



Genesis 4:6-7 *“Then the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? 7 If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.”*

The choice Part Two: choices

I have been fascinated by family vs friends. Why do people usually choose friends over family? To further that thought, why is family hard to live with? I have come to the conclusion that it's about choice. We don't get to choose our parents or siblings. We do however get to choose our friends. There is no freedom in being forced to live with people who are different than you. Unfortunately, we are born as an individual. We are vastly different than our immediate family. There are forced dinners, trips, and sleeping arrangements. Although family can be a great experience, there is little freedom for you in it.

Then we have friends. I have wondered if we choose them or do our similarities choose them for you. They say to know someone is to know their friends. You see, we tend to pick friends that are like us. They do the things we love. You could say that of a spouse but even in that opposites seem to attract. Not so with friends. I'm sure it's different for many people but who would you rather hang out with: friends or siblings? For me it's friends. Family has never been about a safe zone. There were disagreements and friction. Sure, friends fight but that's not the norm. You can toss your friends but you can't toss your family that easily. I feel we pick friends because we choose to stay.

Matthew 27:37 *"Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."*

Years ago, I was hearing Dr. Laura say that "men you need spirituality, you know you do." That statement changed me. For some reason it made sense on that day. What if I did need God. It had never really occurred to me that he could be real. Yet into the night and on to the next day that thought played in my brain. What if it helped me? What if I was missing a spiritual side? Do you know what did not happen? I didn't second guess it. Is church good for my soul? What if I became a Bible thumper? Those thoughts never came up. Why? It's because I'm convinced, I made a choice to try. To see what God was all about. I chose!

Over the years I have met some pretty terrible Christians. I don't play the church game really well. I am by no means a church mouse. Yet, God? I choose him. Quite frankly I can't imagine not choosing him. Is it because he has blessed me? Maybe I want his protection? What is it that made me choose? It comes back to the whole package. We get to choose our friends. With God I get to choose me. Choose how I think, live, and participate in this world. I feel that before I chose God I was of the world. They were like family. I'm stuck here. I'm stuck drinking or doing drugs to feel good. Stuck seeking out sex and anything else to fill up my happy meter. Non-Christians are only happy if the world loves them the right way.

In Gods world our happy meter is fueled by love. We choose to love where love is not warranted. I can sing a worship song alone and feel loved by God. I can do good and feel love from strangers. My happiness is not based on how well the world loves me. Are we happy all the time with God? We will get into that in the last study. But for now, let's just say that over time happiness is a lifestyle over something you must receive. What if you just chose to be content?

Philippians 4:12 *“I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.”*

This verse above is it for me. Maybe I need this tattooed on my forehead. So, every time I enter the bathroom, I see it in the mirror. It's important to have a healthy body. I work on that. It's good to have a healthy mind. I read a ton. I love to work my body and mind. Yet, what if we needed a healthy soul? I just did not think I did for the longest time. Yet, though the years of choosing God I have come to know I do. I do need a healthy soul. To know that something greater has my back and it's good for the soul. Knowing that in private I have someone who listens. That me as an individual is important. How much has my healthy soul helped my mind and body?

It's all about the choice? Does working out make a healthy mind? Does reading a book make a healthy body? Face it, something is missing? A third part. I have said this all along. Finding God is really about finding myself. The real you. Isn't that worth seeing? A choice to believe is not just some dumb saying. Your mind can relax. Your stress can relax. To have a body with a driven soul is something to explain. I can't describe it unless you choose.

Revelation 3:20 *“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.”*

Luke 22:34 *“Jesus answered, “I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me.”*