

A person with a backpack is walking away from the camera on a long, narrow wooden plank bridge that spans across a river. The scene is set during sunset or sunrise, with a warm, golden light illuminating the sky and the water. The bridge is made of many parallel wooden planks, and the person is walking in the center. In the background, there are trees and some buildings on the far bank. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

SPIRITUAL MATURITY

Challenges, Choices & Consequences

Three Cs of Life

■ Challenges

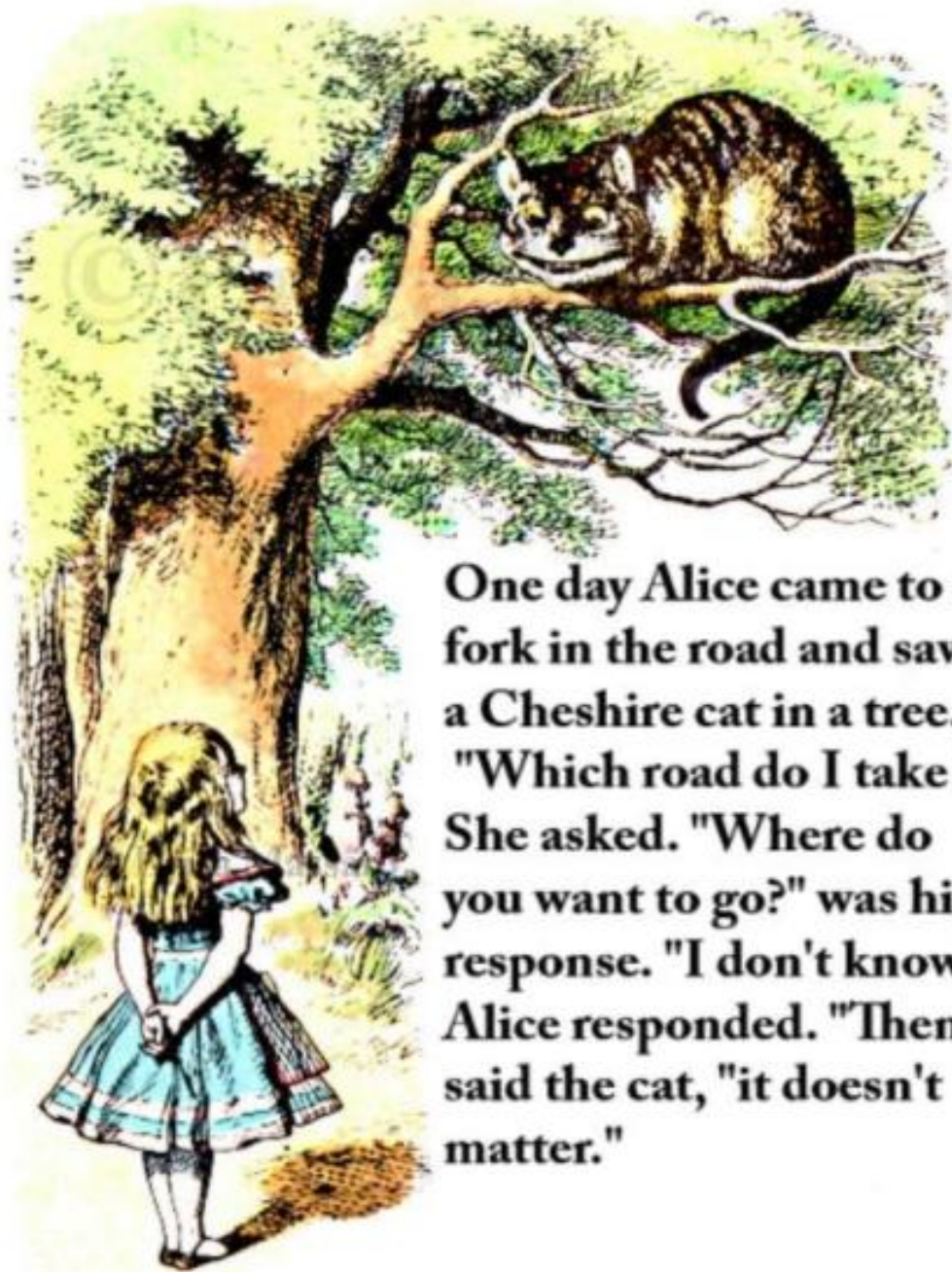
- Sometimes they come as opportunities, and sometimes they come as temptations.

■ Choices

- If we make the right choice, it will result in blessings. If we make the wrong choice...

■ Consequences

- The Bible is filled with the stories of men and women who made right and wrong choices.



One day Alice came to a fork in the road and saw a Cheshire cat in a tree. "Which road do I take?" She asked. "Where do you want to go?" was his response. "I don't know," Alice responded. "Then said the cat, "it doesn't matter."

Know Where You Want To Go

■ **Matthew 7:13-23 / Luke 13:22-30**

- The gate that leads into the kingdom of God is narrow; The broad way leads to destruction.
- False Prophets – People who claim they are speak and teach of God. They may know some knowledge of His Word, but they do not have the wisdom to properly apply His Word.
 - **Matthew 24:24** – For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show (give) great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect (chosen ones).

Foundations of Life

■ **Matthew 7:24-28 / Luke 6:47-49**

- The most important time in building a house or any structure is the foundation. You have to get that right. If you don't, you ultimately will have to tear up everything else and then go back and redo it.
- The foundation isn't the most exciting part of the building process. In fact, when you watch a foundation being laid, it appears as though almost nothing is happening for a long period of time.
- The action starts when the walls are framed in and the drywall is put on, paint, etc. Yet the foundation is the most important.
- **Psalm 18:2, 46 / I Corinthians 3:10-11**



Putting This Together

Endure Until The Harvest

■ Application To Our Life

Hebrews 6:1-8

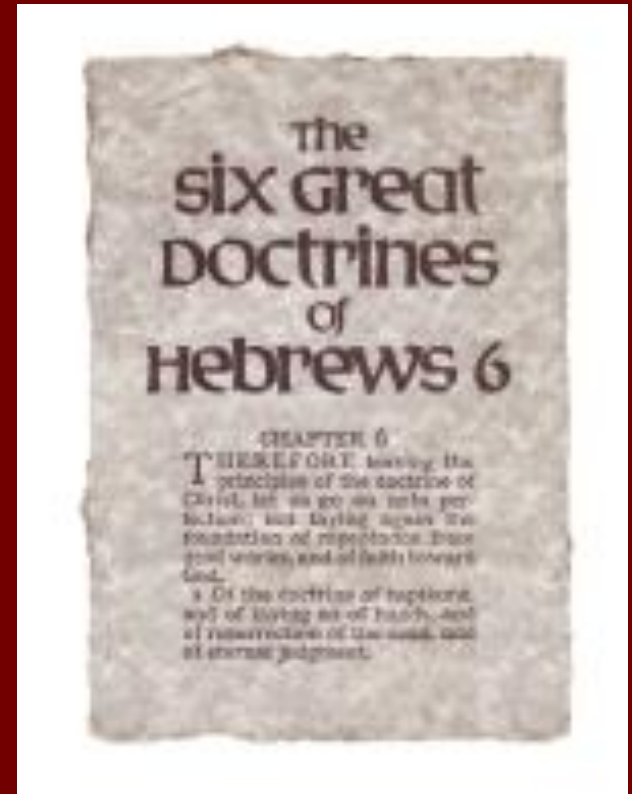
As we go through the process that Jesus Christ went through, in the flesh, and begin to experience what He accomplished, He is magnified in our eyes, because we try to do what He did and realize how awesome and difficult what He did was. While we try to imitate Him, the process of creation is going on. If we stop trying to imitate Him, He becomes diminished. That is why we have to go on to perfection, to completion, because the process is not complete with just believing in Jesus Christ.

Foundation of Life

■ Application To Our Life

Hebrews 6:1-8

- Repentance from Dead Works
- Faith toward God
- The Doctrine of Baptisms
- Laying on of Hands
- Resurrection of the Dead
- Eternal Judgment





decision

making

Marks of Spiritual Maturity

■ Matthew 23:37-40

- “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

■ John 13:35

- “They will know you are my disciples by the way that you love one another”

■ Psalm 16:2-3

- “I said to the LORD, ‘You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing.’ As for the saints who are in the land, they are the glorious ones in whom is all my delight.”

Marks of Spiritual Maturity

■ Agape -

- Affection, Good Will, Love, Benevolence, Brotherly Love
- Love (86x), Charity (28x), Dear (1x), Charitably (1x) and Feast of Charity (1x)

■ I John 4:7

- “Beloved, let us love one another for love is of God and everyone that loves is born of God and knows God.”

■ Matthew 24:12

- “And because iniquity will abound, the love of many shall wax cold.”

Spiritual Decision-Making

■ **Philippians 1:9-11**

- **This is my prayer for you: that your love will grow more and more; that you will have knowledge and understanding with your love; that you will see the difference between what is important and what is not and choose what is important; that you will be pure and blameless for the coming of Christ; that your life will be full of the many good works that are produced by Jesus Christ to bring glory and praise to God.**
- **Part of growing and maturing spiritually is learning to discern the difference between what's important and what's not according to God. He has to define what's important, and not us; that's the key element of spiritual decision making.**

Spiritual Decision-Making

■ James 1:2-8

- Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing. If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. [8] Their loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they are unstable in everything they do.

Ask Yourself: What Will Make God Happy?

■ Romans 12:1-2

- Do not conform to the pattern of this world.
- Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.
- You will be able to test / prove what God's will is.

■ Syschematizo

- “to conform one's self (i.e. one's mind and character) to another's pattern (fashion one's self according to)”

■ I Peter 1:14

- As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance.

Ask Yourself: What Will Make God Happy?

■ Romans 12:1-2

- Do not conform to the pattern of this world.
- Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.
- You will be able to test / prove what God's will is.

■ Metamorphoo

- “to change into another form, to transform, to transfigure” (Matthew 17:2; Mark 9:2)

■ II Corinthians 3:18

- But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Choose Faith Over Fear

■ Hebrews 10:38-39

- And, “But my righteous one will live by faith. And I take no pleasure in the one who shrinks back.” But we do not belong to those who shrink back and are destroyed, but to those who have faith and are saved.
- Fear makes us want to take control of our life (schedule, future, etc) and shrink back from faith in God instead. Take time to make your own Bible studies on men and women in the Bible who acted on faith instead of living fearfully.



Choose Purpose Over Pleasure

■ Acts 20:24

- But my life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God.
- Nothing we do in life will matter if we stray from the purpose God called us to. When making spiritual decisions, you should ask yourself if what you're choosing will help you make more of an impact on others or less.



Putting This Together

Spiritual Maturity

■ Application To Our Life

- Storms will come into every life, and these will determine what your foundation really is. If you're wondering what your life is built on, you will know when the storms come. Storms can take many forms. Sometimes a storm comes as a tidal wave of temptation. At other times the storm is a slowly eroding effect of more subtle methods. Sometimes a storm will come into our lives in the form of a tragedy that begins to test our faith.
- We must decide right now, whether we will be able to stand in that day, by building your life on the right foundation.
- Our **Challenges** of today, may require **Choices** in our life, today, that will lead to make **Changes**, so that we encounter the good **Consequences**.