

Agency

Your Heavenly Father has given you agency, the ability to choose and to act for yourself. Agency is essential in the plan of salvation. Without it, you would not be able to learn or progress or follow the Savior. With it, you are “free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil” (2 Nephi 2:27).

You had the power to choose even before you were born. In the premortal Council in Heaven, Heavenly Father presented His plan, which included the principle of agency. Lucifer rebelled and “sought to destroy the agency of man” (Moses 4:3). As a result, Lucifer and all those who followed him were denied the privilege of receiving a mortal body. Your presence on the earth confirms that you exercised your agency to follow Heavenly Father’s plan.

In mortality, you continue to have agency. Your use of this gift determines your happiness or misery in this life and in the life to come. You are free to choose and act, but you are not free to choose the consequences of your actions. The consequences may not be immediate, but they will always follow. Choices of good and righteousness lead to happiness, peace, and eternal life, while choices of sin and evil eventually lead to heartache and misery.

You are responsible for the decisions you make. You should not blame your circumstances, your family, or your friends if you choose to disobey God’s commandments. You are a child of God with great strength. You have the ability to choose righteousness and happiness, regardless of your circumstances.

You are also responsible for developing the abilities and talents Heavenly Father has given you. You are accountable to Him for what you do with your abilities and how you use your time. Do not idle away your time. Be willing to work hard. Choose to do many good things of your own free will.

Additional references: Deuteronomy 11:26–28; 30:15–20; Joshua 24:14–15; 2 Nephi 2; Helaman 14:30–31; D&C 58:26–28; 101:78

See also Obedience; Plan of Salvation; Temptation

Alcohol (*See* Word of Wisdom)

Apostasy

When individuals or groups of people turn away from the principles of the gospel, they are in a state of apostasy.

Periods of general apostasy have occurred throughout the history of the world. After times of righteousness, people have often turned to wickedness. One example is the Great Apostasy, which occurred after the Savior established His Church. After the deaths of the Savior and His Apostles, men corrupted the principles of the gospel and made unauthorized changes in Church organization and priesthood ordinances. Because of this widespread wickedness, the Lord withdrew the authority of the priesthood from the earth.

During the Great Apostasy, people were without divine direction from living prophets. Many churches were established, but they did not have priesthood power to lead people to the true knowledge of God the Father and Jesus Christ. Parts of the holy scriptures were corrupted or lost, and no one had the authority to confer the gift of the Holy Ghost or perform other priesthood ordinances. This apostasy lasted until Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son appeared to Joseph Smith in 1820 and initiated the restoration of the fullness of the gospel.

We now live in a time when the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored. But unlike the Church in times past, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will not be overcome by general apostasy. The scriptures teach that the Church will never again be destroyed (see D&C 138:44; see also Daniel 2:44).