



DECISIONS: LIFE'S SUM TOTAL
Joshua 24:14-18

Woodland Park Church of Christ

5 June 2022

“Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD! ¹⁵ And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, **choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve**, whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of 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.**” ¹⁶ So the people answered and said: **“Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods;** ¹⁷ for the LORD our God *is* He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, who did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way that we went and among all the people through whom we passed. ¹⁸ And the LORD drove out from before us all the people, including the Amorites who dwelt in the land. We also will serve the LORD, for He *is* our God.” **Joshua 24:14-18 [NKJV]**

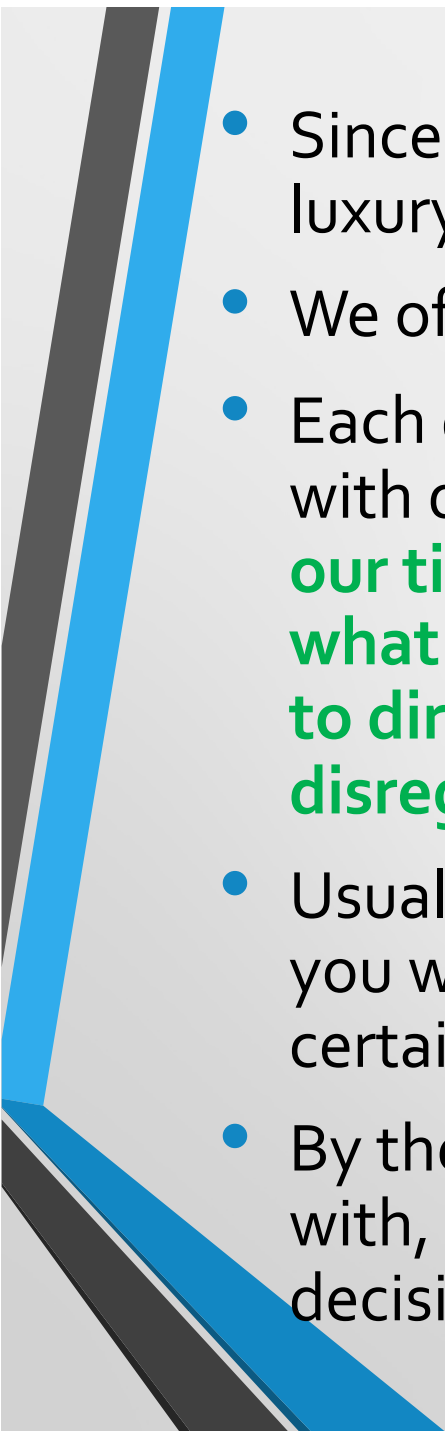
CONTEXT (Joshua's Farewell Address)

- Joshua is about to leave the scene and is preparing Israel for his departure – summons elders, heads, judges, & officers. **Joshua 24:1**
- He had taken the baton after Moses and effectively led Israel into The Promised Land by God's grace.
- Like any good, responsible, God-fearing individual responsible for others, he brings them together to give them a message from God and encouragement to remain steadfast in the Lord – parting counsel/wisdom.
 - Joshua reminds Israel of how good God had been to Israel.
 - Joshua notes how God had protected them through many “dangers, toils, and snares.” **vv. 6-10**
 - Joshua asserts how God had delivered the enemy into their hands. **vv.11-12**

Context (cont'd)

- Now all Israel (each individual) has a decision to make.
- Where would they place their allegiance and to whom would they commit?
- Remember, they had received lands for which they had not labored, cities they had not built, and orchards and groves they had not planted – they had hit the jackpot!
See Joshua 24:13
- Appear that it would be a no-brainer – “WE WANT GOD!” It was for that generation. **v. 31; Judges 2:7-10**

I am reminded that the real test of our commitment to God is usually our ability to remain faithful in our walk when the threat of disaster is removed, and the enemies with whom we fight are the insidious allurements of pleasure and inviting comfort of ease (when there's nothing driving us to our knees).

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- Since the Garden of Eden, God has granted man the luxury to make his own decisions.
 - We often refer to it as “free moral agency.”
 - Each day, seemingly every hour, we are bombarded with decisions and choices to make – **where to spend our time and resources, who to spend them with, what to do when with them; who and what we allow to direct us; what laws and principles we will obey or disregard; etc.**
 - Usually no one holds a gun to your head or threatens you with the death penalty forcing you to choose a certain course.
 - By the same token, man has always had to face, deal with, and come to grips with the consequences of his decisions.

To the woman He said: “**I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception**; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire *shall be* for your husband, And he shall rule over you.” ¹⁷ Then to Adam He said, “Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’:
“**Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life.** ¹⁸ Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. ¹⁹ **In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground**, for out of it you were taken; for dust you *are*, and to dust you shall return.” **Genesis 3:16-19**

The Apostle Paul reminds us using the *Law of the Harvest . . .*

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked [He will not allow Himself to be ridiculed, nor treated with contempt *nor allow His precepts to be scornfully set aside*]; for whatever a man sows, *this and this only* is what he will reap. ⁸ For the one who sows to his flesh [his sinful capacity, his worldliness, his disgraceful impulses] will reap from the flesh ruin *and* destruction, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

Galatians 6:7-8 [AMP]

Beware of Satan's Tricks

- He's still one of the most crafty, alluring, shifty, convincing beings -- and beyond any doubt the most destructive being ever imagined!
- The contrasting voices when it's decision-making time – remember Paul's observation

For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. Romans 7:15

- He will tell you (perhaps through voices in your mind or through the words of associates), that God's way, will, and purpose or morally acceptable behavior is somehow not best for us.

I. First Thing to Do when Faced with a Decision is Seek God's Advice

Trust in *and* rely confidently on the LORD with all your heart and do not rely on your own insight *or* understanding. ⁶ In all your ways know *and* acknowledge *and* recognize Him, and He will make your paths straight *and* smooth [removing obstacles that block your way]. **Proverbs 3:5-6**

Do not move impulsively -- Consult God and allow Him to have a word with you and to have His way in your life.

So many have succumbed to high pressure sales pitches and have found themselves in dire straits spiritually and financially all because they did not take the time to have a little talk with the Lord.

- There is a way *which seems* right to a man *and* appears straight before him, but its end is the way of death. **Proverbs 14:12 [AMP]**

And Saul said to Samuel, "But I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. ²¹ **But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal."**

²² So Samuel said: "Has the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, *and* to heed than the fat of rams. **I Samuel 15:19-22**

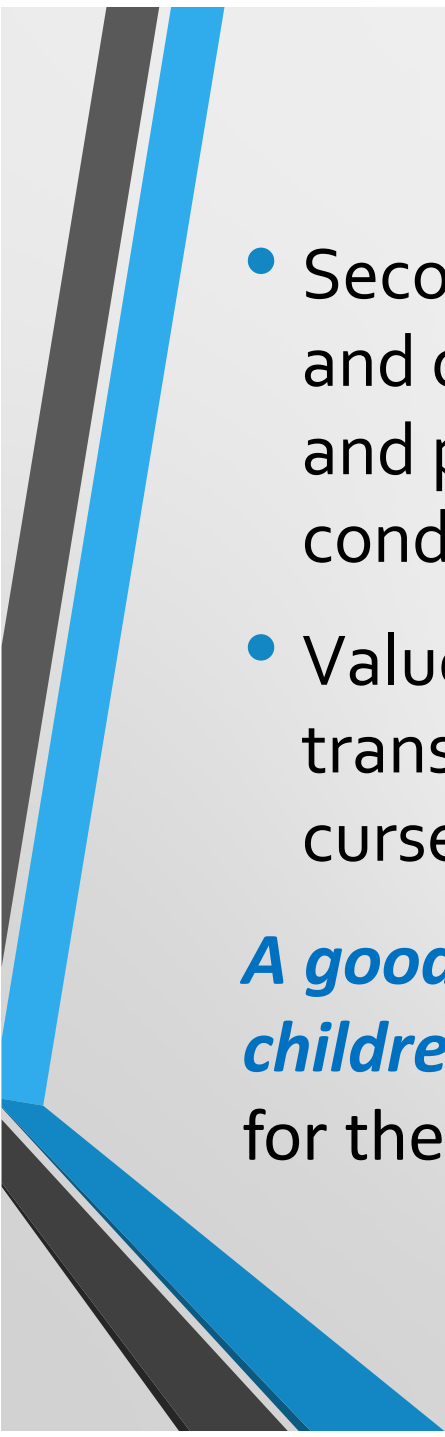
When God speaks to you – Listen to Him!

II. Our Decisions Can and Will Impact Future Generations

“You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness *of anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth; ⁵ you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God, **visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and**

fourth *generations* of those who hate Me,
Exodus 20:4-5 (see also Exodus 34:7, Numbers 14:18, Deuteronomy 5:9)

- Make no mistake and do not be confused, God will not sentence us to death because those before us went awry.
- However, as a parent and leader, my decisions will impact others, even those who have not been born yet.
- Parents decisions can impact current and future generations in at least two ways.
- First, decisions can either put them at an immediate and direct disadvantage or provide an imminent advantage (come up).
 - Parent A suffers from an addiction or has a vice that depletes resources and puts children in a state of lack and hardship, while parent B has no such addiction or vice and is dutiful with his resources. Same can be said with talents and time.

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- Second, we must be keenly aware that choices and decisions often have a bearing on the values and principles that mold character, shape conduct and define who one is.
 - Values, principles, habits, etc. tend to be transgenerational. Ever hear of generational curses?

A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, but the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous. Proverbs 13:22

The Quality of Our Life Rides on the Decisions / Choices We Make

I have found that when I yield to the will of God and remember His directives in making decisions and choices I live a more stress-free life, gain more lasting positive results, rest a lot easier, and have far fewer problems.

Many of life's circumstances are created by three basic choices: the disciplines you choose to keep, the people you choose to be with, and the laws you choose to obey. **Charles Millhuff**

“See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, ¹⁶ in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply . . . ¹⁹ I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore *choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;*** **Deuteronomy 30:15-16,19****

Lord's Invitation Extended to All

- **Be added to the Lord's body**

Hear the gospel (**Acts 15:7; I Corinthians 15:1-4**)

Believe (**Acts 15:7; Rom. 10:17**)

Repent (**Acts 2:38**)

Confess (**Acts 8:37; Rom.10:10**)

Be baptized (**Acts 2:38, 8:38**)

Lord's Invitation (cont'd)

- **Be reconciled unto the Lord** (1 John 1:8-9); or
- **Desire prayer** (James 5:16).