

Date: **14th May, 2017**

Series: **Choose Life**

Topic: **Making the Right Choices**

Text: **Deuteronomy 30:19**

FREE WILL is a gift endowed by the Almighty God to all men and perhaps the greatest of all human attributes:

“I call heaven and earth to witness this day against you that I have set before you life and death, the blessings and the curses; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live” - Deuteronomy 30:19 AMPC

This gift makes every one of us humans, capable of making choices and decisions that have short or long term impacts on our lives. And while it may not be possible to attach an accurate figure to how frequently choices are made, it has been suggested that there are as many choices made as there are seconds in a single day. In other words, from seeming auto decisions of sitting or standing during breakfast to complex situations, as many as eighty (80) thousand remote and major decisions could be made in the space of a day!

Such an understanding leads us to the realization that life is a product of choices, choices we make for ourselves or choices made for us by others. A good question to ponder at this point would be, “If my life so far is a product of choices made by others, am I going to remain disgruntled and whine forever or take a cue from Joseph who found himself in such situations?” Though sold into slavery by his blood brothers, he never lost faith but made key choices which eventually shaped his destiny and groomed him into the person he eventually became. Are you going to keep allowing the vicissitudes of life knock you about or take control of the sails of the ship that is your life?

Another thought to bear in mind is that your situation in life today did not occur by chance but as an aggregate of yesterday’s decisions and choices. Our choices determine our tomorrow; our decisions shape our destinies. It follows therefore that good decisions impact us positively and bad decisions could mar destinies. Having Jesus as Lord and Saviour increases your tendencies toward good decision-making.

Bad Decision Drivers

1. Ignorance. There’s nothing God can do when you refuse to be knowledgeable. In this day and age of information, ignorance cannot be an excuse anymore! Foolishness (which leads to bad decisions) abounds where ignorance is (Ecclesiastes 10:15).
2. Lust – the inability to delay gratification. Immediate gratifications lead to bad decisions because they make us emotional such that our hearts cannot let go (Refer to the stories of Esau in Genesis 25:29-34 and Gehazi in 2 Kings 5:20-27).

3. **Pride.** Pride will always engender bad decisions! Pride makes it impossible for a man to take instructions from God, his parents, and from the people God has placed over his (the man's) life. A good account of how pride can lead a man to make a bad decision is found in 1 Samuel Chapter 15 (where King Saul refused to heed to God's instruction to destroy everything in Amalek). The case of Lot in Genesis Chapters 13 and 19 was that of pride and lust – he was not able to delay gratification; instead of asking what God's will for his life was, he chose the luscious plains of Sodom and Gomorrah with the eyes of his flesh.
4. **Fear** (Read 2 Timothy 1:7). Fear of failure, death, negative outcome, etc., can make you stall in life and lead you into taking wrong decisions. You must trust God for help in dealing with fear and procrastination.

Even while we acknowledge God's leadership position in our lives daily (Romans 8:14), we also should remember that being led by God does not translate to a complete abandonment of our freewill: God leads while we make the decisions based on His leadings. Redemption does not absolve us from decision making - the capacity to make choices which primarily influence our lives is inherent and lies in our hand.

Let us now look at these three (3) ingredients of good decisions:

- 1. Have a clear VISION**

What can you see about your future? (Jeremiah 33:3, Proverbs 29:18). Vision helps us shape the decisions we make today. Unfortunately, many Christians cannot see into their future because their lines of vision are regularly impeded by trivialities - the Mary and Martha syndrome as seen in Luke 10:38-42.

Vision helps us to guide our choices, associations, thought, and where we visit (Hebrews 12:2). It should influence our appetites and desires just as Joseph's refusal to take Potiphar's wife up on her offer was inspired by his vision.

- 2. Review your VALUES**

What are your values? Have you identified your non-negotiables? Are you ready to make sacrifices to preserve them? Are you determined to take an unyielding stance on them in the face of compromise?

Our values dictate our choices and decisions. A person without values will live but cannot be said to be alive - if you have not already, make the wilful decision to be an individual of value today, even if it means avoiding certain people, places or businesses. Recognise that you are a God-driven individual whose values cannot be compromised even in the face of constant temptation; not like the Israelites who, because of their constant indecision, stretched a journey of 40 days into 40 years.

- 3. Use your FAITH**

What are you using your faith for? A great lesson can be learned from the account of the renowned biblical men who, with their expressions of faith and good decisions,

showcased the glory of God (Hebrews 11). Be deliberate in activating your faith through the processes of making good choices and watch your life assume greater meaning, just as Moses' parents saved his life by their demonstration of faith.

As you go through this new week, remember that your decisions are intricately linked to your destiny, hence, make faith-inspired good choices and decisions all day, every day! **CHOOSE WISELY, CHOOSE LIFE!**