Let k and n be positive integers. A sequence $(A_1, \ldots, A_k)$ of $n \times n$ real matrices is *preferred* by *Ivan the Confessor* if $A_i^2 \neq 0$ for $1 \leq i \leq k$, but $A_i A_j = 0$ for $1 \leq i, j \leq k$ with $i \neq j$. Show that $k \leq n$ in all preferred sequences, and give an example of a preferred sequence with $k = n$ for each n.