



Free Will - Part 2

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Last week's blog post was about free will, that God gives us free will in order that we can be creative in how we bring Him glory and honor. Sources say we make an average of 35,000 decisions each day. Last week's post also addressed the fact that we are sinners by nature. "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me." (Psalm 51:5) In the 35,000 decisions, we make we must be intentional about ensuring that we are not making sinful decisions.

Let's look briefly at the early life of Moses in Exodus, the second book of the Bible. Pharaoh, fearing that the Israelites, who were slaves to the Egyptians, were becoming too numerous, ordered the midwives to kill all of the baby Israelite boys. The midwives, however, feared God, and quietly refused to obey the king. As the Israelite population continued to grow, Pharaoh ordered all of the Israelite boys to be thrown into the Nile river. One Israelite woman, however could not do this to her son. She hid him until he was 3 months-old, then placed him in a basket, then put him in the Nile River. As he floated in the basket, he was spotted by Pharaoh's daughter, who sent her slave out to get him. Moses, an Israelite, was raised, as the grandson of the king. Not only was his life spared, but he was reared as royalty. In the very next verses, Exodus 2:11-12, "One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labor. He saw an Egyptian beating an [Israelite], one of his own people. Looking this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand."

In this story, we see how God had perfectly orchestrated Moses' life. God had a plan and a pathway in place for him and it was good. When Moses grew up, and was truly able to exercise his own free will, without his mother's oversight, he committed murder. This decision, one of many decisions he likely made that day, had the potential to change the course of his life. We all know someone who made a bad decision and suffered the consequences for it.

As I think on my own life, I haven't committed murder, but I am most guilty of the sin of pride. Pride, defined as the idea that we are self-sufficient, and do not need to consult the Lord for guidance; pride defined as moving through life making one's own plans; pride defined as taking full advantage of God-given free will, with little or no consideration to how our decisions and actions will (or will not) glorify the Lord; pride defined as believing that we, not the Lord, are to credit for our success. I think back to when I was 21 years-old, about to graduate from college, I was grown and could make my own decisions. My immediate goals were to find a teaching job, get married, and buy a house. I graduated in May of 1998 and had met those 3 goals by April 1999. I don't recall, even one time, asking the Lord if those goals were His will for me. I was acting with pride. I was confident in my abilities, I knew what I wanted out of life, and so I made it happen. Free will. "In his pride the wicked man does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God." Psalm 10:4.

In last week's post, I used the analogy of the GPS guiding us to our destination. It is our choice, or free will, to use the directions provided, or to make our own way. If we start off on our own way, we can decide at any time to use the GPS and it will recalculate a new route for us to reach our destination. Our walk through life, is very similar. He allows us to make our own decisions - to walk with Him, or not. If we become prideful and decide to make our own way, He will be there when we decide that maybe His direction would be better. For that I am thankful, because I am finding that life with Him is so much more fulfilling and meaningful than it was when I was doing it myself. It pains me, however, to think of the blessings I missed out on by doing things Kim's way for so long. When we go off course and later decide to use the GPS, there is no way to recoup the time nor the wasted gasoline. In life, when we go off course, there is no way to recoup the time, and sometimes, it is not possible to return to our original course. Once we have children, sign contracts, accumulate debt, etc., we can't just go back to life before those things. We have to ask the Lord to help us start anew and guide us, from that point, to where He desires for us to be.

One of the best things we can teach our children, is to rely upon the Father. If we teach them this practice early in life, we can prevent them from making many of the mistakes made by young adults. We talk to our children about working to reach their potential, but who knows their potential - not their parents, nor is it their teachers. The Lord knows their potential, He knows why He created them and He will lead them to reach their potential if we invite Him to do so.

~Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.