The Decision Is Yours

Kenneth Copeland

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I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them (Deuteronomy 30:19-20).

In this book, I am going to share with you one of the basic fundamental principles of the Bible. If you will spend time meditating on these things and then acting on what you learn, you will be able to receive anything you need from God.

Freedom to Choose

In Deuteronomy 30, God gives His people a choice. Verse 19 says, *"Therefore, choose...."* **You** is the understood subject, so it is saying, *Therefore, you choose....*

God has given us the divine privilege and responsibility to make a choice. He has set before us life and death, blessing and cursing. The choice is ours.

Many Christians fall into a trap in this area, wondering why God doesn't heal them, prosper them, etc. However, it is important that we realize that God has sent Jesus to the cross. He raised Him from the dead. He has broken the power of sin, sickness, demons and fear. He has given us His Name, His Word, His Holy Spirit. He has finished His work. God has done all He is going to do.

God is a holy God. He is beyond reproach.

Once He has made a decision and declared a thing, He is unchangeable forever. Whether we *like* it or not, our emotional involvements will not change Him, neither will our tears.

God is not moved by emotions. He is moved by faith.

He has given us the choice: *life* or *death*, *blessing* or *cursing.* We can choose

God and live the abundant life, or we can choose the world's way and live in lack. God could force His will on us, but He has chosen not to do so. God created man in His class. He made man with the ability to think for himself and choose his own destiny. If it were left up to Satan, we would have no choice at all. He wants to take away our choice if he can. If we allow it, he will run roughshod over us and beat us down spiritually, mentally and physically. He hates us because we represent God, because we are created in the image of God.

I am going to make a statement now that may sound harsh to you: **God will let you die.** It seems hard, but it is true. Not only that, but God will let you go to hell if you choose. Jesus said that when the Son makes you free, you are free indeed. You are free in every minute particle of your life. When you made Jesus Christ the Lord of your life, you chose Him. You exercised your freedom of choice, and when you did, all the demons in hell could not stop the new birth from taking place.

In Deuteronomy 30:19 when God set the choice before His people, He was speaking to both heaven and earth. Since Satan is the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4), God was speaking to him, serving notice that man was given the right to choose. Once you have the right to make a choice, Satan cannot move in unless you allow it.

The freedom to make a choice places an awesome responsibility in the hands of the believer. This is a privilege reserved only for beings in God's class. Angels are not allowed to think and choose for themselves; they do and say as they are told.

Only the human being, created in the likeness of God, has the God-given privilege of choice. From the day a person is born into this world, he is faced with a constant series of choices: Jesus or the world, Jesus or death, Jesus or a sick body, Jesus or a worried mind, Jesus or a foul mouth.

This is why so many religious people have trouble believing God. Religion teaches us that we dare not make a choice. It portrays God as a Supreme Being Who decides our destiny Himself—that we have no say in the matter. Sinners fight Christianity because they think it will take away their freedom. I thought that myself. I had the idea that if I became a Christian, I would never fly an airplane again, that I would never be free to enjoy life. I thought I would have to fit into the mold that represented Christianity to me.

So many times we have a preconceived idea of how people are supposed to act and how they are supposed to look.

Stop and think about this. Suppose a man gets saved and comes into our church straight off the streets. He doesn't comb his hair the way we do; he doesn't wear the same type of clothes that we do; he doesn't act just like we do. Because he doesn't fit the mold we have in our minds about the way a person is supposed to look and act, we decide that there is something wrong with his experience with God. However, we are not qualified to make that kind of judgment.

We are judging him only by what we see on the outside.

I have seen people who didn't match the mold in my thinking, yet God would bless and use them. Why? Because their hearts were right before God. The Bible says that God looks on the heart (1 Samuel 16:7).

Some Christians have a polished look on the outside, but on the inside, they are full of dead religion and strife-filled thoughts.

Freedom to Think

God Almighty has made us, in the power of His Son, absolutely free to choose our destiny. We have the power to think for ourselves, to choose our own thoughts.

Philippians 4:8 says, *"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."*

The Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth: *"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but* 11

mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

We have to make the decision ourselves and choose to think on good things. God

will not force His thoughts on us. Why?

Because it is not His brain; it is not His mind. He created man in the beginning with a capacity to think for himself and choose his own destiny. He has made available the mind of Christ and the knowledge of His will for our lives, but He will never force or impose them on us.

Someone may say, "Well, I just can't quit worrying. I try to think right. I try to think good thoughts, but it seems as though my head just starts thinking wrong." This is what the alcoholic says about alcohol. He says he just can't give it up. A person who is addicted to tobacco says the same thing about smoking.

The mind that is being dominated by worry and fear and care is not a God-controlled mind. It is not being controlled by the Spirit of God.

The Word says in Luke 21:34, *"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life...."*

Surfeiting means overindulgence in eating and drinking; disgust caused by intemperate indulgence. Jesus Himself places the cares of this life in the same company with drunkenness and surfeiting (or gluttony).

It is socially acceptable to be a glutton and to be filled with worry and care, but drunkenness is a different matter entirely.

Society makes a distinction between them, but the Word of God considers all three to be wrong.

The authority to think for ourselves brings with it the right to choose what we say.

Thoughts transferred to the mouth and acted upon will bring results—**either good or bad.** Matthew 12:36 says for every idle word that proceeds out of our mouths we will render an account in the Day of Judgment. James 3:8-10 says with the tongue we both bless God and curse men.

Then it says, *"My brethren, these things ought not so to be."* We have a choice where the tongue is concerned.

Choose Jesus

We have a right to choose our thoughts, our words and our actions. But how do we get from choice over into action? Jesus gives us the key to it. Let's look at John 8:30-36: **As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?**

Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

Notice Jesus' words in verses 31-32: *"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."*

Many people quote only the second half of that scripture: *"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."* However, Jesus begins by saying, *"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." The* word *disciple* means *discipline.* In other words, if we will continue in His Word, we will be disciplined unto Him. We will be like Him. If we continue in His Word, we will be disciplined the same as He is, and we shall know the truth, and the truth shall make us free (John 8:31-32).

Jesus is the living Word of God. To choose Jesus means to choose the Word.

Remember our first scripture reference—Deuteronomy 30:19-20. It said to choose God is to choose life. Proverbs 4:22 says His Word is life. Jesus said, My words are spirit and they are life (John 6:63). However, you cannot simply pick up the Bible, read it and say, "OK, I'm free." There is more to it than that. You are faced with a decision. When you decide to place the Word as final authority in your life and act on it, you make your choice before God. At that moment, the Spirit of God will move in. He will begin to reveal to you how to think, how to act and how to speak in accordance with the Word you have just chosen. His supernatural power will go to work to remove the hindrance, whatever it may be.

If you need healing, make your choice.

Decide to receive, then go before God and stay there until He can feed you some revealed knowledge from His Word on healing. Satan will try to fight you, but he is helpless where the Word is concerned. He cannot stop it from coming to pass, just as he could not stop the new birth from coming to pass. When you were born again, the Word brought it to pass. *"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever"* (1 Peter 1:23).

Our Authority as Believers

In the business world when a person is given the right of choice in his company, it is called delegation of authority. The boss gives his employee a job and the responsibility for that job. From that point, the choice is his. He will either win it or lose it by his own actions. The reward comes when he wins and the responsibility for failure comes when he loses. That is an unchangeable fact.

The same principle applies in Christianity.

After Jesus was raised from the dead, He appeared to His disciples and delegated His authority to them. He said, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth; therefore, YOU go into all the world; YOU take My Name; YOU cast out the devil.

YOU lay hands on the sick and they will recover (Matthew 28:18; Mark 16:15-18).

This same authority belongs to us as believers today. In Matthew 18:18 Jesus said, Whatsoever YOU bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatsoever YOU loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

Ephesians 6:10-18 says, YOU be strong in the Lord; YOU take the whole armor of God that YOU may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. YOU stand, therefore, having your loins girded with truth and having on the breastplate of righteousness.

Above all, YOU take the shield of faith wherewith YOU shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. YOU take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, and YOU pray with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.

Jesus has delegated His authority to the body of believers in the earth, but it will

not be forced on us. We still have the right to choose whether or not to accept that authority and walk in it.

My Quality Decision

I want to share an experience from my own life as an example of how to make a choice and stand immovable in the face of temptation. Several years ago, I had to make a quality decision to choose Jesus where my diet was concerned. At one point in my life, I weighed 265 pounds and measured 46 inches in the waist. I was bigger then in the waist than I am now in the shoulders!

Today, I weigh 185 and my waist measurement is 36 inches.

From the time I was a small boy, I had experienced an inner turmoil over food. I began overeating when I was a child, and it became a habit with me. A lady in the town where we lived baked pies for a local hotel.

She quit that job and went to work for my parents. She began baking pies for us. They were absolutely delicious! At one point I was eating a whole pie every day.

I didn't have a great problem with my weight then because I was very active. I played football throughout my school years, but then I was drafted into the Army. From the time I received my draft notice until I left for the Army I did nothing but sit around the house and eat. My eating habits had become ridiculous and, since I was no longer getting any exercise, I began to put on weight.

During my period of active duty, I was under such strict supervision that the weight was trimmed off, but I didn't change the basic problem. I began to crave food and think about it the way a drunk thinks about liquor. I would wake up in the middle of the night in a cold sweat thinking about food. I kept candy in my pockets all the time. I wouldn't eat just one Life Saver. I would break open the package and eat half of them at once. I was addicted to sweets the way a drunkard is addicted to alcohol.

The problem was made worse by the fact that overindulgence with food is socially acceptable. That makes it doubly difficult to handle and overcome. To society, the cookie jar is not nearly as bad as the bourbon bottle, **but they both serve the same purpose.** I couldn't sit in church drinking a martini and still be accepted by everyone. But I could sit there eating candy to satisfy my craving, and no one would think anything about it.

When I was discharged from military service, I immediately began to gain more weight.

My body was loaded with sugar. I craved it. I remember coming off one diet after losing about 20-25 pounds and then eating several pounds of chocolate candy in one sitting. I couldn't put it down. I had both hands full, eating it as fast as I could get it into my mouth! It was making me sick, **but I couldn't stop.** That scared me! It is scary when a drunk realizes that he is a drunk.

Peanuts were a real problem for me too.

When I was trying to lose weight, I could hardly wait until I came off my diet, so I could eat peanuts. I didn't eat just one little sack of peanuts; I would buy a gallon can.

Every Christmas I would eat two gallon cans of peanuts!

I also had a craving for freshly baked bread. I had a friend who worked in a bakery, so I would go by the bakery and get an unsliced loaf of bread fresh from the oven while it was still hot. I would cut a hole in the center of the loaf and jam a stick of butter inside, then eat the whole loaf by myself.

Of course, I realized there was a serious problem. I could discipline myself for a while and lose weight, but then I would gain it back immediately. I wanted to lose weight, but I didn't want to change my eating habits. I was like an alcoholic who wants to be able to drink constantly and not be affected by it. I wanted to eat nine times a day and weigh 165 pounds.

I cried and complained to God about my weight. I said, "Father, I don't understand this. I've been delivered from alcohol and tobacco, but I can't get delivered from food and fat!" I reasoned, "I live without alcohol and tobacco, but how can I live without food?" It seemed to me that I had been cheated. Why did I have to be the kind of person who gained weight so easily? The alcoholic says the same thing because he can't take that one drink.

Some people can overeat and never get fat, but that doesn't make it right. There are some skinny gluttons in this world who have real problems. They may not gain weight, but that overindulgence will show up in some other area. Satan will see to that. Some people can drink and not show their liquor, but they are just as much a drunkard as the stumbling bum who can't get out of the gutter.

I sincerely wanted deliverance. I knew something was wrong because I didn't have the power of God in my life to help me overcome the problem. When the power of God got involved where tobacco was concerned, the habit left me as if I had never smoked. When the power of God got involved where alcohol was concerned, the desire left and I no longer cared for alcohol.

When the power of God got involved where sickness and disease were concerned, I was delivered from them. I had used my faith and believed God in those areas, but when I dieted, I would almost go berserk before it was over. I didn't have any spiritual assistance at all. It was purely carnal.

If you try to control the natural man with natural power, you will be defeated because the devil is involved. **Satan cannot be controlled with natural power.** Remember 2 Corinthians 10:4: *"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal [or natural], but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.* "

Finally, I made that **quality decision.** I told God, "I am not going one step further like this. In the Name of Jesus of Nazareth, I am going to get some answers!" I went on a fast and told the Lord, "I am not going to eat until I hear from You on this." I shut myself away from everyone and determined to hear from God. I made the decision to act on His Word.

During that fast, I learned from God about food. My attitude had to be changed. I didn't have a weight problem. **I had a food problem!** Proverbs 23:21 says the glutton and the drunkard will come to poverty. I realized then that God classifies gluttony with drunkenness.

I had to admit that I was a glutton whether I liked it or not. At that point I realized how hard it is for a man who drinks to say he is an alcoholic. I went before God and confessed gluttony. I said, "Father, this is one of the hardest things I have ever done in my life. I have been delivered from alcohol.

I don't care if I never have another drink as long as I live. I've been delivered from tobacco and other habits just as bad, but I can't be delivered from food. I would die!"

God said, *I never asked you to give up food.*

I am not going to deliver you from food. I am going to deliver you from certain kinds of food. Proverbs 23:3 refers to it as *deceitful meat.* The man who is

delivered from alcohol is not delivered from drinking altogether. He is made free from drinking that one chemical substance. The person delivered from smoking is not delivered from breathing. He is delivered from breathing smoke.

The Lord said, *You have never given Me enough credit. I have the ability to change your appetite so that you will thoroughly enjoy foods that you wouldn't eat before.*

Most alcoholics can't stand water, but once they stop drinking alcohol, they acquire a taste for water.

Go before God and ask Him to give you a taste for the good foods and drinks instead of the junk that will kill you. When you are hungry, He will give you a taste for a good tossed salad instead of pecan pie. The choice is yours!

When I made my choice I said, "Father, I am a foodaholic, and in the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, from this day forward, the food that I can't handle will not cross my lips. I am through with it. I choose Jesus."

Since then, I have had opportunities to waver. When I would see foods I liked, just for a moment that old craving would rise up inside me. But I would resist it by saying, "I choose Jesus instead of that. I choose the Word instead of that." When I stood against it, the desire would leave.

I made my *quality decision.* I chose the high life. I chose Jesus instead of candy. I chose Jesus instead of bread. I chose Jesus instead of cakes and pies. Now I have no more problem with food. I can watch someone eating cookies or pie and not be bothered in the least. Praise God, I am so glad to be free! Deliverance is a sweet thing.

Decide to Be Free

First Peter 5:8 says, *"...Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."* Satan is looking for someone to devour, but he cannot succeed without our permission. He can only get to us when we make the wrong choice. Then he will move in like a flood.

You can pray and cry. You can have people lay hands on you and cast the devil out of you, but it will do no good until you yourself make **that quality decision** to stop Satan's influence in your life.

It makes no difference what the problem area is. It may be sickness and disease.

Remember what Jesus asked the man at the pool of Bethesda. He said, *"Wilt thou be made whole?"* (John 5:6). He didn't ask,

"Would you like to be?" He said, *Will you?*

The man had to be willing before he could be healed. Some people do not want to be made whole. They may talk about being healed, but they actually enjoy their sickness. It has provided them with sympathy for years, and they want to keep it.

I have seen people who were healed still acting as though they had the problem. It makes some people mad when they hear a man preach healing. They will fight for the right to be sick!

God sent Jesus to the cross to pay the bill for us, and it was **paid in full.** He bore our sicknesses and carried our diseases. He bore every care, every grief and every sorrow.

First Peter 5:7 says we are to cast all our care over on Him, but it takes a decision to do it. It takes a decision to be healed and to stay well and whole. It requires determination on our part because Satan will put the pressure on to stop us if he possibly can.

When I share these things, I am sometimes accused of taking the fun out of life. But if you are getting life's enjoyment out of a candy bar, you are being shortchanged! The world thinks they are having a great time.

They think their life is fun. I used to think the same way, then I chose Jesus and found out there is a higher life. **If you will choose Jesus, you will choose life in all its fullness and its glory, *"for in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily"*** (Colossians 2:9).

I have found a wealth of enjoyment in laying hands on the sick and seeing them healed. It thrills me to hear reports of how our broadcasts are ministering to the needs of the people. I get excited about what God is doing. There is so much more enjoyment for me in this than when I was in the world!

I love the higher life God has given me. I have been on a Word of God high with

Jesus since 1967, **and it isn't about to wear off!**

The principles I have shared here are true in any area of life. I dealt with overeating because that was my experience. You may have a problem in some other area. It doesn't matter what the problem is. The choice of whether or not to overcome it is yours. The principles of faith are the same in every area of life.

Remember, Jesus said, *"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"* (John 8:31-32).

Deuteronomy 30:19 says, *"Choose life."*

Verse 20 says that God is our life. John 1:1 says, *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* Proverbs 4:20-22 says, *"My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings....For they are life...."*

God, the Word, the Life are one and the same. To choose God is to choose the Word.

To choose life is to choose the Word. To change your thoughts, your words or your actions, you will have to choose the Word of God. When you choose your thoughts from God's Word, then your mind will be renewed and your actions will be transformed. To have His Word dominate your thinking processes is to choose God's great mind instead of your small, limited one. Jesus said in John 3:21, *"But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."*

We make the choice ourselves whether or not to take God's Word. When we choose the Word for our thoughts, our words and our actions, then the power of God comes on the scene and our circumstances and surroundings begin to be ordered of the Lord. When you choose God, you bring God on the scene. No matter what the circumstances look like at the time, if you will stay in the Word and look to God, your circumstances will eventually change—**whether Satan and his crowd like it or not!** Choose Jesus and your body will get in line. Choose Jesus and your life will be transformed.

Continue in His Word. You shall know the truth, and the truth *will* make you free!

Prayer for Salvation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Heavenly Father, I come to You in the Name of Jesus. Your Word says, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall he saved" (Acts 2:21). I am calling on You. I pray and ask Jesus to come into my heart and he Lord over my life according to Romans 10:9-10: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt he saved.

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." I do that now. I confess that Jesus is Lord, and I believe in my heart that God raised Him from the dead.

I am now reborn! I am a Christian—a child of Almighty God! I am saved! You also said in Your Word, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: HOW MUCH MORE shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:13). I'm also asking You to fill me with the Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit, rise up within me as I praise God. I fully expect to speak with other tongues as You give me the utterance (Acts 2:4). In Jesus' Name. Amen!

Begin to praise God for filling you with the Holy Spirit. Speak those words and syllables you receive—not in your own language, but the language given to you by the Holy Spirit. You have to use your own voice. God will not force you to speak. Don't be concerned with how it sounds. It is a heavenly language!

Continue with the blessing God has given you and pray in the spirit every day.

You are a born-again, Spirit-filled believer. You'll never be the same!

Find a good church that boldly preaches God's Word and obeys it. Become a part of a church family who will love and care for you as you love and care for them.

We need to be connected to each other. It increases our strength in God. It's God's plan for us.

Make it a habit to watch the Believer's Voice *of Victory* television broadcast and become a doer of the Word, who is blessed in his doing (James 1:22-25).

About the Author

Kenneth Copeland is co-founder and president of Kenneth Copeland Ministries in Fort Worth, Texas, and best-selling author of books that include *Managing God's Mutual Funds—Yours and His, How to Discipline Your Flesh* and *Honor —Walking in Honesty, Truth and Integrity.*

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With the help of offices and staff in the United States, Canada, England, Australia, South Africa and Ukraine, Kenneth is fulfilling his vision to boldly preach the uncompromised Word of God from the top of this world, to the bottom, and all the way around. His ministry reaches millions of people worldwide through daily and Sunday TV broadcasts, magazines, teaching audios and videos, conventions and campaigns, and the World Wide Web.

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