to deal with this? etc.

Many of these we may not have to think too much about beforehand yet they can have far reaching consequences, affecting not just the moment, but can affect ourselves and others. Choices can bring life or death, blessing or cursing, health or sickness. Making good choices is not always easy and can sometimes take a lot of thought before we arrive at a decision, and it is not unusual that we can wonder if we've made the right decision.

Sometimes we may find it difficult to make a choice on one thing or another. This can be the result of learned behaviour due to our experiences and / or upbringing. But we must remember that the choices we make often bring with them responsibilities particularly if they involve or affect others. Good choices can sometimes be difficult particularly if one considers the consequences or outcomes, but they still have to be made. Avoiding or putting off making a choice for whatever reason, is still making a choice, and such a choice means that we may have to face up to the consequences and or outcomes, by not choosing to make our mind up.

Believe it or not free-will and choice go hand in hand. Without free-will, we wouldn't have choice. Without free-will, mankind would have to obey or follow a specific way of life, or a set of rules that had been laid down by some greater being beforehand, thereby removing the ability to choose. Without choice we would not know true freedom and therefore not have the ability to choose or make decisions in the way we are able to do at present.

The choices we make are often far reaching as they reveal our character or what we are really like, as they can affect our behaviour, attitudes, decisions as well as our brain! Romans 12:2 says, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" (NIV). To help us to understand what is being said, it would be good to see what another translation says about this verse. "Don't copy the behaviour and customs of this world, but be a new and different person with a fresh newness in all you do and think. Then you will learn from your own experience how his ways will really satisfy you" (TLB). Not copying the world is a choice!

Dr. Caroline Leaf, a specialist in the study of the brain, points out that, 'the repeated thinking on a particular matter or subject that goes on - causes electrical impulses within the brain that determine the choices we make,' She goes on to point out that we can change the choices we make by training ourselves to think differently This is what Paul is referring to when he talks about 'renewing our minds' (Rom 12:2 NIV). This is supported by what is said

in Proverbs 23:7, 'For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. ...' (NKJV). Dr. Leaf goes on to say that our thoughts and the choices we make change the very make-up of the way our brain works. The decisions or choices we make today become part of the thought networks in our brain.

Do you have difficulty in making choices of any sort?

If so, why do you think this is?

Is procrastination ever advisable, or have you ever found it detrimental?

What can you do to help you be more efficient in making decisions?