

## August 2025 What if...?

Recently we drove through a place that we might have lived at, and it triggered for me my occasional musing about the apparently random path that life can take. At such times, I find myself asking questions such as, What if we had chosen that house rather than the one we did? What if we had pursued that job rather than the one we did? And so on.

There will be times in life for most of us when those 'what if..?' questions can be a source of great pain and distress, such as when we face bereavement or tragedy for ourselves or our loved ones. And at such times we may well all need the support and reassurance of others. But there may well be other times when we simply look back and wonder what our life might have been like if we had made different choices, if we had followed a different path.

I have heard it suggested that most people only make a small handful of big choices and decisions in life. Things like: What sort of person do I want to be? What values do I want to shape my life around? All of our other, smaller, choices tend to flow from those big choices we have made. One of my big choices has been the choice to try to 'tread lightly' though this life, trying to cherish all life and trying, as far as I can, to avoid doing harm to any.

Christianity often describes our life as a journey where, as we travel through life, we make decisions about the route we should take. One view, among a range of Christian views, describes our life as like a route on a map that God has already marked out for us. This view says that we follow the route through life that God has chosen for us, with only a limited ability to change that route. Another view describes God's influence in our life as being more like a compass than a map. Every time we face a choice or a decision, we can reflect on what we know of God's values, and we can either choose whatever we believe will bring us closer to God, or we can choose another path. But even if we choose a path that takes us further from God, we can always choose to turn back towards him next time we have a choice to make. This view believes that because God made us, we all have within us a 'compass' that points to God, and at every moment in our lives we can choose whether or not we want to follow where that 'compass' points.

So my prayer for all of us this month is that we would each become more aware of the choices we do make, and more aware of the choices we are able to make. And whatever we believe, or don't believe, about God, my prayer is that we would each choose to follow his values of kindness and justice and care for all.

Yours in Christ,  
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