

A BOY'S GUIDE TO MAKING REALLY GOOD CHOICES

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*It is with great pride and thanksgiving
to our Lord that this book is lovingly
dedicated to my four grandsons, my “boys”:*

*Jacob Seitz
Matthew Zaengle
Isaac Seitz
Ryan Zaengle*

*It is such a joy to see the four of you
loving God and desiring to make choices
based on His Word. I love you and
pray diligently for each of you.*

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You Have a Choice



Boy, does it ever feel great to get out of school. What a day! Justin thought to himself as he proudly unlocked the chain that protected his Huffy ZRX terrain bike. (You know the one—the black bike with the words “ZRX Extreme Racer Series” boldly stenciled on the chain guard. Yeah, that one!)

As Justin continued right on with his thinking while he backed away from the bike rack at McKinley Middle School, he couldn’t help but think, *Most days are okay, but today seemed like a train wreck right from the get-go.* For Justin, the downward spiral started in the morning when he told his mom that he had forgotten to set his alarm clock the previous night.

Well, it was sort of the truth. Justin had *meant* to set his clock, but he remembered to do so only after he had gotten in bed. And because the clock was all the way across his room—all of seven feet away!—he chose to let his mom wake him as she usually did whenever he “forgot” to set his alarm. Normally this was not a big deal, except today his dad was going on an important business trip and his mother was trying to help him get away on time to catch his plane. *Soooo,*

Justin told himself, *it was really my mom's fault that I was late for school!*

Justin tried hard to put the scene of his mother's disappointment behind him. At the same time, he was trying to forget the look on Mrs. Adams's face when he told her he had forgotten his English assignment and left it at home and promised to bring it tomorrow. (Actually, this was not a lie. He had "forgotten" his paper—forgotten to write it!) His mom had reminded him about it last night, as she had done for the last several days.

So what happened? Justin had gotten so involved in a video game that he completely forgot about doing his English assignment.

So now Justin was pedaling his way home on the coolest bike ever made. His mission? To dash off something to turn in tomorrow. Sure, he would get a lower grade, but something would be better than nothing, right? Even if it came with just a little lie.

But wait—hadn't Ryan mentioned something about meeting him and some of his other buddies at their secret clubhouse for a look at a new electronic game? Never mind Justin's parents had told him not to hang out with Ryan. They had explained that Ryan was older and was, according to their opinion, beginning to wrongly influence Justin's behavior.

I don't get it. What's so wrong with Ryan? Justin wondered as he pedaled along. Ryan's a neat guy. His parents buy him all those cool video games, and Justin looked up to him because he was older and knew "stuff"—lots of stuff!



So off Justin rode to join the gang at their secret clubhouse, patting himself on the back and thinking everything would be just fine. He promised himself he wouldn't stay long. Besides, who would know he had been there?

Fun in God's Word!

As we begin putting together our guide for making really good choices, you already know that life is full of choices. In fact, you have made a choice to start reading this book! Well, maybe you didn't have a choice. Maybe your mom or dad or Sunday school teacher or youth leader chose this book for you and the guys to read. So it's not really your choice. I'm sure you enjoy it more when you can make a choice about what you do. My hope is that as you continue reading, you'll enjoy this book more and more.

It's time now to see what God's Word, the Bible, says about choices. In this part of each chapter, we will look at Bible verses and answer some questions about the topics covered in the chapter. Our goal is to let God teach us about how to make really good choices. So go find a pen and be ready to write down some answers as you look up some verses in the Bible. As we go through the questions below, we are going to spell out the word C-H-O-I-C-E-S.

Yes, life is full of choices. Right now there are a lot of people in your life who are making choices for you, and that's a good thing. The people who care about you are looking out for you—like your parents, your schoolteachers, your Sunday school teacher, and many others. Now, it's true that you



have no choice about where you live, where you go to school, what you study, when you must go to bed, and on it goes. But whether you make your own choices or others make them for you, there are important things involved in making choices.

Choices deal with your heart. There are lots of choices that you and boys like Justin can and will make for yourself. They are choices that deal with your heart, which then affect your attitudes and ultimately your actions. What do these verses say about your heart attitude?

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it (Proverbs 4:23).

God's command: _____

Why? _____

A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart (Luke 6:45).

What happens to what you store in your heart?



Now go back to the opening story about Justin. List a few of the choices Justin was making for himself.

Do you realize how many choices you, like Justin, make by yourself every day? So just like Justin, the issue is not whether you are “allowed” to make choices—you are already making choices, with or without your parents’ input and approval. Wouldn’t it be great to have or develop a guide that helps you know how to make right choices? Not just good choices, or better choices, but the best choices? That’s our goal in this book. So let’s continue looking at the nature of choices. Next comes the letter “H”:

Having a plan helps you make good choices. Your choices for today started with the plans you made yesterday. When did Justin need to make his choice about setting his alarm clock?



Think about what's happening tomorrow. Do you have a school report due? When is that big test coming? Is it tomorrow? And don't forget to ask Mom what's happening tomorrow so you can put that into your plan. List your plans for tomorrow here:

Justin's mistakes show what can happen when you don't plan ahead. List what went wrong because Justin chose to play video games instead of getting ready for his English paper. (Don't forget what happened with his alarm clock!)

Order your choices with God in mind. I think you can see by now, after looking at Justin's story, that your choices can have serious results. That's why you need to think about what God wants you to do. God wants to help if you will let Him. According to James 1:5, what is the best way to get the help you need to make really good choices?

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask of God...and it will be given to you (James 1:5).



What is the key to making right choices?

What does God promise to give you when you ask Him?

Speaking of right or wrong, let's review. So far in Justin's story, what were Justin's wrong choices—choices you don't want to make?

Influence affects choices. What do I mean by *influence*? When someone or something affects the choices you make, *you are being influenced*.

For example: Have you ever wanted a specific pair of shoes just because your best friend got that very same pair of shoes? Or, do you watch certain TV shows just because it's cool with the other guys at school? That's influence—your choices are shaped by what other people do.



This brings us to another fact about choices: Choices are never made without influence. You may not realize it, but you are constantly being influenced in your choosing. Your family, your friends, and, let's face it, even your own fears and pride have a strong influence on what you choose to do or not do.

With so many people and outside forces bearing down upon you, it is important for you to have as many positive influences around you as possible. Otherwise, according to 1 Corinthians 15:33, what will happen when you are around the wrong kinds of people?

Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character."

Choices have one of two results. Good choices give *good* results, while bad choices give *bad* results. Justin made a choice and had fun playing his video game—and then he made another choice to not set his alarm. Those choices gave bad results: He was late for school, and he didn't finish his English paper (which he then lied about).

But often, like Justin, maybe you don't take time to think about the results of your choices. What is one thing you could tell Justin to do that would help him make better choices with better results?



Everyone's choices are different. Ryan had asked Justin and some of the other guys to join him at a secret clubhouse. We don't know if any of the other guys' parents had a problem with Ryan's plan, but we do know Justin's parents did not want him to go. Now read this verse:

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right (Ephesians 6:1).

Why should the choices made by the other guys have no effect on Justin's choice?

Make this your guiding principle: Your choices should agree with the standards set by God and the wishes of your parents. If you choose to do something that goes against what God or your parents want you to do, would it be a good or bad choice?



Why?

Seeking advice helps you make better choices.

Making really good choices requires you to ask for advice. The book of Proverbs repeatedly speaks about the folly of making choices without seeking the help of others. According to the following verse, what word is used to describe people who do not ask for advice? _____

The way of fools seems right to them, but the wise listen to advice (Proverbs 12:15).

Do you want to be wise according to the Bible's definition? If so, look at Proverbs 12:15 above and read it again. What must you do when you need to make a decision but you are not sure what choice you should make?



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Once again read the opening story of Justin's day of making choices. Here is a list of choices Justin had to make. How can you help him make better choices about these issues?

The alarm clock:

Telling the truth:

The English assignment:

Spending time with Ryan at the secret clubhouse:



Making Really Good Choices

In this chapter we have looked into God's Word and learned about why it is important to make really good **C-H-O-I-C-E-S**. On this page, write out the point of each letter as it was stated in your book. (I'll get you started with "C.")

Choices deal with your heart.

H _____

O _____

I _____

C _____

E _____

S _____

Now write out one thing you liked, learned, or want to do about the choices you need to make.



Take time now to seal your desire to make *really* good choices with the words of this prayer:

*Choose for yourselves this day
whom you will serve
(Joshua 24:15).*

Father God, I want to thank You for all the verses in the Bible that can help me make really good choices. As Joshua 24:15 says, my most important choice each day is to “choose” to serve You. Help me make this choice today and do what Your Word says. Amen.