

CGMF Study Series

Lesson 2

Study Notes

(Source Material: The book "How you make the call: Choices That Make Or Break Us. ", by Ralph Carter)

YOU HAVE A CHOICE!

WHEN WE ARE INFANTS, OTHERS choose for us. They decide what we wear, when we sleep, what we eat, where we go, what we see, and how we are entertained.

As we age, we are afforded the opportunity to make more and more of the choices that impact our lives. Within just a couple of years, with the help of our parents, we begin to make some of the decisions just mentioned. Typically, the better we handle the choices we are afforded, the more freedom we are given in making future decisions. By the time we are eighteen, most of us are making the vast majority of our choices. If, by the time you are out of college, you are not making all your decisions, you have a problem. You may seek the advice of parents, friends, teachers, and pastors, but if you are not the one pulling the trigger on whatever decision is being made, then you need to declare your independence! (Just a word of warning, you can't declare your independence if you are not living independently—translation: "paying the bills.")

So whether you are just now in a position to make all your choices, or you have been at it awhile, here are a few more of those summary statements:

EVERY CHOICE MATTERS.

SOME MATTER MORE THAN OTHERS, FOR SURE.

BUT, EVERY CHOICE MATTERS.

Hebrews 11:26-29

24 By faith Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter when he was grown up. 25 He chose to be mistreated with God's people instead of having the temporary pleasures of sin. 26 He thought that the abuses he suffered for Christ were more valuable than the treasures of Egypt, since he was looking forward to the reward.

27 By faith he left Egypt without being afraid of the king's anger. He kept on going as if he could see what is invisible.

28 By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, in order that the destroyer could not touch their firstborn children.

29 By faith they crossed the Red Sea as if they were on dry land, but when the Egyptians tried it, they were drowned.

Most people know that, but very few live as though their choices are important. Most of us are pretty careless in making decisions. Why are

we flippant about the choices we make? Because we make so many! After a while we forget we even have choices. But we do!

We have a choice about everything—little choices, big choices, choices of consequence, and choices with hardly any consequences. We get to decide to go or stay; to rise and shine or to sleep in and vegetate; to study or to party; and to be polite, or to act like a jerk. It's all up to you. You are in the driver's seat. You will determine the kind of person you will be and the kind of life you will have. The choice is completely yours. And rest assured, the choices just keep on coming.

As a result, most of us get a little haphazard in our choices. At times you will become weary of having to make them and attempt to relinquish control to another. You will flip a coin, ignore or postpone your decision, or respond by saying, "I don't care; you decide." "Whatever you want is fine with me. Suit yourself." "It doesn't matter; I don't give a rip." But ultimately, even your decision to relinquish control, is a choice you have made.

Sadly, there are moments when we become desensitized to the fact that we even have options. We dupe ourselves or allow ourselves to be duped into believing that the only choice we have is the one being forced upon us. But that isn't true! You can choose the road less traveled. For instance, you can choose to do what is best for you—what is most rewarding for you. You don't have to make the obvious choice that we are conditioned to make. You don't have to watch any of the 250 channels. You can turn the TV off. You actually can!

You can sit in silence. For real. You can read a book, build a shelf for your garage, take a walk, or sit on a neighbor's porch and talk. This

will blow your mind, but you can even save the \$150 a month by getting rid of cable. They aren't the IRS. You don't have to pay them.

You don't have to live in a particular neighborhood to be happy. The divorce rate from one neighborhood to another doesn't vary much. People in the nicest parts of town have troubles too. They eat and drink too much and overmedicate themselves just like folks in the adjoining zip code.

Peer pressure, societal expectations, parental pressure, advertising, the PC police, and our own self-imposed expectations make it difficult for you to even believe you have much of a choice, but you do. So whether you make it or forfeit it to the wishes of another—the choice is yours. I want to help you recognize you have options! You get to decide. The choice is yours. In a nutshell, man, I'm trying to give you your life back. For goodness sake, take it.

Joshua 24:14-15

14 “So now, revere the LORD. Serve him honestly and faithfully. Put aside the gods that your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates and in Egypt and serve the LORD.

15 But if it seems wrong in your opinion to serve the LORD, then **choose today whom you will serve. **Choose** the gods whom your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you live. But my family and I will serve the LORD.”**

QUESTIONS TO TALK ABOUT

1. What is the first real choice you remember your parents allowing you to make?

2. Do you remember the first moral choice you ever made? Can you tell the group about it?

3. Do you ever forfeit your privilege of making decisions?

4. Do you ever allow someone to pressure you into making a choice you really didn't want to make?

5. Can you think of a decision you know you need to make but you haven't gotten around to making it yet? Do you know why you are putting it off?