

June 25th, 2023

Ask More, Get Less: Week 4

Here's our Key Thought in our study so far... Your Decisions determine the Direction and Quality of your life!

The truth is, nobody PLANS to complicate their life with Bad Decisions, but far too many people DON'T plan NOT to!

The Conscience Question: Is there a TENSION that deserves my ATTENTION?

The Keystone of our Whole Series is based on this fundamental question that gets woven into every other question: What is the WISE thing to do?

Let's do a Psychological/Social Test: Why is it that people who've had too much alcohol to drink are generally inclined to make bad decisions?

One of the things alcohol does to the brain is it INCREASES NOR-EP-IN-PHRINE in our system, (which is a stimulant) thereby INCREASING Impulsiveness and DECREASING Inhibitions! Which lowers the sensitivity to potential consequences associated with decision making! It also temporarily impairs the activity in our prefrontal cortex, which is where we connect the dots in rational thinking!

Comedian Ron White (Blue Collar Tour/Jeff Foxworthy) accustomed to doing his whole act while drinking hard liquor, once said after being arrested for DUI, "I had the RIGHT to remain silent, but I didn't have the ABILITY to!"

Fortunately, I can't speak from experience on that matter, but the underlying truth is, drunk people don't necessarily or consciously ignore common sense, it just gets suppressed!

I've seen this more than a few times, now that I'm working with the Erie Police Department! We bring people in who are belligerent, mouthy, foul, aggressive, but once they sleep it off, most come out of the holding cell apologetic, quiet, and probably somewhat ashamed! Most of the Officers take all the abuse in stride because they'll say, "He's just drunk!"

The Bad News is, sober people are often guilty of CHOOSING to ignore the cues around us and the Internal pressure within us! In other words, we have less excuses for our poor decisions!

A famous family in the Old Testament gives us some valuable lessons in how to detect TENSIONS that should demand our ATTENTION.

Proverbs 4:1-7 (NIV)

Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction; pay attention and gain understanding. I give you sound learning, so do not forsake my teaching. For I too was a son to my father, still tender, and cherished by my mother. Then he taught me, and he said to me, "Take hold of my words with all your heart; keep my commands, and you will live. Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words or turn away from them. Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you. The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom.

Most Bible searches of Solomon are: Why didn't Solomon follow his own advice?

If we go back a few dozen years, we read the story of Solomon's father, David.

David becomes a refugee, but along the way picks up a ragtag bunch of soldiers that were looking for a leader.

1 Samuel 22:2 (NIV)

All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their commander. About four hundred men were with him.

1 Samuel 24 (NIV)

After Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, "David is in the Desert of En Gedi." So Saul took three thousand able young men from all of Israel and set out to look for David and his men near the Crag of the Wild Goats.

Connection #1: Years before, David tried to comfort Saul by playing music, and on three different occasions, Saul tried to kill him!

Why would God allow the next King to hang around the old king, knowing full well that Saul would try to kill him?

Because God was showing David there is a potential Saul in every one of us!

Back to the Cave: David's men can hardly contain themselves. The guy who's been hunting them down and chasing them all over the desert just walked in, unarmed, and all alone!

Connection #2: Don't ever confuse the Voice of Men with the Voice of God!

His men said, "This is the day the Lord spoke of when he said to you, 'I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish.'"

Let me take this a bit further. Not only were David's men for it, but if David would have walked out of the cave with Saul's severed head (because he was already anointed king), they could have done nothing but swear their allegiance to the new king!

But as David moves closer, something doesn't sit well in his Spirit. And rather than slitting Saul's throat, he just slices off the bottom of his royal robe.

Connection #3: Don't ever try to undo what God has done! Know your Role!

David could not have adequately predicted the outcome of that major offensive action, and that just so happens to be one of our biggest problems: We believe we can predict the outcome!

When we fail to slow down and deal with the tension, it usually leads to unnecessary disappointments.

One of the things that was stopping David was considering his ACTION against his LEGACY. If he wouldn't be crowned King, he would always be remembered as the guy who killed the King!

1 Samuel 24:5 (NIV)

Afterward, David was conscience-stricken for having cut off a corner of his robe.

Saul leaves the cave and is about to leave with his men when David emerges with the cut fabric from Saul's robe. He shouts to him...

1 Samuel 24:10,12 (NIV)

This day you have seen with your own eyes how the Lord delivered you into my hands in the cave. Some urged me to kill you, but I spared you; I said, 'I will not lay my hand on my lord, because he is the Lord's anointed... May the Lord judge between you and me.

Little did David know at the time, but God was lining up the Philistines to take care of Saul, so David's hands would not be bloodied by a rash decision.

Hard, thoughtful decisions leave an Imprint and a Legacy!