

A Young
Woman's
Guide to
Making Right
Choices

Elizabeth George



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Choice 1

Ya Gotta Get Up!

How long will you lie there, you sluggard?

When will you get up from your sleep?

PROVERBS 6:9

Remember where we left Hannah in the last chapter? In bed! Can you picture the scene—and the sound? Hannah was in a dead sleep. Totally knocked out. And then there was a terrible racket. It took a while for Hannah to realize what that awful clanging was or where it was coming from. As consciousness arrived, she shuddered and thought, *Oh no! That's my alarm...already?* Then she went a step further. *Oh no! Not another day! Ugh!*

Poor Hannah was so tired. (Remember, she'd stayed up late talking to Maria on her cell phone.) *Maybe just a few more minutes?* she thought as she rolled over and pressed the snooze button.

So What's It Going to Be?

Are you looking for a good or better life—a life that's less hectic and more rewarding? Then there's one *really simple* but *really hard* choice you can make every day to help achieve that.

In fact it's the *first* choice to make every day, whether you realize it or not: Will you get up when you need to...or not?

Each morning when your sleep is shattered like Hannah's was...right then and there you make perhaps *the most important choice* you'll make all day. It goes like this: If you get up, you're in control of yourself and your day. (Well, at least you're in control of how it begins. And we have to leave room for God's plan, for interruptions, for crises.) Why can I say that about getting up? Because from Minute #1, *you're* calling the shots. You're in the driver's seat of your day.

As we work our way through this book about your life and your choices, you'll see how this one choice directs or influences the rest of each day. You'll see how Choice #1 affects Choice #2...and #3...and #4... When I was growing up, many of my uncles played dominoes. The game is played by matching the number of dots on one end of a domino with the end dots on another domino. My cousins and I would play with the dominoes when the adults took a break. We didn't know how to play the game so we stood all of the pieces on their ends in a line, one behind the other. If one of us had a shaky hand or bonked the table, all the dominoes toppled, each one tipping the one behind it over. That tumbling of the whole group due to one domino falling is called "the domino effect."

I hate to say it, but when you don't get out of bed when you're supposed to so you can get everything done in an "orderly way" (1 Corinthians 14:40), the domino effect goes into action. *Everything* suffers. It's amazing how that one first choice influences almost every aspect of the day.

Big Results Begin with Small Steps

I like to do things in small steps. It's easier that way, and

it makes success and change more achievable. So instead of saying, “I’m going to get up on time or early every day for the rest of my life,” I purpose to get up on time for just one day. You see, what you are today is what you have been becoming. And what you are today is what you will be in the future...if nothing changes. Every act repeated—either good or bad—is creating the real you. Each choice—good or bad—made over and over again becomes a habit. And I’m sure your goal (like mine) is to make right choices again and again until you’ve established good, godly habits.

And, my friend, I’m not talking just about ordinary everyday living here either. Life is so much more than that! For instance, what about your dreams? What do you want to be? What do you want to do? What kind of person do you want to become? Why not write a few of them down?

Well, as they said in the Wild West, “Daylight’s a’burnin’!” When you get up in the morning you’re grabbing the opportunity to make your dreams come true. You’re going to work on becoming the unique person God created you to be and doing the magnificent things He’s planned for you. You have all day to make right choices that move you in the direction of something exciting, something excellent, something grand and outstanding, something you can be Christian-proud of at the end of the day.

And when you don’t get up? Well, you know all about it!

You miss many opportunities...and often pay a price...to make your dreams happen or move closer to your goal. I like this thought that was in a teen magazine: “Oversleeping will never make dreams come true.”¹ And when you get up late and have to rush, you stress out, and your positive attitude for the day turns sour or harried. So getting up is the first right choice you get to make every day. It’s a mega-choice!

From God's Word to Your Heart...

Keep in mind as you read the following verses that a “slug-gard” is someone who has a bad habit of being lazy, slow, or idle. It’s someone who hates to get up and hates to work. If you’ve ever seen a slug on a sidewalk or driveway, you get the picture. Let’s take a closer look at “sluggards” to make sure we know who they are. While you read, write down your thoughts on the scriptures and how the principles apply to your life.

As a door turns on its hinges, so a sluggard turns on his bed (Proverbs 26:14).

How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest—and poverty [ruin] will come on you like a bandit (Proverbs 6:9-11).

Sluggards...

...will not begin things.

...will not finish things.

...will not face things.²

Meet Some People Who Got Up on Time...or Sooner!

As you go through this section feel free to mark up and interact with the verses. These people have a big important message for you and me.

Jesus. God's Son and our Savior, got up early. What did He do once He was awake?

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed (Mark 1:35).

Jesus talked to His heavenly Father first thing in the morning. He prayed to God. He received daily strength for doing God's will for one more day. He was spiritually armed for facing and handling temptation, especially the temptation to turn away from going to the cross.

The Proverbs 31 woman. She's a picture of God's ideal woman. Proverbs 31:10-31 is a Hebrew poem, and each verse highlights a character quality. Guess what quality is found in verse 15?

She gets up while it is still dark; she provides food for her family and portions for her servant girls.

This woman was a wife and mom. For her to fulfill one of

God's priorities for her—to take care of her family—she had to set her alarm (so to speak—I wonder what people used back then?) and get up and get going early. Living her life God's way was important enough to get a jump start on the day.

The women at the tomb. Wow! What an example this group of gals is. They loved Jesus. And when He died on the cross, they were there to the very end. Then they followed those who carried their Savior's body to see where He was placed. After that they went home and did the work of preparing spices for Jesus' body so He could be properly buried. And then what did they do?

Very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb
(Luke 24:1).

Do you think they were tired? Do you think it was horrible watching Jesus suffer brutality and die in agony on the cross? And yet these women pressed on with their mission—to tend to Jesus' body and burial. What if they had hit the snooze button on their alarm clocks and gone back to sleep on that all-important morning when they needed to minister to the Lord's body? (Okay, they didn't have alarm clocks like we have, but you get the idea.) What if the women slept in? What if they made excuses and didn't go?

Teens Who Get Up

I'm inspired every time I read about teens who have a passion for something that's so serious and intense that it gets them out of bed. For instance (and this is where your dreams come in!):

My friend's daughter had a horse. She loved that horse like a best friend. She didn't even have to set her alarm at night because she couldn't wait to get up and feed and brush her horse before school. What time did she get up? Five o'clock.

My niece was on an ice skating team. She adored skating. In fact, she slept with her skates in her bed. Guess what time she had to be at the ice rink? Five o'clock. And she had to get up even earlier to get ready and get to the rink on time.

As I'm writing this book, the World Olympic competition is in full swing. I'm sure you've seen the gymnastics competition. Those girls at the Olympic level—most of them in their mid to late teens—are the best in the world. How did they get that way? By training. By practicing. By following instructions. And by getting up early in the morning to do their training... plus their schooling and homework. Each one of these teens was following a dream, a dream powerful enough to get them out of bed each day so they could do all that following—and achieving!—their dreams required.

People get out of bed for all sorts of reasons. To meet with a prayer group or gather for prayer at the school flagpole. To work on a Bible study for youth group. To meet with a study group at school. To go over exam material one more time before the test. To go to sports practice.

What are you passionate about? What do you love doing more than anything else? What do you adore doing but never have enough time for? Take a minute to jot down some answers.

“A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” This well-known adage says a lot. For instance, you have dreams and responsibilities that make up your life. So to begin your journey of following and fulfilling your dreams and taking care of your responsibilities, you must begin with one single step—by getting up tomorrow.

1. *What do you want to do tomorrow?* This question has to do with your goals and dreams. In my case I want to purchase a birthday gift for a special friend. My granddaughter wants to have time to sketch in her art pad. Another girl I know wants to practice her driving with her dad before he goes to work so she'll be better prepared for passing her driver's test. What about you? What do you strongly desire to achieve tomorrow? Write it down and note why it's important to you.

2. *What do you have to do tomorrow?* What are your responsibilities? Schoolwork? Work? Chores? Babysitting your little brother? What's on your must-do list? Finishing your term paper? Taking out the trash? Emptying the dishwasher? Feeding the dog next door while your neighbors are on vacation? Take a stab at creating a list. You may need to make it two columns. *Warning:* This list can get quite long!

Your Heart Response

Here's a challenge that really moved my heart. I'm hoping and praying it moves yours too! It's from the book *Don't Waste Your Life*:

Most people slip by in life without a passion for God, spending their lives on trivial diversions, living for comfort and pleasure...[Don't] get caught up in a life that counts for nothing...Learn to live for Christ, and don't waste your life!³

Life is a precious gift from God. In addition to the life He's given you, He also has incredible plans and purposes for you. Nothing could be worse than a life that counts for nothing. You have many opportunities to live with passion, make a difference, contribute to others, and bring honor and glory to God. Why not get started today?

Things to Do Today to Make Right Choices

As you think about living your life God's way, let the following choices pave the way for a better tomorrow. This will help you follow through on your first step toward a better life—getting out of bed.

Step 1: Decide when you would like to get up.

Step 2: Determine when you must get up to make your day go the way you wish it to go.

*Step 3: Set your alarm...*a good loud one...an obnoxious one!

Step 4: Get to bed in time to get the rest you need before getting up on time.

Step 5: Pray. Ask for God's help to get up. Tell Him why it's important that you get up on time. Go over your plans, purposes, commitments, and dreams for tomorrow with Him. He cares!

*Step 6: Purpose to get up...*no matter what. Don't give in. And don't worry about not getting enough sleep. It's only for one morning.

Step 7: Praise God when you hear the alarm. The psalmist cried out with the dawn, "This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:24).

~~~~~ *Girls Helping Girls* ~~~~~

❁ What small steps could Hannah take to start her day better?

- ❁ How do you think Hannah's "Oh no! Not another day!" attitude will affect her day?
  
- ❁ Of the scriptures shared in this chapter, which one meant the most to you and why? How would you share that with Hannah?
  
- ❁ In what ways are you like Hannah? What do you need to do to have a better approach to the day?

*Want to Know More?  
Check It Out!*

- ✓ Read Proverbs 6:6-8. What do you learn from the tiny ant that you can remember and copy?

Verse 7—

Verse 8—

If the sluggard follows the instructions of verse 6, what will happen?

- ✓ Read these proverbs and note the results of being lazy.

Proverbs 12:27—

Proverbs 26:15—

- ✓ In Proverbs 26:16, what else do you learn about a sluggard?

- ✓ Read these proverbs that point out a number of lame excuses offered by the foolish sluggard. Also note the results (or what you think the results will be) of his excuses.

Proverbs 20:4—

Proverbs 26:13—

- ✓ What do you learn about the lifestyle of a sluggard in these verses?

Proverbs 13:4—

Proverbs 21:25-26—

- ✓ By contrast what does Proverbs 13:4 say is the reward of a diligent lifestyle?



## God's Guidelines for Making Right Choices

- ✿ *Your future starts the second you get up.* “Do not love sleep or you will grow poor; stay awake and you will have food to spare” (Proverbs 20:13).
- ✿ *Get up...get going...keep going.* “Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise!” (Proverbs 6:6). “How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep?” (verse 9).
- ✿ *Realize the value of each day.* “Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom” (Psalm 30:12).
- ✿ *Have a purpose for each day.* “We constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith” (2 Thessalonians 1:11).
- ✿ *Look to Jesus as a model.* “Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed” (Mark 1:35).