



Volume 8, No. 10, October, 2020



None of Self and All of Thee

*O, the bitter pain and sorrow
That a time could ever be,
When I proudly said to Jesus,
"All of self, and none of Thee,
All of self and none of Thee,
All of self and none of Thee,"
When I proudly said to Jesus,
"All of Self and none of Thee."*

*Yet He found me; I beheld Him
Bleeding on th'accursed tree,
And my wistful heart said faintly,
"Some of self, and some of Thee,
Some of self, and some of Thee,
Some of self, and some of Thee,"
And my wistful heart said faintly,
"Some of self and some of Thee."*

*Day by day His tender mercy
Healing, helping full and free,
Bro't me lower while I whispered,
"Less of self, and more of Thee,
Less of self, and more of Thee,
Less of self, and more of Thee,"
Bro't me lower while I whispered,
"Less of self and more of Thee."*

*Higher than the highest heavens,
Deeper than the deepest sea,
Lord, Thy love at last has conquered,
"None of self, and all of Thee,
None of self and all of Thee,
None of self and all of Thee,
Lord, Thy love at last has conquered,
None of self and all of Thee."*

Words: Theodore Monod (w 1874)
Music: James McGranahan (w. 1876)



Decisions have Consequences

Every day we are faced with decisions to make. Each of those decisions will have a consequence. Sometimes the consequence is good. I decided to spend the day with my mother, and the outcome was very enjoyable! Sometimes the consequence is bad. I love the taste of salty sunflower seeds, and before I knew it, over a couple of weeks I had eaten five bags of sunflower seeds. I now know what an attack of diverticulitis feels like, and I don't crave sunflower seeds like I once did. The consequence of that decision was very painful.

Throughout history, we can look back and see the consequences of bad decisions. David decided not to follow God's command and took a census of the people anyway. There was a bad consequence to that action. Not only David, but his people suffered for his decision as well.

I Chronicles 21:9-14: ⁹ The LORD spoke to Gad, David's seer, saying, ¹⁰ "Go and speak to David, saying, 'Thus says the LORD, "I offer you three things; choose for yourself one of them, which I will do to you."' "¹¹ So Gad came to David and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, 'Take for yourself ¹² either three years of famine, or three months to be swept away before your foes, while the sword of your enemies overtakes you, or else three days of the sword of the LORD, even pestilence in the land, and the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the territory of Israel.' Now, therefore, consider what answer I shall return to Him who sent me." ¹³ David said to Gad, "I am in great distress; please let me fall into the hand of the LORD, for His mercies are very great. But do not let me fall into the hand of man."¹⁴ So the LORD sent a pestilence on Israel; 70,000 men of Israel fell.

Demas was a fellow worker of Paul's as is mentioned in Philemon 1:23-24: ²³*Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you,* ²⁴*as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow workers.*

But Demas made another decision which is recorded in 2 Timothy 4:10: ¹⁰*for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica.*

Let us, like Joshua, make the right decision for ourselves and for our families. Joshua 24:14-15: ¹⁴*Now, therefore, fear the LORD and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD.* ¹⁵*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."*

Lorna Smith, Lubbock, Texas

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Decisions

Whether we realize it or not, every minute of our entire lives is based on the decisions we make. Some will be right decisions; others will be horribly wrong decisions. From the time we are old enough to make our own decisions, we will be guided by those decisions.

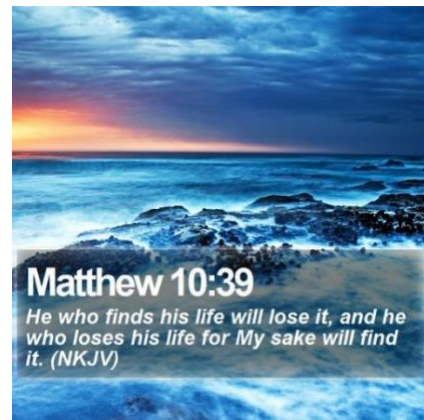
God created us as individuals who have the right to choose. We are not puppets. God does not pull our strings and force us to obey His will. I've often heard the phrase, "free moral agents." That's what we are – free to choose. The greatest decision we will ever make is to search for and acquire that "pearl of great

price" (the Kingdom of Heaven) Matthew 13:44-46 (NIV). Our preacher's sermon on May 3rd was about the treasure of Heaven, the Kingdom of God, and the cost and the value of that "pearl of great price."

Our decisions are based on the difference between cost and value in the material world. We see something we want, we look at the price, and determine if the price is too high or if it is within our budget. Then we decide whether to buy or not to buy.

Spiritual decisions are made the same way. There is nothing of greater value than the Lord and His Kingdom, but too many believe the cost of the Kingdom is too great so they choose the world instead of Christ. To them, Satan is easier and more fun to serve. And he is. People float along in life serving self, never stopping to think about the consequences of their actions. The consequences of serving self are horrendous. I sometimes wonder about the reasons for not acknowledging God. Could it be that they ignore God, thinking there will be no cost? What do you and I base our decisions on—the cost or the value, both spiritually and materially?

Jesus said in Matthew 16:24, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." What does "taking up my cross" mean? It doesn't mean any physical or emotional burden that I have to carry through my life. It does mean that every day, I decide the Lord and His Kingdom will be number one in my life, to the exclusion of all else, even family.



Jesus taught us in Matthew 10:37-39, "Anyone who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever

finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."

Luke 14:26-27 says, *"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes—even his own life—he cannot be my disciple."* Jesus is not saying that we literally hate our family. It's a strong expression that simply means to "love less." The comparison between love of family and love for Jesus should be so great that there is *no* comparison. He must *always* be number one!

Our choice of a life mate, vocation, or the schools we attend are *big* life decisions. If God has had no part in these decisions, the consequences can be destructive. Looking at society today, we see the devastating results of decisions made carelessly and without God.

Each day we live is filled with decisions to be made from the time we rise until we go to bed at night. Those daily decisions determine how well our day goes. We can have bad days without God, or we can have days that are governed by Him. That's why it's so important for Christians to give the beginning of each day to the Father. Whether our daily decisions are "major" or "minor," they will have their own consequences, good or bad.

As Christians, we must base all our decisions on the wisdom and discernment of God. The Lord will not (in fact, cannot) accept second or third place in our lives. He is either number one, or He is not at all.

Where does He fit in my life? Where does He fit in your life?

Mary Anna Melton, Rolla, Missouri

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Choices, Good or Bad?

Choices. We all make choices, every day, many times a day. Some of the choices we make are good choices with good results; other choices may seem good at the moment but turn out to be very detrimental—to us, to others, or both.

Parents strive to teach their children to make good choices, to think beyond the gratification of the moment and choose the better option. To the frustrated teenager, dropping out of school may seem to be a great idea; but wise parents will guide that teen beyond the frustration of the moment. Wisdom gained through their years of experience tells parents that education is vital to the future of their child. However, the teen still has to choose whether to listen to his parents' advice or not. The decision he makes will affect his entire future.

Moral choices face us every day. The handsome, dashing young suitor may sweep the gullible girl off her feet; but he may be a very poor husband who leads her away from the Lord and His church. King Solomon was the wisest man of all time, yet he allowed his foreign wives to lead him away from seeking God. So often, the choice of a husband or wife has lifelong, even eternal, consequences. Young people, blinded by the immediate attraction and emotion of the moment, sometimes make foolish choices, affecting not only themselves but also any children resulting from the marriage.

Choices made on the job also affect us. Employees can choose to be honest, hardworking, efficient employees or to be lazy, careless, or dishonest in work habits. Colossians 3:23-24 says to servants (employees), *"whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men...for you serve the Lord Christ."* As Christians, we have a higher "boss" than the person who employs us.

We choose the way we treat other people. Our choices may be influenced by the other person's behavior or appearance, but Galatians 6:10 teaches us to, *"do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith."* James 2:1 teaches us, *"Do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ...with partiality."* This is another way of saying, *"Love your neighbor as yourself"* (James 2:8).

How do we choose to use our time? Each of us is given 24 hours in each day, no more and no less. Who or what is first in the choices we make? Do we focus most of our time and attention on the TV? Is our time spent in getting, then trying to keep, the things of the world? How much of our time do we devote to Bible study and to prayer? Are we making good choices?

King Saul had a choice to make. The word of the Lord came to Samuel who passed it along to Saul in 1 Samuel 15:2-3, *"...Now go and attack Amalek and utterly destroy all that they [Amalekites] have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey."* The instructions were clear; however, Saul chose to take the Amalekite king, Agag, alive, thereby disregarding God's direct instructions as passed on to him by Samuel. His choice cost him his throne and his position as leader of the Israelite people.

The Jews chose to reject Jesus and his teachings. In John 6, Jesus had just taught them that He is the bread of life and that, *"...no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father."* John 6:66 says that from that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. His closest disciples now had a choice to make. Jesus asked, *"Do you also want to go away?"* Simon Peter made a good choice when he responded, *"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."*

The rich young ruler came to Jesus asking, *"...what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"* (Matthew 19:16) Jesus answered his question, and the young man now had a choice to make—to sell all he had and follow Jesus – or not. At that time, he chose to go away sorrowful rather than to follow Jesus' answer.

Cain decided to take his brother's life and thereby condemned himself to a difficult life. David's spur of the moment decision to call for Bathsheba to be brought to him led to a multitude of problems upon him and his household. Pilate seemed to have a divided heart. He wanted to release Jesus, but he also wanted to curry favor with the Jews. Tradition says that the remainder of his life was not good and that he died in exile, far from the power he had earlier enjoyed.

However, Esther's decision to follow her cousin's advice and seek an audience with the king was a very courageous choice and led to the right for her people to defend themselves. When Ruth decided to remain with Naomi rather than to return to her own people, she had no way to know that she would become a part of the earthly lineage of the Messiah.

How are we using our own time, abilities and resources? Do we find a way to use them in service to God and to our fellow Christians? The choices are ours. So are the consequences.

Evelyn Waite, Rolla, Missouri

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You are not a reservoir with a limited amount of resources; you are a channel attached to unlimited divine resources.

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I Am Mine No More

I am mine (I am mine) no more,
I am mine (I am mine) no more,
I've been bought with blood,
I am mine no more.

Jesus is (Jesus is) my Lord,
Jesus is (Jesus is) my Lord,
And He rules (and He rules) my life,
Jesus is my Lord.

He will come (He will come) again,
He will come (He will come) again,
And He'll take (and He'll take) me home,
He will come again.

Words: Unknown author
Music: Unknown composer

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Sunrise is a monthly newsletter written and/or assembled by members of the Rolla Church of Christ. Sunrise is printed and distributed (primarily via email) to individuals and congregations around the country. All previous issues can be accessed by going to <http://www.seekgrowserveLove.org>. Click on the Resources tab, then on Sunrise Newsletter. You will find the current issue plus all previous issues.

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