

CHOICES 5.8.18

Choices either free us or ensnare us. Simplified, we either choose life and blessing, or death and curses.

In the book 'Just Do Something' by Kevin De Young - Professor Barry Schwartz explains we are overburdened with choice, from which breakfast cereal to complicating even the concepts of following God – so many choices adding confusion can actually end in limited or diminished life.

The choices we make affect our life. The choices others make affect/influence us too. There is potential to choose incorrectly but in that we have confidence that God is always working for good, for us and those around us, future. There may be a cost to pay, God is still working for good.

Adam and Eve – choice.

Joseph – others' choices: see Joseph's story and his perspective on it: Genesis 50:20; 45:1-8. Joseph could have blame-placed and grown bitter, but he made right choices along/within the journey and God worked major miracles.

As we walk through life, if we will work our choices through these two filters, we will see extraordinary things too.

1. Matthew 6:33
2. Galatians 2:20

Acts 1:8 – God empowers us to live selfless life making selfless choices.

Be assured God wants to bless: Deuteronomy 28:1-14 (bless: 1-8 and establish: 9-14). See also: Deuteronomy 30:11-20: our choices affect the generations to come.

We have looked at Joshua 6 – Joshua keen for those who had crossed over into the Promised Land not to make the same mistakes that kept them wondering and dying in the desert. The Promised Land also presented with huge challenges that required good choices. Joshua had sought God for how to take Jericho and was obedient to what was asked. Jericho was formidable and the people barbaric but because Joshua did what God had asked, favour came. God specifically commanded that no individual was to take any plunder. One poor choice by Achan ensnared him and his family.

Joshua 7:1-23. Please read. God had not brought them this far to bring them this far, but God was not able to go with them any further until this issue was dealt with.

Highlighted verses:

V1: 'devoted things' – there are things which are precious to God, that we must honour and place the same value upon: the Word of God, wives, children – these are God given and to be handled with care, as precious. (Bathsheba was a devoted thing for Uriah, but she wasn't for David to touch or handle).

V7: see at what happens when advice comes from natural sources and see Joshua fall back into earlier language.

You can screw up a \$20 note and it has the same value. Every single human being holds the same value in God's eyes. Consider how Jesus valued the widow's gift of 2 mites. A note from a grandchild can be cute to any other reader than the grandparent but will be kept and read over and over by the grandparent.

Achan's sin: in his mind it was justified, but not in God's. He was aware of the commandments and the specific command when he went into battle. See how sin develops. (James 1:14-16).

Joshua 7:21

1. 'When I **saw** ...' gazed (beyond a glance, considered – as David did upon Bathsheba; nothing wrong in seeing a woman – they are there, but the second glance is what takes your hand). Nothing wrong with the treasure itself but God had devoted it for other purposes. Achan may not have premeditated but he also hadn't quite consolidated his heart in this matter (even though he knew what God had said). We all have freewill; it is my choice to turn my head, to shut my eye, to handle things correctly. Job 31:1 Job made a covenant with his eyes not to look upon a girl – he made a clear statement and was absolutely committed not to take a second look.

2. '... I coveted ...' in the second look, these things delighted his eyes, and this justified his entitlement to them. Ai (the small city) was already theirs. God had said what he said for a reason and Achan had he have heeded that would have chosen life and blessing – coveting is a condition of the heart and the heart must be guarded. 1 John 2:15-17.
3. '... I took...' See Casting Crowns' 'Slow Fade' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QASREBVDsLk> Life does not need to be a slow fade. This was Achan's desire playing louder than God's commands; the devil did not make him do it; he knew God's will towards devoted things. A thought became an action – the choice is right there at any given time.

We don't need to walk around expecting defeat, but we must consolidate some things in our heart, choose some things deliberately:

- What I look at
- What is precious in God's sight
- Understanding the value of every soul
- Understanding the great value of every culture

We must

1. Look correctly,
2. Value correctly and
3. Handle correctly; we can't touch or take what isn't ours to handle.

This is choosing life. When we choose to accept Jesus as Saviour and Lord, He gives us a new start and the ability to leave the past behind – and then be blessed (life and blessing). One of the things we can't touch from that time on is our past – God paid the price to clear it – though there be consequences to pay, we can't touch what lies behind any longer; Jesus handled it correctly.

A glance is unavoidable, a gaze is a choice. If the heart has made a compact before the glance occurs, the heart and mind are guarded; where truth and integrity meet because what we fix our eyes upon is where we set our heart. Matthew 6:33, Galatians 2:20.

Hold course and hold fast to your integrity.