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“Choices”

What is the meaning of choices? It is an act of selecting or in making a decision when faced with two or more possibilities.

For instance, the choice between good and evil. One of the biggest choices we have each day is to choose to love myself. We can make the choice to try and make positive thoughts whether than negative thoughts.

Sometimes we get to choose and sometimes the choice is made for us. When we are born, the family we are born into did not happen with our decision. The country we grew up in was not our choice nor was our race. It is what we do with choices that have been made for us.

The Serenity Prayer states God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, Courage to change the things I can and the Wisdom to know the difference. There is a teaching about acceptance I would like to share with you. Acceptance is the answer to all my problems today. When I am disturbed, it is because I find some person, place, thing or situation—some fact of my life – unacceptable to me, and I can find no serenity until I accept that person, place, thing or situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment. Nothing, absolutely nothing happens in God’s world by mistake. Until I accept myself, my situation and my life completely on life’s terms, I cannot be happy. I need to concentrate not so much on what happens in the world as on what needs to be changed in me and in my attitudes!

One way we can get guidance with accepting choices made for us is by being a friend to Jesus. One of my favorite hymns is “What a Friend We have in Jesus”. I researched this hymn and found the hymn started as a poem written by Joseph Scribber and later put to music. While Joseph was living in Ireland he had lost his fiancé to a horse accident. After moving to Canada, he lost his second fiancé to a sudden illness. After these two sad happenings, his grief was overwhelming and he turned to God and wrote this poem. He was greatly comforted as was his mother. As a young man, he attempted to follow literally the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount which stresses “Be anxious for nothing”. Jesus made it clear that anxiety stems from a lack of faith.

We can focus on worry and anxiety or we can focus on gratitude. A sermon Pastor Mary Beth preached on July 21, 2019. She stated that both cannot live in you. If we want peace, when anxiety rises up in us, we need to replace it with something we are grateful for. I had a day of gratitude that day.

An email that I sent out that day sharing my testimony of gratitude that I would like to share with all of you. We have a high school senior who is one of the sweetest young ladies I am blessed to know. She is blessed with two parents who love her dearly which I believe has influenced her to be the loving person she is to others. Our granddaughter Madison was visiting from Kansas City. Emily asked if she could take her to Ames to get smoothie in her jeep. I asked if she would like to go to the Boone theater to see “Lion King” which she did. It was a blessed experience to have both of these girls and the “Lion King” was an amazing movie. Madison had never been to a movie theater with only one movie showing. Later that evening my husband the cook made a fried chicken supper. Now, we are all in our places doing our own things and just what to share I am grateful for this Madrid, Iowa life.

The scripture in Philippians commands us not to be anxious about life. We are actually sinning against God when we are anxious. We take our focus off God and focus on the problem.

My Kdg. students who had difficulty staying on task I would say and they would repeat the word Focus. We need to breathe, pray and LET GO!

Psalm 4 is the 4th Psalm in the Bible. David is requesting God to deliver him from past distresses. The message is that the victories of sinners are only temporary and meaningless, and that only repentance can bring true happiness. David talks to God and Men.

This Psalm opens with David calling to God because he is in distress and then verse 2 onward it speaks to other people that he clearly wishes to challenge. People he is talking to are delusional and chasing after things other than God.

David's prayer asks God for grace. Then, he addresses men, likely his current enemies, urging them to shun lies and stop rebelling against God. David encourages his own followers to avoid sin, to search their hearts, and offer sacrifices to the Lord. Urging us as believers to trust in the Lord like the hymn "Trust and Obey".

Psalm 4 is a Psalm about Faith. "Let Faith be your Strength". David pours out his complaint against slanderous enemies and finds peace and refuge in God. Focus in this Psalm is on David's reputation.

David's heart is full of more joy than a farmer's experience when they have an abundant harvest. Psalm closes with David testifying to peaceful sleep that the Lord gives by causing him to dwell safely.

When you have Joy, you will be an effective witness for Jesus Christ. When I lived in Boone, I had a neighbor named Joy. She originally was from England. She was a very devoted Christian who prayed daily every day. She had been praying for me and even though I was going to Church I did not have a personal relationship with Jesus. I went to a Bible Study with her and Christ entered my heart. My heart was filled with Joy which I am still filled with even in trials and tribulation.

Be confident God hears our prayers. David prayed with Passion. He encourages us to do the same. There is a difference in being happy or being full of joy. Happy can be because I just got a new car. Happiness is temporary but Joy leads to peace. So, why should we make good choices because we want our hearts to be filled with Joy. If the Lord puts gladness in your heart, you can still have joy in spite of your circumstances. Even with slander and lies David's gladness cannot be taken away.

In closing, the hymn "Sweet Hour of Prayer" which started as a poem written by a blind lay preacher who served in the hamlet of Coleshill, Warwickshire, England. He owned a small trinket shop in the village. The kind of prayer in this hymn is private prayer, rather than prayers of the body of Christ gathered in worship. William Bradbury wrote the music for this favorite hymn. May this week be one which we individually focus on praying!