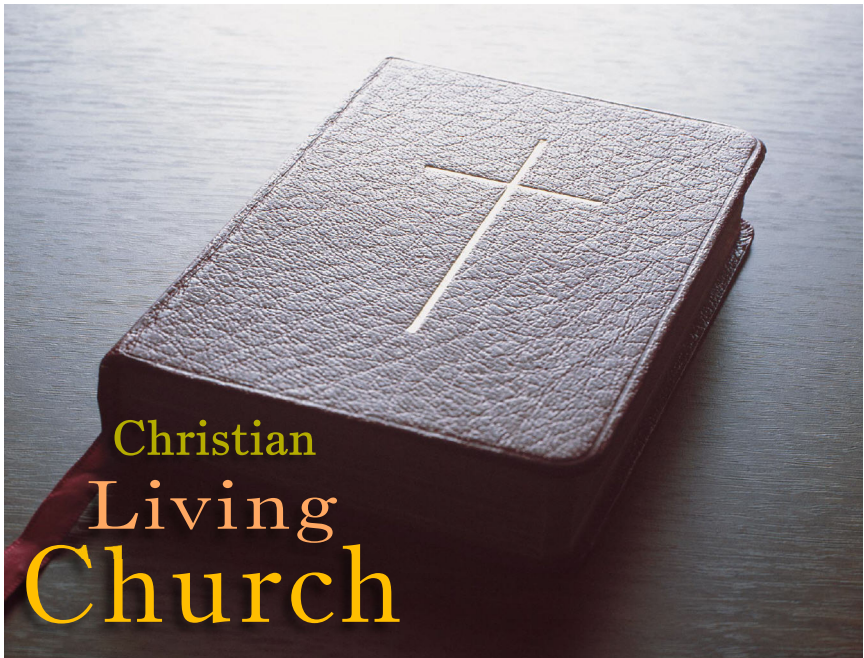


# Christian Decisions in a Secular World

*“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”*



Christian  
Living  
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This series of lessons has been designed for private study or classroom presentation. The purpose of this foreword is to explain certain conventions utilized throughout the program. The overall concept is to begin with the basic concepts necessary for the new convert to understand and progress toward more complex doctrine. The lessons are numbered in order to maintain the proper sequence of study.

When Scripture references are encountered in the text, various actions are recommended. When in parenthetical bold (**Genesis 1:1**) the verse is to be looked up and read right away. Frequently, the next textual statement will comment on that verse. Reading verse and text in proper order will enhance one's understanding of the verse. Direct quotes from Scripture will be "*bold italicized and contained in quotation marks*" and, unless otherwise noted, will be from the King James Bible. When the reference is in parenthetical non-bold (Genesis 1:1) it is to provide the Scriptural basis for the statement if confirmation is desired. References in blue [Genesis 1:1](#) will be listed in the lesson section entitled **FURTHER STUDY**.

**FURTHER STUDY** is the "homework" section. Its purpose is to encourage Bible study at home. The referenced verses have a short summation to assist the student desiring more knowledge about a subject to find what they are looking for.

The **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS** section is primarily for classroom use. Open discussion with the exchange of ideas produces growth for all involved. Most of the time the answer is contained in the referenced Scripture but sometimes the question is offered for open discussion. Even in private Bible study, analysis of the question and the search for its answer can be rewarding.

This work is offered to anyone with a desire to better understand God's Word. It is our hope and prayer that the person studying these lessons will come away with a better understanding of God's will and a closer walk with our Lord, Jesus Christ.

With Loving Concern for all those seeking God's Message  
The Church of God Rocky Mount  
Rocky Mount, Virginia

## Key Verse: Romans 12:2



*“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”*

### Discussion Question:

What does this Key Verse mean to you?

If you are a Christian, or if you have decided to follow God and His ways, then I have some bad news and some good news for you. The Good News is that there is a better world coming when Jesus Christ returns and sets up His Kingdom on this Earth. The bad news is that, for the time being, you must live (and make decisions) in this world. And those decisions *will* affect your life and your relationship with God.

Since we have to live in this world for the time being, perhaps the first thing you should do is learn to take responsibility for your past mistakes and decisions (or lack of decisions) and realize that where a person

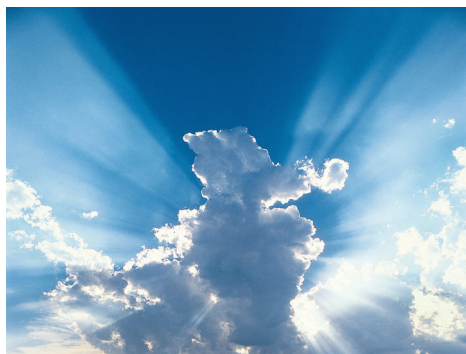
is in life has a lot to do with those past actions and decisions. It is *so easy* to follow the crowd. So easy to go with the flow. Proverbs 14:12 says, ***“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”*** Doing the right thing will sometimes require you to go “upstream” against the flow of our world and culture. How many people are there who wish they had never picked up and tried that first cigarette? Satan will try and influence you to make the wrong decisions in your life, just like he did in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve. Go back to the third chapter of Genesis and read that account. Adam and Eve make a bad decision to not trust God and then try and pass the blame onto each other and Satan. God did not allow Adam and Eve to place all the blame on Satan or on each



other. They were held to a degree of responsibility just like we are today. Always remember this: *you are no match for the devil alone!* You *must* have the armor of God that your Bible talks about in [Ephesians 6:10-15](#). You must have and not quench the Holy Spirit of God living in you and leading you into right decisions. And when you make a wrong decision and sin (and not all wrong decisions are sin, some are just poor judgment that God can still turn around for good) remember that even though you can be forgiven, that forgiveness will not necessarily do away with the consequences. For example, if you drive drunk and wreck and they have to amputate your right arm you can be forgiven but you will still have one less arm than you were born with. One of the most important lessons that we all need to learn, and learn well, is that sin can *seem good* at the time, but that sin *has consequences!* Living

in this world will be a little easier if you will remember that God has called *you* to be *born again* into *His* wonderful family and to be a part of *His Kingdom*. A sobering thought to remember is one that I heard a minister say several years ago. He said that there is a good chance that you will be living your life when you die or when Jesus returns about the same way you are living it now. So, the question is: are you making the right decisions today and living your life the way you should if this were your last day?

When we think about things that don't please God and how to eliminate those things from





our lives we all have a list of things that come to mind. So, how can we get rid of the things that don't please God? We can't on our own! Philipians 2:13 says, "***For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.***" God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases Him. We must listen to God's prompting and surrender to His perfect will.

It has been said that the greatest power we humans have is the power to decide. The first and foremost we choose is whom we're going to serve. This primary choice will determine all our subsequent choices with three main ones topping the chart. These three are: What is our purpose in life? What is our passion or profession in life? Who will be our partner in this life? The choices are like seeds we plant affecting our own lives, the lives of others and even our

environment.

In Scripture, Jesus warns against burdening the Sabbath with rules and regulations that prevent the people from doing good on the Sabbath. In desperate situations, God requires mercy, not sacrifice. Healing the sick and feeding the hungry both please God (**Matthew 12:1-13**). This gives believers a clear conscience when doing good things, like volunteering, or stepping out of their normal Sabbath routine to save someone, be it on the side of the road or in a life threatening situation.

One of the most common things that can happen to you after baptism is to begin to question whether you are a worse sinner *now* than before. There will be times when you feel like what's the use, I might as well give up, God has abandoned me. Keep in mind that before God called you the Holy Spirit did not dwell in you.



You did not have that Spirit of God working in your life as it is today, you lived your life without any deep conviction because the Spirit of God was not there. Now, the Spirit works through your conscience which makes you have a greater conviction of your sins. The fact that you may feel more appalled *now*, by your sinful actions, than before baptism, simply reveals God is working in your life in a more powerful way.

When God calls a person out of this world, his destiny is to be conformed to the image and character of God! Building Godly character takes time and there may be trials that God uses along the way to build in you the character that He wants. Remember, King David was anointed years before actually becoming king. During that time, God was molding David into the man he needed to be in order to qualify for kingship. The same is true

with you. God is molding and building righteous character.

The Scripture says, “***Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path***” (Psalm 119:105). Keep in mind the light that God will give us is just enough to see the pathway for today. Often we want to see the beginning to the end, however, the promise that God gives us is enough light to see our next step, enough wisdom to make our next move.

To close this lesson about making Christian decisions in this world, four real-life experiences will be related by members of the Rocky Mount congregation. These are short accounts of trials encountered by these individuals and the decisions they made to overcome the challenge to their Christian Sabbatarian beliefs.

Ronnie Nolen was working as sub-contractor for a general contractor. A problem devel-



oped with scheduling that required Ronnie's crew to work over the weekend, which meant that they had to work Saturday & Sunday. Other work by another sub-contractor was scheduled for Monday and Ronnie's crew had to be finished with their work before it could begin. Ronnie refused to work on the Sabbath. The contractor strongly insisted that they must work on the Sabbath, prompting Ronnie to inform him that they would quit the job at that point. Faced with Ronnie's determined demeanor, the contractor backed down. Ronnie's crew finished on Monday. The sub-contractor scheduled for Monday didn't show up until Wednesday. The result of Ronnie's firm stand to defend his faith was that the Sabbath was observed and the crisis resolved itself.

Janie Shaw had the following experience: When I went to work for Williams High

School, I explained that I could not work on the Sabbath and the Holy Days. They accommodated me on this quite well until the snowstorm of 2000 hit and put the kids out of school for three weeks. Now during all this time I only missed 3 days of work. Those days I reported for work the Head Principal and I were the only ones there. My department continued to function while the area dug out of a 16 inch snowfall. Makeup days were announced and Saturdays were mandated for all staff--no exceptions. I went to see the Principal and told him that they could work on Saturdays but I would not be there because that was the Sabbath and they would have to have someone else do the attendance on those days. He relented and I was the only one that was excused from working. I think the fact that I stood firm for the Sabbath and was so willing to work during the snowstorm when others would not resulted

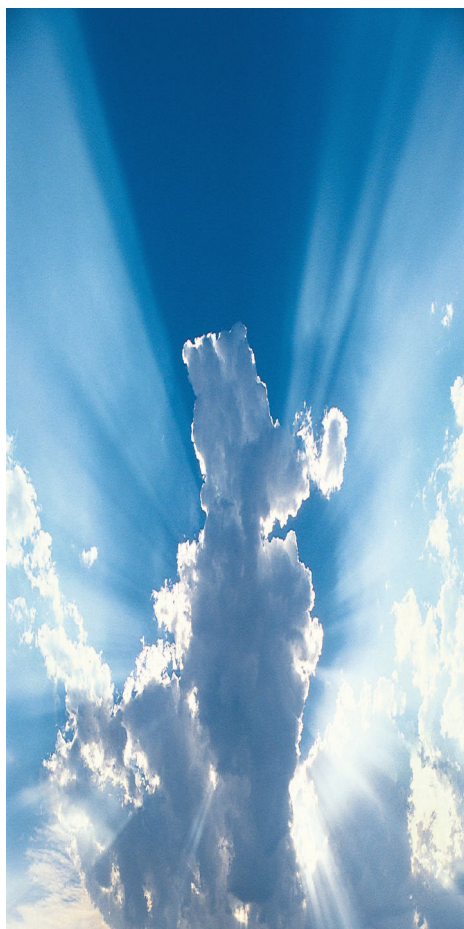


in the situation working in my favor.

This is Esther Wheeley's story: Several years ago while working in the high school cafeteria there were ice storms for three Wednesdays in a row. The schools were closed. Make up days were scheduled for Saturdays. I told the manager that I was a Sabbath keeper and that I would not be working and she said OK, not to worry about it. About half of the students showed up for school and the Saturday make up days were canceled. God really works for the benefit of His children.

James Shaw cleared the air concerning the Sabbath during the application process: When looking for a job, I made sure that I made it clear on the applications I submitted that I would not be able to work past sundown on Friday and before sundown on Saturday. Through every step of the process whenever scheduling

came up, I made sure to confirm that it would not be a problem. By being up front about the times I would not be able to work, my employers were much more understanding and willing to work around those times.







## Discussion Questions:

1. Is the opinion held by the majority always the correct one?  
**Matthew 7:13-14**

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2. In the effort to live a life pleasing to God, where should one begin? **Psalm 51:10**

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3. Is there any real possibility that God will abandon you?  
**Matthew 28:20**

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## FURTHER STUDY:

**Genesis 3:1-13** The serpent said to the woman, Yea, hath God said.....

**Psalm 101** I will set no wicked thing before my eyes.

**Romans 8:35-39** Nothing can separate us from the love of God.

**Ephesians 6:10-18** The whole armor of God.

**Philippians 4:8** What things are honest, just, and pure; think on these things.

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**Notes:**

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