

THE DECISION IS YOURS #1

“The Power of Choice”

I. A New Series

A. Introduction

Tonight we begin a new teaching series on the subject, “The Decision is Yours”. We will take for our text a powerful pronouncement God spoke to His people in the Old Testament...

Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessing and curses. Now I call heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life so that you and your descendants might live!
Deuteronomy 30:19

A Dramatic Picture of the Power of Choice

- God gives Israel a choice between 2 very clear options: Life or Death; Blessing or Cursing
- Notice that whatever choice they make will be honored in heaven and on earth
- Notice the will of God is clear: God commands them to CHOOSE LIFE!
- And yet we know from what follows that most of them did not choose life and blessing.
- And so it continues today. Oh so many, even in the Church, do not realize that...

Our decisions determine our destiny.

There are literally 1000's of promises in the Bible but many of them are *conditional*; we must make a choice. The decisions we make today determine our tomorrow and our eternity.

B. Our Lives are Made Up of Continual Choices

1. **Psychology Today** magazine tells us we make about 35,000 choices every day; eliminating sleep time, that's about 2,000 choices an hour!

- a. Most of these are small of little importance
- b. But small are large, the number of choices we make is way up.

2. Sociologists agree that modern man is faced with more choices than his ancestors!

Take entertainment for an example:

- a. When I was young we had no TV; when we got one there were 3 channels.
- b. Today, there are over 127,000 TV channels in the world.
- c. The average American has access to 189 TV channels in their home; but mostly only watches about 16 of them.
- d. The Apple Store now offers over 2 million apps for your iPhone!

3. This new generation has more decisions to make than ever before; our teenagers are tempted with some very dangerous choices that weren't even an option when you were a teen.

4. And it's part of a bigger problem that very few saw coming: Americans are being confronted with so *many* choices that they are losing their ability to make good ones!

a. The late Peter Drucker was considered the leading business guru of the last generation and he *did* see the crisis coming: that this new age of technology is an unprecedented change in the human condition:

“For the first time, rapidly growing numbers of people have choices. For the first time, people will have to manage themselves; and society is totally unprepared for it.”
Peter Drucker

5. He was predicting that American society would not be prepared to deal with all the freedom to have so many choices because we have forgotten how to manage ourselves.

6. Americans have more freedom and more prosperity than any other nation on earth. The spiritual downside is that the more freedom and more prosperity bring you more options and more decisions to make.

7. This means it's going to take more maturity in your decision making if you really want to live for the Lord! Let me give you an example:

***Reinhard Bonnke's African crusades are attended by as many as a half-million;** most of whom WALK many miles to get there; and stand all day in the hot sun to hear the Gospel; the church in China is the fastest growing church in the world even though the common people are poor and Christians are persecuted

***Meanwhile, in America, church attendance is down across the board;** although people can drive to the meeting, sit in air conditioned buildings; fewer are making the decision to do so.

*Why? I suggest to you that it's because the 3rd world African nations don't have so many choices to make; the Gospel has less competition among those with fewer options to choose from!

***More Freedom + More Money = More Decisions to Make!** The more freedom you have, the more money you have, the more choices you have to make because you have so many options as to what you will do

*I believe this is why the Gospel often thrives in Africa and China but is on the decline in the more prosperous nations.

8. What we need today is a fresh word from God about the power of our choices and what the Bible says about...

II. The Dynamics of Decision Making

A. We Begin with a Foundational Truth

"The decisive element is the will, not the emotions."

Derek Prince

1. The Bible teaches us that decision-making is a function of the will; that we make choices with the will, not with the emotions.

a. The heart has a part; the emotions have a vote; but in the end, decisions are an act of our will.

2. I would like to demonstrate this from a passage in 103rd Psalm:

Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:

Psalm 103:1-2

3. It's important to notice here that David is speaking to *himself*; he is speaking to his SOUL out of his SPIRIT.

a. In his heart (or his “spirit”), David wants to bless the Lord; but he recognizes that there was a problem in his soul; the soul is where the decision is ultimately made; so he is commanding his soul to (choose to) bless the Lord!

4. To understand the dynamics of decision-making we need to understand the human nature, or how God made us.

B. The Trichotomy of Man

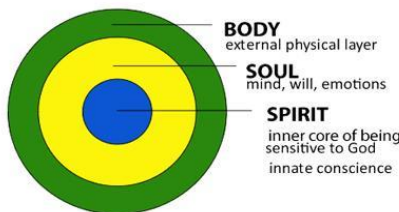
Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 5:23

1. God is a Trinity; His “Triune”; which means 3 in 1; it literally means one God in 3 Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

2. The Bible tells us that Man is made in the “image and likeness of God”; so it is logical that...

Man is a trichotomy: spirit, soul, and body.



Man has a physical external; an “outer layer”=the Body
Man has a Soul-the place where knowledge is stored; emotions are felt; decisions are made by the will

Then Man has a Spirit; an essence or core; the Spirit is the true center of man

3. **Each dimension of man has a specific function:**

- The spirit of man is God-aware
- The soul of man is Self-aware

- The body of man is World-aware

a. God has equipped me to connect with Creation:

- I connect with the world with my Body
- I connect with others with my Soul
- I connect with God with my Spirit

4. It may help you to remember that the Bible term most used for the spirit of man is the “heart” of man; when man fell away from God, his “heart” was darkened; his “spirit” was separated from God.

5. This is why God begins the work of salvation with the heart of man, the spirit of man; this is where we are “born again” and where we receive a new “heart”.

a. Once we are born again in our spirit, the mind now has the power to make a decision to choose life!

(Some say that salvation comes to the spirit when the soul chooses to follow Christ; I believe the other way round; that salvation is the choice of the soul that has come to salvation; but either way, the SOUL is where the DECISION is made!)

6. Notice that the soul of man is the “middle man”; the soul is decisive!

a. It is the soul where decisions take place; where choices are made; the soul that says, “I will” or “I will not”.

7. God designed us to be ruled by our spirit; with the soul and the body in subjection to our heart. When we are aligned with God:

- The spirit serves God
- The soul serves the spirit
- The body serves the soul

C. The Problem is in the Soul

1. When man is out of order, the spirit is not in charge; he is ruled by his body or his soul.

2. The soul is the seat of the emotions; and so many people are ruled by their emotions.

3. It's easy to divide the body and soul; we know the difference between the physical and the non-physical. But the only way to distinguish between our soul and our spirit is the Word of God.

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12 NASB

a. It is only by the Word of God that we can know the difference between spirit, soul and body ("joints and marrow").

b. The Word of God is the living sword that "pierces" into our innermost being and judges all our thoughts and intentions.

4. There is a famous passage in the 7th chapter of the Book of Romans where the Apostle Paul is describing a warfare going on within himself:

Excerpts from Romans 7:15-25 (NLT)

15 I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate. 18 I want to do what is right, but I can't. 19 I want to do what is good but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway.

a. Someone said Paul must have been a golfer!

5. But seriously; what a powerful statement of the human condition!

a. There is too much here to go deeper; but the bottom line is that there are 2 forces at work in Paul and in us:

For I delight in the law of God according to the *inward man*. But I see another law *in my members*, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is *in my members*.

Romans 7:22-23

b. Notice the conflict: the “inner man” is the spirit, that within us that loves God’s word; but that man is attacked from within himself; the “members” speaks of the flesh, including the un-renewed mind; and he feels a captive.

6. Finally, he cries out...

“Who will free me from this life dominated by sin and death? Thank God, the answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord!” (v.24-25)

7. It is Jesus Christ, who is the Word of God that can set us free; He alone has the power to set us in order; so that our spirit is commanding our will and our will is obedient and making right choices.

III. Conclusion

A. Review What We Have Said

1. God has given us decisions to make; He has set some very clear choices before us:

Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessing and curses. Now I call heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life so that you and your descendants might live!
Deuteronomy 30:19

- a. The decisions we make determine our present and our future.
- b. The blessings of God are available; but we must choose to lay hold of them.
- c. Our decisions not only affect us but also those who come after us!

2. Decisions are a function of the will not the emotions; our spirit may know what we should do; but we must command our soul to choose to do it.

Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.
2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:
Psalm 103:1-2

- a. David commands 2 decisions of his soul:
 - “Bless the Lord, soul, “all that is within” him to bless His name.

- “Bless the Lord O my soul, and **FORGET NOT all His benefits:**

- (1) Who forgives all your sins
- (2) Who heals all your diseases
- (3) Who redeems your life from destruction
- (4) Who crowns you with love and mercy
- (5) Who satisfies you with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagles

3. Notice that choosing to bless the Lord and to remember all His benefits is an act of the will; this is what it means to “choose life and blessing”.

“The decisive element is the will.”

Derek Prince

- a. Emotions don’t matter!

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