



"Personal Choice"
Psalms 111
Rev. JD Moffett
August 30, 2026

¹ Praise the Lord.

***I will extol the Lord with all my heart
in the council of the upright and in the assembly.***

**² Great are the works of the Lord;
they are pondered by all who delight in them.**

**³ Glorious and majestic are his deeds,
and his righteousness endures forever.**

**⁴ He has caused his wonders to be remembered;
the Lord is gracious and compassionate.**

**⁵ He provides food for those who fear him;
he remembers his covenant forever.**

**⁶ He has shown his people the power of his works,
giving them the lands of other nations.**

**⁷ The works of his hands are faithful and just;
all his precepts are trustworthy.**

**⁸ They are established for ever and ever,
enacted in faithfulness and uprightness.**

**⁹ He provided redemption for his people;
he ordained his covenant forever—
holy and awesome is his name.**

**¹⁰ The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;
all who follow his precepts have good understanding.
To him belongs eternal praise.**

Croft Pentz is quoted as saying: Of all creation, only man can say yes or no to God. This message is all about our freedom and the choices we can make as free persons. Freedom from ritual and tradition is a wonderful and dangerous blessing. With it, our souls are liberated to experience Christ, and His power is loosed to work through us. We are also tempted to think we have no responsibility to put it to better use than just exhilaration and joy. In First Corinthians 8, Paul says that we are free from rituals, but not from our responsibility.

My Dad's generation was the 60's. They were going to change everything. All the rituals of the establishment had to go! The one thing his generation misunderstood – just as today's anti-establishment groups miss the point – is that, while they hated the establishment's rituals and were trying to change it all, they had their own rituals developing.

If you don't believe you're steeped in ritual, try this exercise: name one aspect of your day (today) that is not part of a ritual you've developed. For instance, which leg did you put in your pants first when you were dressing this morning? On which side of the bed did you roll out today? Do you brush first, or floss? How about those shoelaces...did you loop over or under...or did you opt for slip on shoes because you don't like laces?

When I was in high school there was a campaign pointed at Washington D.C. to Throw the bums OUT! They wanted to elect everyone new to both houses. Even Thomas Jefferson, our founding father and author of the Declaration of Independence advocated regular revolutions of change. He said we should throw out all bills passed by Congress every 20 years and start over. All those ideas sound radical and, perhaps, make us feel uncomfortable. The reason is because our rituals are tied to our routine – those things which make our lives easier, simpler. We do them habitually, and without too much thought.

We don't like to change our familiar patterns; we get uncomfortable, irritable, and resistant. But, if the routine itself is uncomfortable to us, it is because someone else is comfortable with it, and we'd rather change it! Routines and rituals (as important as some may be) are no-wins! Our choices affect more than ourselves. Whatever I change will affect someone else, whether it affects them negatively or positively.

Paul pointed to our freedom and responsibility all at once; and he repeated it twice in his letters to the Corinthian church: "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient." 1 Corinthians 6 Not all choices are evil or good; some are good, some better. The trick is to not let the good become the enemy of the best. I can, for instance, study my Bible – that is good! I could also put down my Bible and rescue a child from drowning in the lake – that would be best!

When making our choices in life, we must consider others; we must consider God's will, and the lives of other people. We can do that if we do as a Bishop once said to a friend who was weighing a [life] call: "If you are uncertain of which of the two paths to take, choose the one on which the shadow of the cross falls."

Making Good or Poor Choices

A man really wanted to help his son understand the importance of making right choices, obeying, and doing right. So, if his son made a bad choice or a wrong decision, he'd give him a nail, send him to a post out in the back yard, and have him take a hammer and put the nail in the post. And every day that he went through the whole day making good decisions, he'd let him go out and remove one of those nails.

As the boy grew up from the age of about eight years until about fourteen or fifteen, there were always 2 or 3 nails in the post, and he'd be nailing them in and pulling them out. But he got better, until finally, as he grew and matured, all the nails were removed.

When all the nails were removed, he felt pretty good. Then his dad took him out and said, Son, I want you to take a good look at that post you've been nailing and un-nailing all these years. The boy looked at it for a moment and saw all the holes where all those nails had been hammered-in over the years; the nail scars were many, and they pretty well dominated the appearance of that post.

His dad said, I want to tell you something, son, about bad choices. You may be completely forgiven; there are no nails left -- no problem there -- but you do have the remaining effects. That post will never be the same again.

That is a well-worn story that illustrates how our choices have lasting consequences. Unfortunately, those who are prone to making poor or immoral decisions can see this story in an unhealthy way. The post is viewed as the decision-maker's life, and the holes as being the ruined quality of that life. This is a natural, but sad, incomplete interpretation.

It is clear that when we make choices, they affect many lives, not just our own; it's like ripples in a still pond. A husband who decides to do drugs pulls his wife, children, parents, co-workers, neighbors, and friends into hard circumstances. In short, the holes in the post represent not only our own lives, but the collective existence of all mankind. A ripple never stops. It just continues until it is swallowed by the shore, or it becomes a part of the current again...but it is still there.

We must remember that God doesn't hate or punish children because of the sins of parents. There are too many indicators in Scripture that we each bear the responsibility of our own misdeeds. The sense here is the ripples. Whatever we do that opposes God will show up in the generations that follow, because of genetic predisposition; we bear after our own kind. Those things you do in opposition to God's will are a nail hole in the life of your offspring.

Abram (Abraham before his name change) made plenty of mistakes, poor choices, otherwise known as sin. We will look at some of the ripples – the poor choices of his nephew, Lot. Lot observed Abram in Egypt, and all along the trail. Whatever Abram did was like a nail going in or coming out of the post. There were continuing ripples for every nail hammered by a poor choice.

God Expects Us to Make Wise Choices

One side-road, however, we must be careful to never blame God for the ripples. Christians sometimes pray, asking God to give them special insight or change a circumstance when they've directly disobeyed God's will. They fully expect God to do something mystical/magical to fix everything. I personally believe that this is almost worse than consulting Madame Sadie the Crystal Ball Gazer.

God expects us to make wise, mature, and Godly choices. You cannot do that if you don't live in His will, close to His side. Jesus would have us do what we can do! We do not sit, praying God will drop a solution out of the sky. Every command in Scripture urges us to be involved in working for Kingdom results. Certainly, we must pray and trust...and act! But we must act in accordance with mature, courageous faith in Christ, and in the will of God.

Simply stated, if we expect God to send solutions to our financial problems, we must act boldly, giving generously as God has shown us in His Word. If we expect God to send solutions to our problems with our enemies, we must act boldly, loving them, praying for those who spitefully abuse us because of Christ's name. If we expect God to send solutions to our health problems, we must act boldly, treating our bodies with respect, balancing rest, work and play with healthy attitudes and exercise.

Think of a time that you may have made a fearful choice instead of a bold one...how do you think that situation would have changed if you had acted boldly? Regardless of what situations we find ourselves in we must remember that a choice in the flesh is a poor choice. A good choice is a Godly choice.

If You Want to Make a Godly Choice, Return to the Place of Your Call

Friends, there is always a way back to God. We see it throughout scripture. He used Abram after he failed in Egypt. He used David after he fell into adultery. He used Jonah though he kept falling. Remember, His mercies are new every morning!

Enron - Godly Choices

The February 2, 2002, issue of World magazine reports that Sherron Watkins never aspired to be a hero. And she certainly never imagined that there would be T-shirts reading Thanks, Sherron Watkins, Our Hero.

Watkins was an Enron vice-president who worked for the company's chief financial officer. It was there that she became aware of the questionable accounting practices that Enron used to hide the extent of its losses and the lie about its bottom-line figures.

Watkins was initially afraid to confront senior management about the irregularities. But after talking to a friend and her mother, Watkins drafted a six-page memo to Enron CEO Kenneth Lay. In it she expressed her concern that the company "will implode in a wave of accounting scandals."

She went further calling Enron a "crooked company" whose profits were "nothing but an elaborate hoax." She expected to be fired and was surprised when she wasn't. Watkins not only had the courage to risk her job, she -- unlike other Enron executives -- but she refused to use her insider knowledge for personal gain. Despite seeing the company coming apart, Watkins never sold her stock. Watkins' behavior has made her, in the London Guardian's words, "the toast of America."

But as her Sunday school teacher told WorldD magazine, her Christian friends sometimes wonder what the big deal is. After all, she was only doing what a Christian should do.

How are you doing with your choices?

Do you examine your rituals often? Your routines largely determine your choices. Jimmy Hoffa is reported to have said, I have a lot of faults, but being wrong isn't one of 'em.

We need to remember that when life is too comfortable, there's a chance we haven't been moving forward enough to feel the wind resistance.

And, if you're making Godly choices, you'll be feeling the resistance all the time. That's what happens when God gives you freedom of choice and you choose to pick up a cross daily and follow Him. **AMEN!!!**