

The Choices of Life

Former President Ronald Reagan says he learned the need for decision making early in life. An aunt had taken him to a cobbler to have a pair of shoes made for him. The shoemaker asked young Ronald Reagan, "Do you want a square toe or a round toe?" Reagan hemmed and hawed. So the cobbler said, "Come back in a day or two and let me know what you want." A few days later the shoemaker saw Reagan on the street and asked what he had decided about the shoes. "I still haven't made up my mind," the boy answered. "Very well," said the cobbler. When Reagan received the shoes, he was shocked to see that one shoe had a square toe and the other a round toe. "Looking at those shoes every day taught me a lesson," said Reagan years later. "If you don't make your own decisions, somebody else will make them for you!" The sovereign God has made us people, not puppets. We have His Word to guide us, His love to redeem us, and His assurance that we are capable of making choices.

Deuteronomy 30: 11 – 20

1) Choices face us throughout life

- From the very beginning man has been faced with choices – it isn't something that has developed in the modern era
 - Adam and Eve were given a choice in the Garden of Eden when God told them not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil situated in the middle of the Garden
 - We can be assured that it is no coincidence that the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil were both situated in the middle of the Garden.
 - God put a choice right in front of them that they had to make – the choice that was set before them was essentially to choose life or to choose death
 - Years later God had led His people out of slavery to the promised land to start afresh and he set the same choice before them – life or death, obey God or disobey God
- Not all choices that face us in life are about obedience and disobedience
 - We have practical choices in life such as:
 - What we will study
 - What career to follow
 - What house to buy or rent
 - What vehicle to buy
 - Where to live
 - We have relationship choices such as:
 - Choosing our spouse
 - Choosing our friends
 - We have financial choices such as:
 - How to budget/spend our income
 - How to invest our money
 - We have spiritual and moral choices such as:
 - Where to worship
 - To reach out or not to reach out to others
 - To drink, smoke, take drugs, illicit sex or not
 - The list can go on
- The fact is is that we will have choices to make throughout our lives.

2) Life's choices in kingdom perspective

- The grace of God calls us and empowers us to make the right choice but does not force us in the way we should go – that is our choice.
 - God regenerates us and puts us in contact with all his divine resources, but he cannot make us walk according to his will. OSWALD CHAMBERS
 - Adam and Eve were told what to do and they chose to do wrong
 - Jesus called Peter, James and John from their fishing boats. They had to choose whether to continue fishing or follow Jesus. They chose to follow Jesus
 - Jesus called Matthew from his tax collectors office. He had to choose whether to continue working as a tax collector with all the wealth that goes with the job or to follow Jesus. He chose Jesus.
 - Judas had a choice whether to be a loyal disciple of Jesus or whether to betray Him for 20 pieces of silver. He made a bad choice and regretted it. He had the same grace available to him as the rest of the disciples.

- God calls us all to follow Him in salvation. It is up to us to choose to follow or not
- Choices in the kingdom of God can be looked at from various perspectives
 - What has God commanded us to do
 - As with Adam and Eve God sets choices before us and gives us a directive to do what is right.
 - God has commanded us to forgive others. When someone hurts us we have a choice to make whether we will obey God and forgive or disobey and not forgive.
 - God doesn't always give you the feeling that you are able to obey but He always gives the grace to do so after we have chosen to obey Him e.g. Moses
 - Moral issues
 - We are constantly faced with moral choices in life.
 - The question that we need to ask ourselves on the issue is "Which kingdom does this belong to?"
 - Things like sexual perversity, drunkenness, drugs etc. belong to the kingdom of darkness and not to the kingdom of God.
 - We are told that those who practise such things will not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5: 21)
 - Thus, when we are face with the choice to practise such things we ought to choose what belongs in the kingdom of God – wholesome living – rather than what belongs to the kingdom of darkness.
 - Choose to follow the route that will make you happy and it will probably end up destroying your life. Choose the route that is right and you will end up being happy, content, at peace as well.
 - Practical, non-moral choices
 - Not all choices are a matter of obedience or disobedience or a moral issue. Many choices in life are practical choices as we have seen.
 - Many of these choices aren't a matter of a right or a wrong choice but they could determine what is good for you and what is best for you.
- Making kingdom choices
 - Ask God
 - What has God called you to do?
 - Besides living by general kingdom values what kingdom values are priority in your life?
 - Relationships
 - Missions/evangelism – a desire to see people come to know Christ
 - Discipleship – a desire to see Christians come to maturity in Christ
 - How our money should be invested in the kingdom
 - What has God put on my heart to do in the secular field?
 - This will determine our choice of what to study?
 - Do I have peace about the choice that I have made?
 - Ephesians 4: 7 The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
 - If you don't have peace about what you have decided to do then go back and prayerfully re-look at your choices.
 - Don't move ahead without the peace of God. It is probably the Holy Spirit telling you that you have made the wrong choice.

3) Choices have consequences

- Deuteronomy 30: 15 See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction
 - The consequences of our choices at the basic level is that of life and prosperity or death and destruction.
- Death and destruction
 - Making the wrong moral choices can cause death and destruction
 - Alcoholics and drug addicts have destroyed their lives by choosing alcohol and drugs
 - Many people living on the streets are there because of bad choices
 - Choosing an immoral lifestyle leads to breakdown of relationships
 - We may choose to disobey God and live a wholesome life in rebellion but it leads to eternal judgment.
- Life and prosperity
 - When we choose to follow God in His ways we live in the abundant life
 - Sometimes that propensity may not be material but it is the overall wellness – the Shalom of God – over our lives.
 - We have a confidence with joy and peace knowing that we have made the right choice and are in the centre of God's will in obedience to Him, morally and practically