

Choices



Looks like 2 meals!

Do you realise that we each make hundreds of choices every day? When dinner is ready do you rush and sit down straight away or do you wait a little before sitting down? Do you move the position of the chair before you sit down or leave it as it is? Do you have a look at the meal before you start to eat or do you start to eat immediately? (Probably depends on how hungry you are!) Do you use a knife and fork or just a fork? Do you put a large amount on your fork or take dainty little nibbles? Do you start to eat the thing on your plate that you like the best or do you leave the best part until the end? What a lot of choices you have already made before you even begin to eat!



What about when you walk out anywhere. Do you walk fast or take your time and walk slowly? (Some of us have to keep stopping for a breather!) Do you take big strides or average steps? Do you look down most of the time to see where you are putting your feet? Do you look around at the view as you walk or just plough straight ahead?



Jesus was always giving people choices. He said that our prayer times were personal between ourselves and God and that we do not have to announce to everyone that we have been praying or make a show of it to make ourselves appear to be pious and holy.



He said a similar thing about giving our offerings of money to the church. What we do is private and the amount we give is our own business. God is the one who guides us about this. I know that today there are Gift Aid schemes where a record has to be made of the amount given for tax purposes, but that is usually only known by the church treasurer and is not something that is disclosed to others. What Jesus spoke against was folk showing off about the amount that they gave. He spoke about the widow who had only offered a penny but who had actually donated more than those who were better off financially who were giving more money, because she had given a far larger proportion of her income.

On more than one occasion Jesus spoke about our love for our parents and families. If people today were asked to put their priorities in order of preference, many of them, even Christians, would put their families as top priority; however, Jesus said that He should be **NUMBER 1** on our priority list.

That can be a very difficult statement with which to come to terms as people are being asked to give propriety to Jesus, whom we are unable to see, over and above our parents, spouse or children who need our love and care. He does not need this for His own sake but asks it because He wants to be the centre of our lives and in the most important position in order to be able to guide us in every aspect of our everyday lives.



Jesus – Top of the list



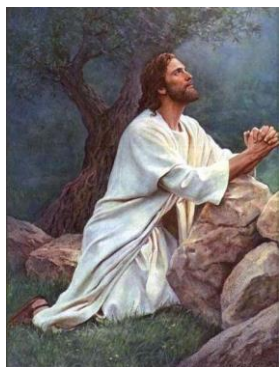
Forgiveness is another thing about which Jesus gives us a choice. There has been a time or times when every one of us has had to forgive another person for a wrong thing that they have done or said against us. Jesus knew that unforgiveness can create a bitterness in our hearts that not only prevents us from having a right relationship with that other person, but also actually affects our own health. One

very important factor about forgiveness was mentioned by Jesus when He gave the 'Lord's Prayer'. It includes the fact that God's forgiveness for us is dependent on if we have forgiven others. That is a rather frightening thought isn't it? That thought alone should really encourage us to make sure that our relationships with others are as they should be.



Is there someone you need to forgive?

Jesus Himself had a terrible choice to make. He came down to earth as a human being in order to make it possible for God to forgive every one of us. How? When He died on the cross He took the punishment for all of the things that we have done and said wrong so that when our lives on earth come to an end, we are able to go into the presence of a holy



*God. Jesus had a choice as to whether or not He went through this. Just before He was arrested and taken prisoner, He was in the Garden of Gethsemane and prayed to God that He would not have to go through with this death that God intended for Him. He knew, however, that it was the very reason why He had left His Father in Heaven and come to the earth, so He was able to say in His prayer, "Not My will God, but Yours." What a choice. Not nice at all. That is what Jesus chose to do for me and for you. No wonder He expects to be **Number 1** in our lives! He loves us so very much that He was prepared to do anything to make sure that we are able to go into God's presence.*

It is not really very important how fast we choose to eat our dinner or what size strides we take when walking along, but, it is extremely important what choice we make about Jesus. He made the right choice for us; are we going to make the right choice by choosing to love and follow Him?

Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life."

John 14:6