

The Painful Choice -- To Obey God -- By Loving Others

For this day I make the choice before God and His holy angels to obey Him through His Word **to love other people** (John 15:9-13; I Cor 13: Gal 5:22; Eph 4:32; I John 4:7-12).

By my choice to trust God for wisdom and strength to obey Him -- I hereby declare that by loving other people I choose --

1. **To recognize them as a person created by God** with all the rights and value given to them by that creation. I choose to respect them, listen to them, honor them, and recognize how valuable and important they are to God -- taking into account that Jesus Christ died for them.
2. **To give them their rightful place in my life** even though they may be a stranger to me and I may never see them again. I choose to be accountable to God to give them what I can -- a smile, a friendly word, a courteous act. I choose **not** to use them for my advantage, to take my anger and frustration out on them. I will not despise them nor look upon them as less important than I am. I will treat them as I would wish to be treated if the relationship were reversed.
3. **To seek their good -- even though it would mean sacrifice.** For those momentary contacts that often occur I choose to sacrifice a moment of my time, thought, attention and pride to recognize them for that moment even though no response is given. For those close to me as family and friends -- I make a life-long choice -- to love them as defined in the Bible even though it may be painful.

If at any time I seem to be the target of harsh, critical, inconsiderate words and actions -- then I choose in love to stand aside and let it all go by. I will seek not to react or respond in kind. In that moment I will attempt to ask God -- if any of that treatment may be of Him for my good -- then I choose to submit to His correction. If it is not of Him I will reject it without treating the person in any way but in love.

When words and treatment come from within or from others that appear to be from the enemy, then I choose to catch it all in the Shield of Faith that I hold before me, and put it under my feet. If the enemy is using some person against me -- then I choose to distinguish between that person -- who may be only the channel -- and the source of the attack, the enemy himself. I will, in the name of the Lord Jesus, put it all under my feet and will stand upon it. I choose to respond to the person in love -- with some kind of neutral statement that will defuse the issue.

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When I find myself becoming involved in some relationship or situation that is **not my calling or responsibility -- through solicitation, gossip, curiosity, pride, or requests for help** -- then I will choose to draw away and hold up the Shield of Faith. I will choose not to hoe in a garden that is not mine -- **unless the Lord Himself gives me direct guidance to do so, through His Word or otherwise**. And, I choose not to teach others or tell them how to conduct their lives or evaluate how others are living unless I have clear guidance from God. I choose to act on the truth that how others live and what they have done -- is none of my business. God has a plan for them and is wise and powerful enough to correct them and to care for them without my help (Rom 12:9-20; 14:4).

While I make these choices in good faith -- I recognize that only by the continual grace of God can these choices be carried out. Therefore, I will trust God, submit to Him, and be willing to be taught how to obey Him.

Victor Matthews