

Our view of someone's decision changes
depending on if that someone acted voluntarily

This is seen in the case of Brian Wells

He entered the bank with a note saying
the bomb would detonate in 15 min
if he didn't leave the bank with 250,000

Your opinion of him may change
once you know the bomb he had
was forcibly placed around his neck

He was a pizza delivery man
who was making a delivery when it was put on him
with handwritten instructions
that would keep the bomb from exploding

But he still robbed the bank willingly
because he didn't HAVE TO do it

He could have hugged them
or laid down on the sidewalk

He assessed the situation and decided
that his best decision was to rob the bank

It was just more preferable than the alternative

Your opinion may change again
when you realize this was part of his plan

The two people that put the bomb on him
were his partners, and it was supposed to
look like he was a victim

Your opinion may change again when you realize
the two people he worked with
switched it with a real bomb without him knowing

He agreed to a fake bomb

When Brian realized the switch,
he tried to run, but they fired a gun at him
causing him to cooperate

Again, he made the choice to cooperate

He could have just taken the bullet

Notice how each piece of information changes your view a little bit

You see his decisions differently with each detail

They each reveal a different motivation to his actions

EXAMPLE: Heb. 10:25 says Christians are to meet together

We view someone differently if they CAN'T do this than if they
simply don't for a lesser reason

WE ARE FREE
BECAUSE WE ALWAYS DO
WHAT WE **MOST** WANT TO DO
AT THE MOMENT OF DOING

We are free if acting voluntary

Again, you must remember how we are defining freedom

Your freedom is not found in what you could do

It is found in why you did what you did

And you voluntarily do what you do

Jonathan Edwards “A man never, in any instance, wills anything contrary to his desires, or desires anything contrary to his will.”

This leads me to the conclusion that we should speak of PEOPLE being free rather than the WILL being free

The concept of free will is not as clear as we could be

“The source of choosing lies in the heart’s affections and deliberations by which motives emerge to generate the willing of a choice” Scott C.

We never act against what we **MOST** want to do

Our desires may be layered like an onion, but the strongest desire at that moment wins

Different factors drive what we “want” to do

None more basic and common than self-love

Self-interest/love is always involved in our decisions

Everything you do is rooted in self-interest

Blaise Pascal: All men seek happiness. This is without exception. Whatever different means they employ, they all tend to this end. . . . The will never takes the least step but to this object. This is the motive of every action of every man, even of those who hang themselves.

Self-interest is the base motive of all action even as it is conjoined with other motives that either taint it with vice or transform it into something virtuous

Everyone has self-love

The Golden Rule is rooted in it - Matt. 7:12

The second greatest command assumes it - Matt. 22:37-39

A good marriage is built on this - Eph. 5:29

Unity requires it - Phil. 2:4

This is not something you get rid of as a Christian...

This is something you learn to do as a Christian

You have been wrong about this your whole life

You finally see loving God and loving others is in your best interest

Holiness actually is good for you

You have never been better to yourself than when you have been holy

Aren't Christians supposed to be about self-denial???

Isn't it true that I love does not insist on its own way???

Doesn't it clearly violate Luke 14:26?

Remember Jesus uses "hate" as hyperbole

God clearly commands us to love our father and mother

It would be inaccurate to assume hating my "life" means hating "myself"

The idea is that you hate the life you live when lived apart from Christ

Mark 8:34-35 helps clarify this

Augustine: If you love your soul, there is danger of its being destroyed. Therefore you may [must] not love it, since you do not want it to be destroyed. But in not wanting it to be destroyed you love it.

Jesus is calling people to abandon all desolate and worthless pleasures of this earthly life

The call is to hate what will never bring you what you're looking for

What is found in Christ is worth whatever it costs... even your own life

Every time we sin, we hate ourself, God, and others

The reason this feels odd to say is because we all know self-love is a 2-edged sword

In our depravity, it is used to promote evil desires and corresponds to greed, covetousness, envy, jealousy, and the like...

This is what Paul was talking about in 2 Tim. 3:2

As a new creation in Christ, God's wisdom regarding self-love is restored to something that is in concert with loving God and others

When we, as born-again humans, adhere to what God says is good, right, and true, then we truly act in the best interest of God, others, and ourselves

All sin and temptation is rooted in deception

We can know that people always do what they want and what they think is in their best interest, and this lets us know they are deceived about what they think is best for them

This is how the Serpent deceived Eve in Gen. 3:1-7 and 2 Cor. 4:1-3

They believed eating would bring enlightenment, not death

They were convinced they knew what they needed better than God

This is how temptation works...

You are choosing what you are convinced is best for you

Again, we always choose what we want, even if what we want will destroy us...

How does this work???

What we want to do is always in accord with our **desires**

Edwards - "The will is always determined by the strongest motive."

Some of you may have your doubts about this

You look back on your life and see decisions you wish you had never made

I want to explain how this can happen

It may be something you have never considered/noticed

There are conflicting desires and competing desires, but in the end, the most persuasive or prevailing desire wins

People do what they MOST want to do AT THAT MOMENT

In most cases, we seem to act instinctively

We aren't always aware of all the reasons why we choose what we choose

Let's examine how our decisions can arise

Conflicting Desires

A mugger says I can give him my money or get shot

Though this is clear, we usually deal with struggles of Matt. 6:24

Let's examine what most of our decisions involve

Competing Desires

Picking between 2 positives

Should I eat Captain Crunch or Golden Grahams?

If 2 of your sons played against each other for a
championship...

Though it may be by a small margin, one will win in your
desires

Picking between 2 negatives

Stranded on an island with only rotten fish and moldy
bread to eat

All of this to say that even when our choices appear random, they
never are

We are always satisfying the desire that wins in that
moment

This is helpful to understand because it explains that there is a reason for everything you do

Even when you find yourself doing what you swore you would never do

A son who HATES to cut grass does it with joy

His dad promised him a new video game system if he completed it

The positive outcome overcomes the undesirable task

A son willingly cuts grass because dad threatened him with being grounded for a month

An undesirable activity beat out a less desirable outcome

Notice again that the boy is always doing what he wants and always doing what he thinks is best

SO HOW DO WE CHANGE???

IF I SIN BECAUSE I WANT TO AT THAT MOMENT,
WHAT HOPE IS THERE FOR ME TO NEVER WANT TO DO THAT AGAIN???

IS THERE ANY WAY TO BREAK FROM THE SLAVERY OF SINFUL DESIRES???

Next Week...