



# Making Choices: When Cultural Values and Kingdom Values Collide

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Bring God home

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Celebrate Diwali with these beautifully crafted 24-karat gold and silver-plated idols of Goddess Lakshmi and Lord Ganesha. Bring them home or give them away as gifts to start spreading the love. 1-year warranty.

Estelle Deities (Lakshmi & Ganeshji)

Sky Price
₹ 940

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Turn to someone next to you and share your immediate reactions to this ad.

What is biblical and what is cultural?  
A short exercise.

What helped you decide in making your  
choices?

Mark "C" if you think the statement below is a cultural value, and "B" if you think it is biblical.

- To line up when waiting for a bus or paying for something.
- To make sure you call before visiting a person's home.
- To send thank-you cards.
- To be honest.
- To have wine at communion.
- To think of others before yourself.

Mark "C" if you think the statement below is a cultural value, and "B" if you think it is biblical.

- To express your feelings openly and directly ("Tell it like it is").
- Everyone is entitled to freedom and the pursuit of happiness.
- Save up money for your retirement.
- Respect the elders among you.
- God helps those who help themselves



Mark "C" if you think the statement below is a cultural value, and "B" if you think it is biblical.

- Greet each other with a kiss.
- Have a church building.
- Cleanliness is next to godliness.
- Do things decently and in order.
- Drums, pianos, guitars-any musical instrument can be used for worship.
- Little children should have their own worship service.

Mark "C" if you think the statement below is a cultural value, and "B" if you think it is biblical.

- The democratic process.
- Practice hospitality.
- Give to those who are in need.
- The capitalistic way of life.
- Food for everyone.
- To support your parents materially and in every way you can

What helped you decide in making your choices?

How we see the world depends mostly on how our lenses have been trained to view others and their world.

The lens we used is our culture.

# Culture is

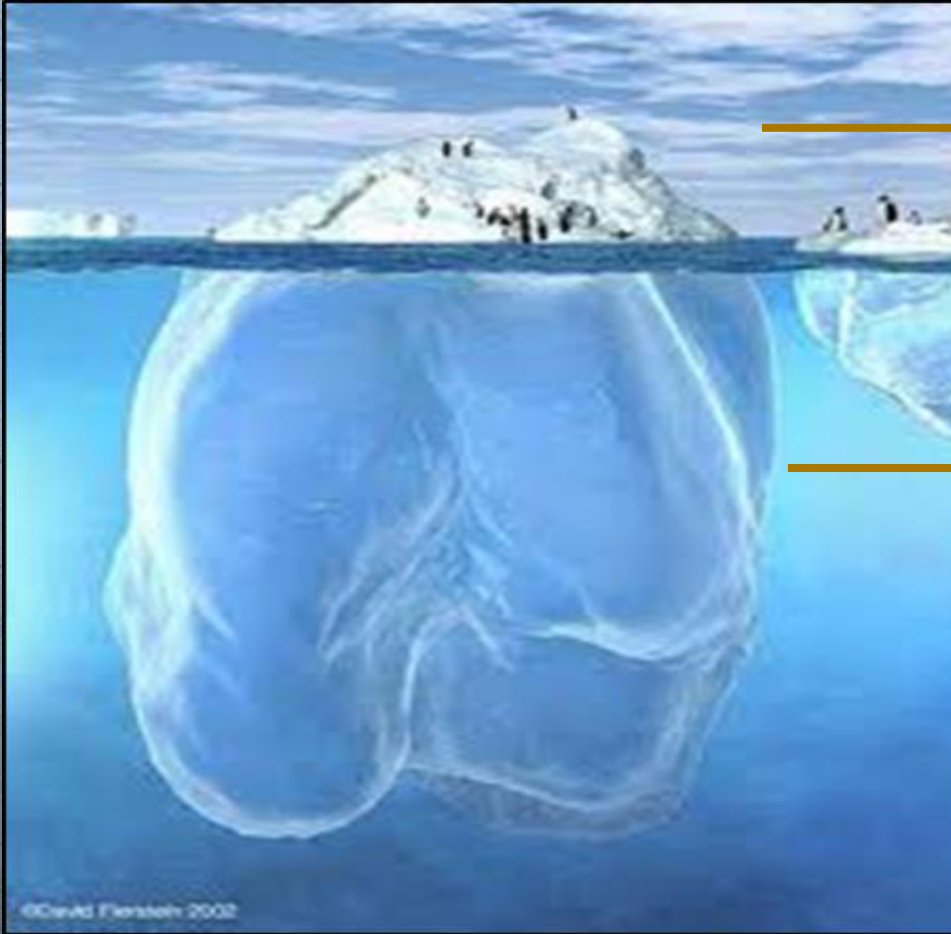
- *The way people live*
- *Set of products, beliefs, and values*
- *An integrated system of products, values, and beliefs that define how a group of people live and relate with the world*
- *A mental map by which we live and evaluate how others live*





Culture is  
like an  
iceberg.

There is  
more than  
meets the  
eye.



## Observable

People, products, dress,  
Behavior, greetings,  
Ceremonies, festivals, etc.

## Hidden

Beliefs  
Rules and roles  
Assumptions  
Expectations  
Values  
Worldview



# Joshua and the Options for God's People

## Joshua 24

14 "Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. 15 But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

# Joshua and the Options for God's People

## Joshua 24

- In the midst of a leadership transition, Joshua confronted the leaders of Israel to choose for themselves who they would serve.
- The continuity of strong leadership rests on who the leader serves.
- Two worlds, two cultures, many gods

# Joshua and the Options for God's People

## Joshua 24

Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve:

gods of your  
ancestors

Former way life

gods of the  
Amorites

Current way of life

# Joshua and the Options for God's People

## Joshua 24

Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve:

gods of the Chaldeans:

Fire, light, the sun

Gods of the Egyptians:

Ape, serpents, vegetables

gods of 1st culture

gods of the Amorites: own  
pantheon of gods with a  
chief deity, Amurru ('Lord of  
the Mountains') whose wife,  
Belit-Seri was 'Lady of the  
Desert')

gods of my current culture

# Choose you this day...

gods of the Chaldeans  
Fire, light, sun  
gods of the Egyptians:  
Ape, serpents, vegetables

gods of the former  
culture

**But as for  
me and my  
household,  
we will  
serve  
the Lord**

gods of the Amorites:  
Own pantheon of gods  
with a chief deity, Amurru,  
*Lord of the Mountains* and  
wife, Belit-Seri, *Lord of the  
Desert*

gods of the current  
culture

What are the idols of your 1st culture?

What are the idols of current culture?

# Practical Guidelines

1. Remember: No culture is perfect. Our cultures have both beauty and idolatry
2. Do not jump to quick conclusions
3. Find out what builds trust or what is the most loving thing to do in the culture.

4. Ask a cultural informant/mentor what to do
5. Be patient and ask God for wisdom.
6. Be quick to acknowledge your error/mistake
7. Guard your heart
8. Think on these things- ask questions:



# Questions to ask when making decisions

- ❑ **Question of Rightness** - Is it right? Is it wrong?
- ❑ **Question of Goodness** -Is it good ? Is it bad?
- ❑ **Question of Importance** - Is it significant? Is it insignificant?
- ❑ **Questions of personal consequence** – Can I live with the results of this decision? Will the decision please God? Who or what am I afraid of? What will people think of me? What “cost” do I have to pay for this decision? What’s the eternal consequence?

# Questions to ask when making decisions

- ❑ **Questions of social impact** – Who will I offend? What will people say? Who will be shamed by my action or decision? Who else will be affected by my action?
- ❑ **Questions of practical consideration**- Is it convenient? Is it comfortable, affordable, inexpensive, fast, reliable? Is this the best economical approach?
- ❑ **Questions of faith and Christian growth** – How will I grow in my faith with this decision? Is this decision outrightly wise, foolish or a step of faith? Can I handle the ambiguity? What does this decision tell me about God? Where is God in this decision? Where is God in the dissonance?

9. Kingdom values always trumps cultural values

10. Cross-cultural living sharpens our ability to appreciate God's grace and beauty displayed through people of another culture. Enjoy the adventure.