

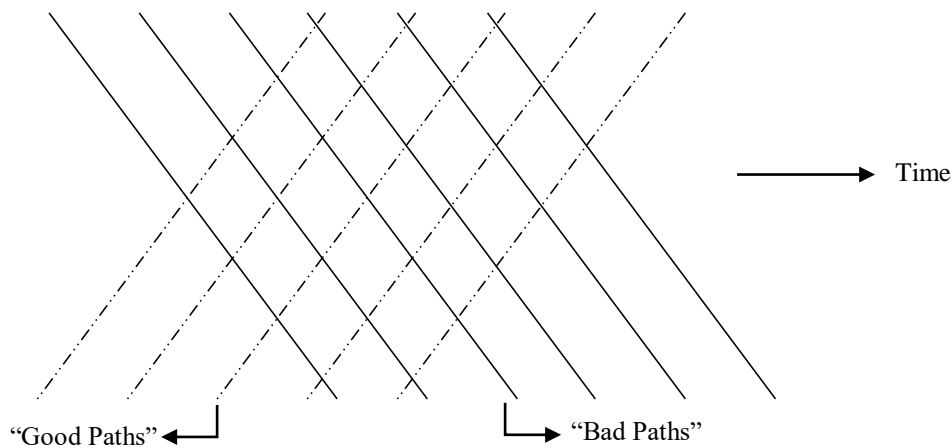
## 5B The Chicken-Wire Diagram

(By Bill)

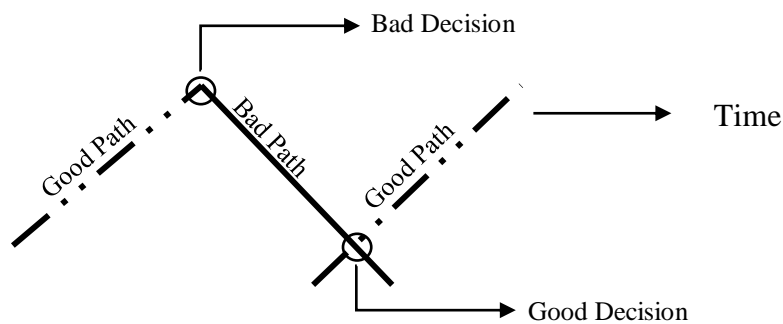
Do our choices matter?

Consider your life plotted on a piece of chicken-wire. As you go through life you continually make decisions- good decisions that move you in one direction, and bad decisions (sinful decisions) that move you in the other direction.

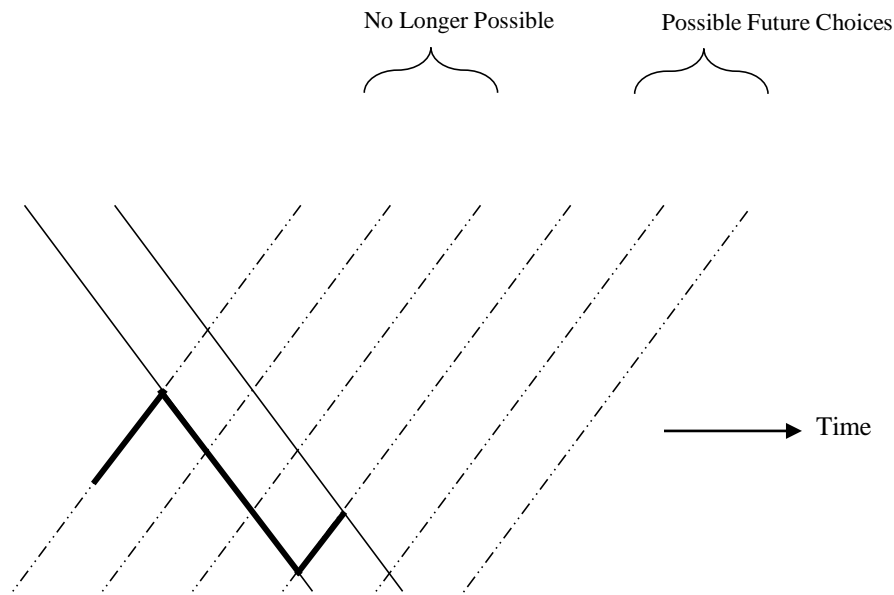
Suppose you plot your life choices as a function of time, like this:



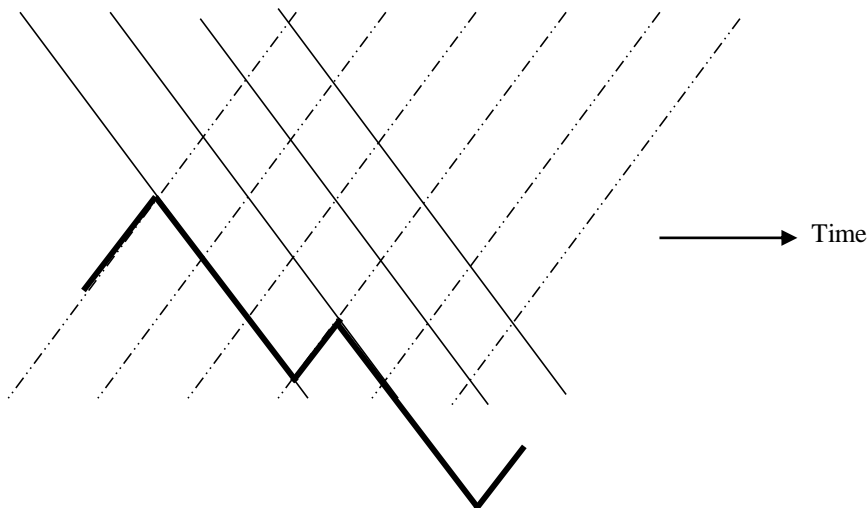
As you chart your "life path," it might go as follows:



When you make a bad decision (to sin instead to not sin) it changes your life forever. You lose opportunities and the possibility of choices which would occur if you had not chosen to sin. You lower the spiritual potential to serve God effectively:



One common problem with a bad choice is that it makes it easier to make another bad choice, (“I’ve messed up this far, I might as well go all the way and ruin everything.”) One sin tends to encourage more sin, but part of the future is then forever closed off to you, which is depressing:



You can however, with God’s help, start making good choices again and move in a positive direction.

Here's an example: Sometimes, Christians hang out with other Christians most of the time, but they would like to reach out to non-Christians in order to help them come to Christ.

Good motive. So, how do I do it?

Well, I figure I'll hang out with them, and I suppose they'll feel more comfortable with me if I do the stuff they do. For instance, suppose I'm a LeTourneau student, where I have promised not to drink any alcoholic beverages as long as I am enrolled in LETU.

Suppose further that, for a good reason, so that I can get to know me better, I'll go to some of their parties; that's okay, as long as I don't drink, but one thing leads to another, and in order not to offend them...well, I take a drink (just a little, but I'm breaking a promise, so it is a sin, maybe just a little one, but maybe just little more...)

One thing leads to another, and finally, I wake up in a strange bed, in a motel room somewhere, and I'm next to a strange girl! I look at her, and she's not at all attractive to me...so I turn over! There, on the bedside table, is a marriage license! I'm a Christian, so divorce is not allowed, what do I do?

Sin tends to lead to sin, which leads to sin. I have talked to more than one Christian girl who has gotten pregnant after drinking. One was a Christian and didn't know who the guy was – she had the baby, gave him away to a good Christian couple and repented of her sin and later married a good Christian guy (who, actually, was faithful to stick with her and supported her as she went through the delivery and married her in a Christian marriage afterwards.) So, sin doesn't have to lead to more sin. But it can cause hardships and complications. Another girl we counseled unfortunately murdered her baby through an abortion.

Sometimes, when I talk about the chicken-wire diagram, I give the illustration of a kid whose mom told him not to play near the railroad tracks. One day he comes in hopping on one foot and says, "Mom, I disobeyed you, and a train cut off my foot."

Well, he sinned, and he probably won't be able to fix the results. The results of sin can be lasting, but all is not lost!

The good news is that God can still use you after multiple bad decisions

Who, in the Bible, is the worst sinner in the world? Answer: the apostle Paul, who referred to himself as "the chief of sinners" (1Timothy 1:15). But he was used by God to write a huge chunk of the New Testament!

So, no matter how far down you have gone, if you repent and grow, God can still use you in his work! You can still do great things for God!