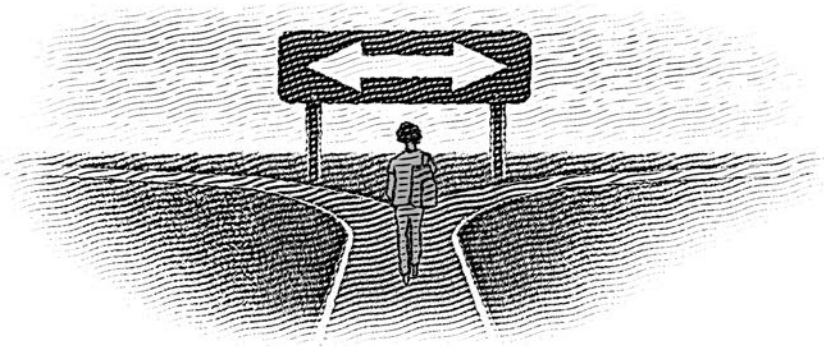


Our Choices



SABBATH—APRIL 6

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Ephesians 1:1–4; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Proverbs 12:26; Psalm 37:27; Ecclesiastes 2:1–11.

MEMORY VERSE: “ ‘You must decide whom you will serve. You may serve the gods that your people worshiped when they lived on the other side of the Euphrates River. Or you may serve the gods of the Amorites who lived in this land. As for me and my family, we will serve the Lord’ ” (Joshua 24:15, ICB).

LIFE IS FULL OF CHOICES. We make choices all day from the time we wake up until the time we go to bed. Each day, we make so many choices. It is hard to remember them all!

Some choices are very easy for us to make. We make them again and again. Other choices are big. They can change our lives and our families. So, it is very important to think about our choices before we make them. Big or small, our choices can change our lives forever.

Did you ever make a choice you wish you did not make? We all have. Some of us live for a long time with the bad things that happen because of our choices. But there is good news! God forgives us. He saves us. He heals us even when we make the worst decisions of our lives.

This week, we will look at our choices. How do we make good choices? What difference will our choices make in our own lives and in the lives of other people?



It is very important to think about our choices before we make them.

GOD MADE US FREE TO CHOOSE (Ephesians 1:1–4)

Some Christians believe that God decides who will be saved or lost before a person is born. These Christians think that no one can do anything to change God’s decision.

Seventh-day Adventists do not agree with this idea. We believe that God wants everyone to be saved. Before He made the earth, God chose us to have everlasting life.

Ephesians 1:1–4; Titus 1:1, 2; and 2 Timothy 1:8, 9 tell us that God chose to save us. What do we learn about that choice from these verses? When did God choose to save us?



Love is a choice.

This is wonderful news! But sadly, some people will be lost in the end (Matthew 25:41). Why? Because God gave us freedom to choose. This choice is a gift that God gave humans.

What does Matthew 22:35–37 teach us about God’s gift, the freedom to make choices?

God does not force us to love Him. Love is a choice. We choose to love other people. What if you were forced to love someone? That is not real love. The Bible shows us this idea about love is true. The Bible is one long story about God. The story is about how God tries to win our hearts with His love. Jesus’ own life shows us this truth. Some people chose to love Jesus. Other people wanted to kill Him.

Yes, God chose to save us. He wants everyone to be saved too. But in the end, we have to make the choice to accept God’s offer to save us. The most important choice we ever can make is the choice to serve God.

**HOW DO WE MAKE GOOD CHOICES?
(1 Thessalonians 5:17)**

We all know that it is very important for us to make good choices. We also know that wrong choices can hurt us and other people. So, how do we make good choices?

The verses below give us important Bible rules. These rules help us make good decisions. What are these rules?

1. 1 Thessalonians 5:17; James 1:5 _____

2. Isaiah 1:19; Matthew 7:24, 25 _____

3. Psalm 119:105; 2 Timothy 3:16 _____

4. Proverbs 3:5, 6; Isaiah 58:11 _____

5. Proverbs 15:22; Proverbs 24:6 _____



**Before we make decisions,
we must pray.**

Before we make decisions, we must pray. We must ask God to help us. God will help us make right choices. God will help us not to break His law or go against the Bible. So, we must trust God. We must pray that the choices we make will give God glory. What if our wishes go against God's plan for our lives? Then we must be ready to give up what we want. Wise people can help us make good decisions too. God wants what is best for us. So, we must give our lives to Him. Then we can trust in the choices we make.

How do you make big choices in life? How do prayer and trust in God's promises help you make good choices?

HOW DO I CHOOSE THE RIGHT FRIENDS? (Proverbs 12:26)

One of the most important choices we will make is choosing our friends. Most of the time, we do not plan to be someone's friend. Friendships happen when we spend time with people who like the same things we do.

Proverbs 12:26; Proverbs 17:17; Proverbs 18:24; Proverbs 22:24, 25 give us some important Bible rules. These rules teach us how we should choose our friends. What are these rules?



Often our sadness pushes other people away.

Do you want to have friends? Then first you “must be a friend” (Proverbs 18:24, NLV). Sometimes people are sad because they are alone. But often their sadness pushes other people away. “Even the best people, are not always perfect. So, we must choose friends who will love us when they learn we are not perfect. And we must love them in the same way too. We should love and respect our friends even when we see their faults. This love shows Jesus. We cannot help seeing our friends’ faults. But we must not let pride fill our hearts. We should not think we are always good and everyone else is wrong. We should be patient with people when they make mistakes. This behavior will help our hearts not to be selfish. Then we will want to help people as much as we can.”—Ellen G. White, *Pastoral [about pastors] Ministry [work for God]*, page 95, adapted.

Almost everyone knows about David's friendship with Jonathan. Jonathan's dad was King Saul. King Saul did not obey God. So, God took the kingdom of Israel away from Saul and chose David as the new king. This story shows us a powerful example of how one person's wrong choices (Saul's) hurt another person (Jonathan).

But was Jonathan angry or jealous of David? No. Jonathan chose to help David. Jonathan protected David from Saul's anger. “Jonathan felt very close to David. He loved David as much as he loved himself” (1 Samuel 18:1, ICB). Wow! That is a beautiful example of true friendship!

“Do not be fooled: ‘Bad friends will ruin good habits’ ” (1 Corinthians 15:33, ICB). Why is this true?

**MARRIAGE: HOW DO I MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE?
(Psalm 37:27)**

You must choose your friends carefully. But you must be even more careful when you choose your husband or wife. God made Adam’s wife with His own hands. God made Eve using part of Adam. Adam’s choice for a wife was easy: (1) Eve was the only woman on earth. (2) Eve also was a perfect woman. The rest of us have a harder time finding the right person for us. None of us is perfect. Also, we have many more people to choose from than Adam did!

Our decision to get married is very important. So, God gave us some important rules to help us make the right choice. We looked at some of these rules already in Monday’s study. But God gives us some more rules to help us make the best choice about marriage. (We will look at the topic of marriage more closely in lesson 6.) Why does God give us these rules? Because it is the second most important decision we will make. The first and most important decision, of course, is our choice to serve the Lord.

What advice does God give us about marriage in Psalm 37:27; Psalm 119:97; 1 Corinthians 15:33; and James 1:23–25?



Before you look for the right person to marry, first be the right person yourself.

Here is a good rule to follow: before you look for the right person to marry, first be the right person yourself. “ ‘Do for other people the same things you want them to do for you’ ” (Matthew 7:12, ICB). Let us say you find a really wonderful person to marry. This person is everything you want: loving, gentle, and giving. You should be these things too. If you are not, then you will have problems in your marriage.

This truth is not new. Both Jesus and Paul say it is wrong for us to blame other people for doing bad things when we do the same things too (Matthew 7:3; Romans 2).

We want people to show more love. But is it fair to expect them to show us love when we do not show it to them?

HOW DO I CHOOSE THE RIGHT WORK TO DO IN LIFE? (Ecclesiastes 2:1–11)

We all need to make the choice about the work we want to do in life. Some people are born rich. They do not need to work. But most people are not that lucky. They must choose what they will do in life to earn money.

Yes, certain things can limit our choices about the work we will do in life. But even with few choices, we can make decisions that make us happy. The work we choose can give our lives meaning too. Whatever we do, we should do it to give God glory.

In Ecclesiastes 2:1–11, we read about Solomon’s mistake. What mistake did he make? What does his mistake teach us? Why must we be careful not to do the same thing?



Whatever work we choose to do in life, we should do it to give God glory.

Most of us are not as rich as Solomon. But we can fall into the same trap he did. Paul warns us: our love for “money is the root [cause] of all evil” (1 Timothy 6:10, KJV). Paul continues: “Some people have turned away from what we believe because they want to get more and more money” (1 Timothy 6:10, ERV). Then they felt “a lot of pain and sorrow” (1 Timothy 6:10, ERV). A poor person can love money in the same way as a rich person.

Yes, we need to earn money to support ourselves and our families. But we must not make money a false god. Many families have been hurt by fathers who cared more about getting rich than spending time with their kids. What do you think those children will choose? A father who makes a lot of money and is never home? Or a father who is not very rich but spends a lot of time with his kids? Most kids will choose a father who will spend time with them.

God gave us work as part of our lives (Genesis 2:15). But we must not make our work the only reason for our lives. Solomon made this sad mistake.

Someone said: “How many people at the end of their lives wish they spent more time in the office than with their families?” What does the answer to this question teach us?

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Everywhere in the Bible, we see what it means to be free to make choices. Even Adam and Eve (Genesis 3) were free to choose. Sadly, they made the wrong choice. If perfect people can make wrong choices, what about us sinners?

God made us free to make our own choices, even the wrong ones. But we do not need to make wrong choices. We are free to make the right choices. With God's power in us, we can choose to do what is good. So, it is very important for us to think carefully about our choices before we make any decisions. We must ask: What will our choices do to our families? Cain chose to kill his brother. This choice hurt his family very deeply. Joseph's brothers chose to sell Joseph into slavery. Their choice almost destroyed their father's life. "His [Joseph's] father saw the coat and knew that it was Joseph's. He said, 'Yes, that is his! Maybe some wild animal has killed him. My son Joseph has been eaten by a wild animal!' Jacob was so sorry [sad] about his son that he tore his clothes. Then Jacob put on special clothes to show that he was sad. He continued to be sad about his son for a long time. All of Jacob's sons and daughters tried to comfort him, but Jacob was never comforted. He said, 'I will be sad about my son until the day I die.' So Jacob continued to mourn [cry for] his son Joseph" (Genesis 37:33–35, ERV).

Everywhere in the Bible, we find examples of the free choices people made. Some of these choices were good. But some were bad. (Read more about some of these choices in Numbers 16:1–32; Daniel 6:23, 24; Genesis 18:19.)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1 What are some of the choices you made today? What do these choices tell you about yourself? What do they tell you about how close you are to God and to other people? Do you wish that you had not made some of the choices you made today? If so, which ones?
- 2 Who are some of the people in the Bible who made wrong choices? What can we learn from their mistakes? How did their wrong choices hurt their families?
- 3 Yes, we will feel bad about wrong choices we make. Why then is the Good News so wonderful? What Bible promises can help you heal from the wrong choices you made in the past?



Adam and Eve were free to choose (Genesis 3). Sadly, they made the wrong choice.