

Today I Choose

*An 18-Day Prayer Guide
For Believers*

By Chris Blanton



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Preface

I am not a Biblical scholar, but my spirit has been awakened by God to enjoy the process of learning. My life is by no means one that should be examined and scrutinized for mass publication. I am a simple man with a scarred past, and a hopeful future. My choices have brought me where I am. In recent years, those choices have gradually become more influenced by the Holy Spirit, so that I am becoming more like Jesus was: compassionate, giving, happy. These qualities—and more—can be obtained by walking daily with Father God.

A few years ago, I wrote this song which contains a great deal of “life lessons” that I’ve been learning. Somewhere along the way I was inspired to dissect each phrase of the song, translate them into prayers, and note a few Scriptures that support each phrase. Now the finished product is in your hands.

This book is a guide to praying out loud, using not only your inner voice and mind but also your vocal cords. Jesus said that you must believe in your heart **and** confess with your mouth in order to be saved. There must be something important about saying things out loud: declaring, stating, announcing. Things spoken are often remembered far longer than things read.

If we are redeemed, then why are we not perfect? The Lord has wholly rescued us, yet there are still pieces of us that are

unbelieving. Just before an afflicted boy was healed, his father said, "Lord I believe. Help my unbelief." (Mark 9:24) There is this daily struggle of our old self warring against our redeemed self. Even the Apostle Paul talked about his inner battle to do what is right and holy and just. We should not consider ourselves to be any different. We are saved, yet we struggle. Many of our choices in life are influenced by plain ol' selfishness. So, let's go on an 18-day journey together to remind ourselves of some truths that will put us on the path of submission to the Lord, to change the way we make our decisions.

In this devotional guide, I cite only portions of the Bible. Therefore, I highly recommend that you follow the lead of the Bereans, mentioned in Acts 17. It is wise to be fair-minded and slow to judge when reading or hearing a teacher or pastor. We are encouraged to search the Scriptures ourselves to verify truth in spoken and written words. I strongly suggest that you read entire passages, even whole books of the Bible, as you find assurance and encouragement for this amazing journey that you are living in the Spirit.

The written prayers in this devotion are only meant to be a starting point into a fruitful prayer-life in which you communicate deeply with God. "Amens" have not been included, so that you may feel free to extend the prayers as needed. In some places (*parenthetical words*) have been included so that you can speak to the Lord concerning what is relevant for the moment or situation. There are plenty of blank pages for you to write any continuations of prayer, if you want to.

May the Spirit help you finish what you are starting, and give you guidance and peace along the way. I pray that your spirit will continue to be called to life, and that you will answer that call with a resounding, "Yeah!" This is **your** journey. No one else can tell the story of your life like you can. Let's go!

–Chris Blanton

Download the free MP3 music file of "Today I Choose" by visiting www.blantonschool.com

■ DAY 3

There is a freedom I am meant to choose.

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

Galatians 5:11

Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart. Psalm 37:4

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. James 1:22

I will give you a new heart, and put a new spirit in you. I will remove from you your heart of stone... Ezekiel 36:26

Father, I have often been tempted to fall into patterns of my old life. Even though You have redeemed me, and set me on this path of life, every now and then there is a major struggle that goes on inside me. What is this?!? Please help me remember that you have set me free! You have replaced my cold, distant heart with one that can connect, sympathize, and respond to life. You have put in me a new spirit, a fresh outlook. By the power of Your Holy Spirit, I am no longer held captive by the selfish desires I've known all my years. Help me choose to live this new life that you have given me. I ask You to send Your Spirit daily to guide me through this transition

from what I once was to what I am becoming in You. Freedom from my old self. Freedom for my new self. Thank You for these new desires in this new heart.

■ DAY 4

There is a joy I am meant to share.

Sing for joy to God our strength; shout aloud to the God of Jacob! Begin the music, strike the tambourine, play the melodious harp and lyre. Psalm 81:1-2

A cheerful look brings joy to the heart, and good news gives health to the bones. Proverbs 15:30

...let your light shine... Matthew 5:16

Father, throughout my life I've seen people who have a soft twinkle in their eyes. They glow with a brilliance that needs no words to describe. They shine from within, causing everyone around them to be affected for good. By Your Spirit, I now get to be one of those people. You are filling me with joy, and giving peace to my mind. Help me find a group of people who share that same twinkle, and lead me in learning the many ways to express my joy throughout the day. Help me smile and sing and shout, and let me be a shining ray of hope to the people in my world. With just a simple glance—not even saying a word—I can share this joy that You've given me. Teach me how.

About the author

Chris Blanton is a worship leader, songwriter, and music instructor. Through the Blanton School of Music, he and his wife Laura offer educational experiences in piano, guitar, voice, drums, bass, and other instruments. Chris enjoyed five years as worship pastor of The Church at Northside in Rome, GA. Then he and Laura moved near the University of Georgia, where Laura obtained a Master's of Piano Performance. They have chosen to make their home in Athens, with their wonderful son Stephen.

Chris can be found playing some musical instrument almost weekly at the Athens Vineyard Church, where he and his family have found great encouragement and support. He has performed regularly with the Athens Symphony, as a guest solo vocalist, as a Choir member, and even as Santa Claus—yes, the jolly ol' fat man in the padded red suit. Chris was a presenter at the 2007 Worship Facilities Conference & Expo (WFX) in Atlanta, and through the Blanton School of Music, he offers weekend workshops in audio education and worship band training.

Chris Blanton's music is available on iTunes and other digital download stores. Please visit his music website www.broadjam.com/chrisblanton to hear even more.