

“Choices—Choices!”

02-16-2014

Moses is at the end of his life speaking to the people of Israel. None of them who left Egypt with Him are still alive, except Joshua and Caleb, and they'll be leading the people into the Promised Land. Moses is giving his final words to a new generation and reminding them that as they continue, they will have to make choices.

We can all use some help as we look at life. Life is tricky. It's filled with all kinds of danger. All along life's journey we must make choices.

God Gave Us the Gift of Choice. It's a wonderful gift. God gave Adam and Eve the gift of free will, the ability to make choices, at creation. Sadly, they made the wrong choice! Even though God had given them everything in the perfect Garden of Eden, they chose to listen to and follow what Satan said. Because of this choice, they lost the Garden and perfection.

Open to Deuteronomy 30. God's also given the gift of choice to you and me. Life is full of choices. We make hundreds of choices each and every day. Some of our choices are fairly small, but there's some which impact our lives greatly. Before the children of Israel went into the land of Promise, Moses gave this message about choices. Look at verses 19-20, *“I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.”*

There are choices we make that are literally choosing life, and choosing closeness to God Who made us and sent His Son to redeem us. And there are choices we make that can be choosing damage and destruction.

Let's look at some questions about our major choices in life. “What?” What am I going to do? How am I going to use my talents and gifts to provide for my needs and the needs of others? This question is huge! It used to be that once a person decided on a career, they stayed with that all the way to retirement, but that's not what's happening for many because after they begin a career, they change to something else.

“Who?” Who am I going to spend the rest of my life with? Whoever you're led to be with is going to have a huge impact on your life! For a Christian, it becomes even more important as God tells us that we need to marry someone who shares Christ in common with us and is going the same direction.

The decision you both make about what kind of family to have is huge.

“Where?” Where am I going to live? The community you choose to live in has an enormous influence on your life. It used to be that wherever you grew up was where you stayed. That's sure not the case today! Sometimes a community's a good choice and sometimes it's not.

“How?” How am I going to live my life? That's a big decision especially because we as believers realize we've been given life by God. There are some major choices for believers we need to make again and again. Choices that determine the quality of our relationship with Jesus.

“Will I live a life of obedience or self-will?” Every day every believer makes decision after decision about obedience. Is it ethical or honest to cut a corner or get-away with something? Will I live life God's way or my way? Listen to Jesus' words as He looks at His disciples struggling with the same questions in Luke 6:46, *“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?”*

To choose to live by self-will is a dangerous and damaging thing for the child of God. Going our own way many times leads to disaster. We need to make God our leader and submit to His direction and Will each and every day of our lives.

"Will I commit to spiritual growth or spiritual ruin?" Spiritual growth doesn't just happen! God can always be counted on to do His gracious Will in our life as a believer. But our choices about certain spiritual disciplines can be good for growth or not. You won't grow very much at all until you decide to have an intimate relationship with God's Word, or develop a walk with Jesus until you choose to make prayer an integral part of your everyday life.

To become a fully committed follower of Jesus, you have to decide to invest your time, talents, and treasures for His Kingdom. To make the choice of having genuine relationships with other brothers and sisters in the faith in church each Sunday and during the week, can make a huge difference.

"Will I live for me or others?" Every day we decide for whom we'll live. Self-centeredness is so strong in most of us that we feel, "It's all about me!" As a follower of Jesus we have to learn to listen to and learn from Him. From Mark 8:34, *"And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.'"*

Following Jesus means living for others. We need to be witnessing to others about Jesus and serving them so they see Jesus in us! Philippians 2:3-4, *"Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves."*

"Will I live for the culture or for Christ?" Open to Joshua 24. This world pulls on us every day, trying to drag us into one sin or another. Our daily choice needs to be to live for Christ and not give into the messages and patterns of the culture. Sometimes this will mean making some hard choices. It might mean being misunderstood by family and friends. It might even mean some kind of suffering. Joshua, from the Old Testament, had to make just such a choice. Listen to his words in verses 14-15, *"Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."*

There are times all of us have made wrong choices. But it's then we need to turn to our loving God in repentance saying, *"God, I've made some bad choices and gotten into some bad habits. I'm sorry. Forgive me. Help me make good choices today that will allow me to walk closely with You."*

As you look at your life and look at the choices you have to make, Choose wisely. Choose Jesus Christ.