

Risk and Return

Jude 8-16

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God could have created us in such a way that we are pre-programmed to mindlessly obey Him. We could have been designed as a group of robots, God took the risk of designing us with a free will to pick and choose as we go through life. It is because humans have a free will that people pick sides and then conflict arises between races, countries, political parties, as well as religious and nonreligious groups.

I am convinced that Satan and his host of demons fuel these fires of religious division, especially between God's people and those who oppose. God must have decided that the rewards from giving us a free will outweigh the risks of giving us a free will.

- I. Freedom can open the door to error
 - A. Freedom to be right is freedom to be wrong
 1. Cain decided he could come to God on his own terms
 2. Balaam decided profit was more important than truth (Joshua 24:9-10)
 3. Korah decided he was just as qualified to be in charge
 - B. Freedom to be wrong is freedom to be judged
 1. Cain was cursed by God to life as a fugitive (Genesis 4:9-12)
 2. Balaam was killed in the war with Midian (Numbers 31:7-8)
 3. Korah was swallowed by an earthquake (Numbers 16:31-33)
- II. Freedom can open the door to blessing
 - A. As we avoid the hidden dangers
 - B. As we focus on what is true
 - C. As we navigate by what is stable
 - D. As we listen for the voice of God

So What?

- There is risk in choosing to be a devoted follower of Jesus Christ
 - The disciples chose to stand up for the truth and paid the price
 - Stephen chose to stand up for the truth and was stoned to death.
- There is risk in choosing to be a committed member of a church
- There is reward in choosing to be a devoted follower of Jesus Christ
 - God is glorified and pleased
 - Jesus is honored
 - We live with the satisfaction
 - Others may come to faith – *“After James was arrested and led to place of execution, his unnamed accuser was moved by his courage. He not only repented and converted on the spot, but asked to be executed alongside James. The Roman executioners obliged, and both men were beheaded simultaneously.”*
- There is reward in choosing to be a committed member of a church
 - *“We’re eager to get involved in something bigger than just going to church.”*