

STUDY 43 – CHOOSING GOD’S BEST

Brain Facts:

1. Your **state of mind** is a real, physical, electromagnetic, quantum (dealing with speed), and chemical flow that is always occurring in your brain because of how you think in your mind.
2. Your **state of mind** switches your genes on or off in a positive or negative direction based on the choices and reactions that you make in your mind. Scientifically, this is called “epigenetics”. Epigenetics is the study of how your **behavior** and **environment** can cause changes that impact the way that your genes work. Lifestyle factors that can modify your genetic behavior are diet, obesity, physical activity or lack thereof, smoking, consuming alcohol, environmental pollutants, stress, and working on night shifts.¹ This idea of behavioral choices is reflected in [Deuteronomy 30:19](#).²

Dt 30:19 (NKJV) **I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;**

What you have to take away from this is that God holds you responsible to make good choices in your life – no matter what area of your life you are talking about. God was clear when He told His people that they had to “**choose His life**”, to choose what they knew God wanted them to do versus what they wanted to do. What you do with your life, either good or bad, is directly related to what you choose to do with it.

- a. You can choose to be a loving, caring, and understanding marriage partner, or you can choose to just be mediocre, indifferent, and insensitive.
- b. You can choose for your life to be focused on bringing glory to God or you can choose to satisfy your own pleasures and whims.
- c. You can choose to be gracious and kind to people or you can choose to be grumpy and annoying to them.
- d. You can choose to speak your mind about anything or you can choose to exercise self-control.
- e. You can choose to build people up or you can choose to tear them down.

The Christian life is always about the choices you make, and the Scriptures have made what those choices should be very clear. Once again, your choices switch your genes on or off in a positive or negative direction. All of these are choices that God places before you, and whichever of these kinds of choices that you make are what ultimately shape your life. That is why God said to His people in this verse that “**I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing**”. What He is saying is “*Here it is, you choose*” – “**choose life**”.

KEY PRINCIPLE 150: IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE IN YOUR MIND TO DO THE RIGHT THING IN YOUR LIFE.

¹ Torres, *Epigenetics*, ep.

² Leaf, *Switch*, 14.

3. 95% of your body's genes are influenced by your **life factors** (family, education, friends, trials, etc.) and your **life choices**. What this is saying is that your body's genetic activity, what we might call your genetic programming, is largely determined by your thoughts, your attitudes, and your perceptions – all of which collectively form your mindset, or your state of mind.³

This is amazing because what it means is that the way that you think about life and perceive life is what actually creates and transforms the physical nature of your brain. If you think about life and perceive life from God's perspective, then that is what becomes the most life transforming and most beneficial for your life. However, if you willingly choose to ignore how God has designed your life to function the best and to provide His greatest blessings on your life, then in essence you are rejecting the only hope that you have to ultimately be successful before God. You may be successful from a worldly perspective, but that does not mean that your life will have any kind of meaning fulfillment, joy, or peace.

So, the issue is simple. The more you think about something, it is always creating new thought networks or neural pathways that physically begin to grow in your brain.⁴ Just as one example, if you always think about being rich, then that is what you will want to always be doing – make more money. Contentment will not be on your radar. You will probably work too much, spend most of what you have, and in the end be empty. Why? It because "things" cannot satisfy your soul. Listen to [Proverbs 23:4-5](#),

Pr 23:4 (NKJV) Do not overwork to be rich; because of your own understanding, cease! ⁵ Will you set your eyes on that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away like an eagle toward heaven.

It is staggering to me how carelessly many believers guard what they allow to enter into their minds. From demonic video games to the most immoral and godless television programs possible to misinformation media platforms, there is so much destructive information that enters into people's minds, and they just casually let it happen and think nothing of it. Think of it this way. The enemy is using other people who are not Christians and who have no respect for your values to place their ungodly thoughts and images into your minds – and you choose to let them do it. This is how the enemy works. Whatever you allow your mind to **be exposed to** on a consistent basis is what you are allowing by default to build neural pathways that become strongholds that the enemy uses against you. It could be many other avenues like the following:

1. It could be someone who is a full-time gossip and you listen to them.
2. It could be someone you work with who is extremely bitter and caustic and you listen to them.
3. It could be an immoral television program, and you choose to watch it each week.
4. It could be a compromising believer always finding fault with the church and you listen to them.

These thoughts and ideas and people are all around you and sometimes are simply unavoidable. However, for the ones you can avoid, that is exactly what you need to do – **avoid the caustic, ungodly, and sarcastic ideas and thoughts that other people are speaking to you like the plague**. Remember that the more garbage you allow into your mind, the more garbage will come out of your life.

³ Leaf, *Think*, 41.

⁴ Leaf, *Switch*, 20.

The simple principle of this study has been that **if you want to really change your life and the trajectory that it is on, then you have to change how you think.** There are no other options. God will not live the Christian life for you. You may think that there are and that you can pursue them with no negative impacts, but in the end you will find yourself empty and discouraged. When you reach that point, then just remember that what you have allowed into your mind is what has corrupted your life. You have to guard your mind as if your life depends on it. You have to be filling your mind with God's truth. I think you do that in two ways.

1. First, **you read and meditate on Scripture.** You make this a non-negotiable habit of your life. You make it a priority of your life every day to spend time reading and studying the Scriptures. I always have a notebook with me when I read so I can write down what I believe God is speaking to me about. If I write it down, I am much more inclined to remember it and to apply it to my life. I underline important verses that speak to my life and I just sit and meditate on them. I have no reason to "move on" quickly – none whatsoever. I pray the Scriptures back to God so as to remind myself of what is important to Him.
2. Secondly, **you read good books.** I am constantly reading good books. I research the authors, look at the Table of Contents before I buy them, and read some excerpts to see if I will actually like the way that someone writes. My life has been deeply impacted by godly men who have written godly books and yours will be as well.

Here is what I want to suggest that you do if you believe that there are some areas of your life that need some adjusting and modifying. You know deep down that you are not satisfied with some areas of your life. So, you can make a list of those areas because you know what it is that leaves you empty and unfulfilled. Now, please do not make someone else the reason that you feel that way. If you are always blaming someone else for what you do not like about your life, then in reality, you cannot make any spiritual progress. You have to take personal responsibility for your spiritual life and decisions, and where you actually are in your spiritual life. So, here is what I want you to consider doing.

1. First, I want you to be very honest about where you feel empty, lonely, frustrated, and unfulfilled. Make a list. Write down the things that make you feel this way.
2. Secondly, once you have that list, then I want you to make a simple decision that **you are going to create some new neural pathways that you are going to allow to become trenches of truth in your mind.** If you are willing to change your mind so that you think like God thinks, I guarantee you that God will change your life.
3. Thirdly, **identify all of the areas of God's Word that you know speak to your personal problem.** It will take you some time to be able to do this, so please do not get into a hurry and miss the major verses that God actually wants to use in your life. Remember that the truth is the key to your being successful. Jesus said in [John 8:32](#),

Jn 8:32 (NKJV) And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

The truth is your anchor, and without it, you have nothing but your own foolish ideas, and they will always move you in the wrong direction. Just take any subject – say anger, and then do a study on anger

as best you can. Find out all that you can about what God says about anger. Then, the more you learn about it, the more you should do two things:

1. The first area is to try and commit certain verses to memory so that you can have a meaningful recall when you sense that you are becoming angry. For most Christians, this is a very difficult exercise because it takes a lot of mental energy and focus to memorize things as you get older, but do not sell yourself short – even if it is only one verse a week that you review when you are eating supper or going to bed.
2. The second area is to start putting those Scriptures into your own words, your own personal declarations of what you have gleaned to be God’s best for your life. Putting them into your own words will help you in remembering them. Personalize them.

Let us assume that you know that you are going to be around someone who just makes you angry. You have to be mentally prepared for what you know is probably inevitable. I have someone like that in my life – someone who is always able to stir up things within me that I do not want to happen relative to anger. Before I ever see them, I am prepared. I know how I am going to react before anything is ever said or happens. Your emotions are a function of what you think, and if that is the case, then it only stands to reason that emotions like anger, anxiety, and discouragement are revealing what you are thinking and what you actually believe about how God wants you to respond to something difficult.⁵

So, both of these exercises will help you to **keep the truth of God in your mind**. As simple as that may sound, it is critical. Please remember that you are much more inclined to remember something if you write it down and then internalize it – think about it, meditate on it, analyze it. One of our primary principles is that the more you repeat truth to yourself, the more deep-seated that truth becomes in your mind. So, the more that you meditate on God’s Word, the deeper godly neural pathways become in your mind, and the easier it will be to do the right thing even when you may not want to do the right thing. It is in your mind that you either believe or reject the lies of the devil, and it is in your mind that you either believe or reject the truth of God. Put God’s truth into your mind as much as you can. It is with your mind that you choose to follow God’s Word in spite of what may be happening to you.⁶

Let us assume that you are eating a meal in public with an individual that always seems to irritate you in some way. They never seem to have any self-control over what they say or where they say it. They are generally condescending, rude, and almost vulgar in what they say. You have already been embarrassed multiple times in front of other people when you are with them. So, the person that you are eating with does their normal thing and irritates you. What do you do? Do you just speak your mind? If you think that you should, then you have probably believed some lie of the devil. God never wants you to be like the rude, arrogant person that may be condescending. That is not how God works.

Here is the lesson that you must learn if you are ever going to make any progress – **you must know how you are going to respond before the difficult situation ever happens**. Your mindset and way of thinking and path forward has to be established before you ever sit down to eat. You know exactly what will probably happen, so you need to have already developed a mindset that will guide you in how you

⁵ Anderson, *Managing*, 48.

⁶ Leaf, *Switch*, 22.

are going to respond. If you wait until it happens, you will probably become just like the other person and say the wrong thing, so you must have a biblical mindset, a biblical neural pathway that will guide you in a way that pleases God. For instance, [Proverbs 15:1](#) says,

Pr 15:1 (NKJV) **A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.**

That is just one verse out of a hundred with which you can build your new pattern of thinking. So, let us personalize that verse, let us make our declaration from that verse. Here is mine. It is very simple. *“I will not speak harshly to someone else.”* That is what God is saying. Do not talk ugly to people.

Here is one thing that you will soon find if you discipline yourself to meditate on God’s Word. It will help you to see things in the Word that you have never seen before. The word for “**meditation**” comes from a Hebrew word for a cow that is ruminating. The cow has four stomachs, so he chews the grass and it goes down into the first stomach. After being digested there, it comes back up into his mouth and he chews it some more. It goes back down into stomach two, and the whole process starts over again. The reason that the cow eats this way is so that it can get the maximum amount of nutrition possible from the grass.⁷ That is the picture of what it means to meditate on Scripture.

3. The third area is to identify all of the lies that the devil has convinced you to believe. For instance,
 - a. If you do not believe that God can fix your problem, then you have believed the devil’s lies. It is that simple.
 - b. If you do not believe that you have the endurance to proceed, then you have believed the devil’s lies. It is that simple.
 - c. If you blame everything on someone else, then you have believed the devil’s lies.

You must accurately identify the lies that the devil is using to undermine your life. Once again, I encourage you to NOT blame the problem on someone else. That will be a great distraction to you making any progress in your life spiritually. **Let God deal with you.** The other person may actually be the problem, and if they are, then let God deal with them. He is much better at this than you are. These problems or issues that you are struggling with should not be identified as *“another person problem”*, but as a personal problem.

Write the problem down so that you know that you are not focusing on someone else, but that you are only addressing the negative neural pathways that you have formed in your own life, and the things that you are not properly and biblically addressing. It will include your ungodly words and your ungodly attitudes where you have allowed the enemy to build a stronghold in your life.

You have to identify your personal problems correctly, or you will never be able to achieve God’s best for your life.

He is there with you, and He is going to help you to be honest and transparent about those areas of your life that need to be addressed and changed. Think about what you have written down. Evaluate whether or not you are really being honest with yourself and with God. Anything less will not help you. You want to create a new neural pathway.

⁷ Groeschel, *Winning*, 102.

So, what you have to do is to identify the lies that you are no longer going to believe. You MUST write them down and go over them in the same way that you reflect on God's Word. You are simply going to replace those lies with the truth of God's Word. Out beside every lie, you are going to write down the truth of God's Word that refutes that lie. If you are not willing to make this effort, then the enemy will continue to get you to believe his lies. This is what [2 Corinthians 10:5](#) speaks of as "casting down" any thought or idea that you know is not consistent with God's Word.

2Co 10:5 (NKJV) **casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,**

This is really very simple, but it just seems so hard for people because they do not want to change. They always want someone else to change, but not themselves, so they have great difficulty in doing this critical part. They just become satisfied to live under the delusion that they know more about their life and what brings them happiness and fulfillment than God does. This is very common and very debilitating to this entire effort.

4. Then lastly, after you have identified the problem, identified the Scriptures that you need to use, and identified the lies of the devil that you have believed, then **write down your declarations and affirmations so that you can always have them with you**. Keep them near you. Put them on your cell phone or some 3x5 cards – anything to help you remember. **Repetition is what reinforces the truth in your mind**, so constantly refresh your mind and heart with the truths of God's Word and how you understand it. Keep rejecting the lies of the devil. Just think of how the devil uses repetition. He has been repeating the same lies to you for years. He knows that if you listen to his lies long enough that you will eventually believe them. However, if you will do these four simple steps, you will literally build a neural pathway that will begin to control how you respond to really difficult circumstances. You will begin to become conformed into the very image of Christ and find spiritual strength that you previously did not believe actually existed for you personally. Here are the steps one last time for "rewiring" your brain and for "renewing" your mind to think like God thinks: (1) identify the problem, (2), identify the solutions from Scripture that address your problem, (3) identify the lies of the devil, and (4) write down your affirmations of God's truth and begin to live by that truth.

As you write down God's solutions and meditate on His truth, it will not be long before you will actually believe what you have written down. Just keep affirming what is the right thing to do. Do not waver from God's Word because it is what will "**set you free**". Remember how the cow ruminates. He digests his food over and over and over. If the enemy can discourage you when things are not going as you wanted them to go, then he can easily create a stronghold in your life that will harm you. This is a process that has to be repeated. If you just say the right thing a couple of times, then that is not a strong enough effort to create the new neural pathway that is going to help you. You must understand and appreciate how your brain works. You are fearfully and wonderfully made, and once you understand how God has designed your mind to be victorious, it will become a lifelong habit. Just remember that the devil knows how your brain works much better than you do, and that is why he never tires in telling you the same lies. He understands the value of repetition.

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