

Joshua: Walking by Faith, Growing in Grace

Decide

Joshua 24:14-15

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HDBC

I'm not a great chess player. I'm not even a good chess player. I know the pieces and how they can be moved. I know the object is to take your opponent's king. But I really don't know anything about the strategy involved in the game. Those who are good at it are able to anticipate the moves of the opponent and to think several moves ahead. Honestly, it requires too much mental work for me to consider it a **game**.

However, I do know that if you are going to play chess as with almost any game, there is a time when your opponent completes his move and says, **it's your turn**. You have to make a move. And that move will impact the way the rest of the game plays out. **At that point you have to live with your decision.**

Life is like that. It involves a series of decisions. According to Google's AI, an adult makes about 35,000 decisions each day. I'm not sure I buy that. Some research indicates that the number of **informed decisions** per day is about 122. Of course, most are not all that important. **What you eat for lunch, what you choose to wear, where you gas up your car.**

But there are decisions that are monumental. They matter. **A marriage partner, career choice, purchase of a home.** The people of Israel faced a decision greater than those. In fact it is the most important decision everyone in every generation has to make. That includes you and me. During his final speech, Joshua called them to make this decision.

He was a seasoned warrior, a veteran pilgrim, a proven leader. He left the slavery of Egypt, camped out in the desert for 40 years, then led the people over the Jordan River into battle with the inhabitants of a new land. He led the people to systematically drive out the inhabitants of the land and to get established. He was truly one of the great men of the Old Testament.

He was a man of faith, vision, conviction and resolve. He was one of the few men in scripture who seemed to really stay true. I know he made mistakes, but for the most part the testimony of his life is impeccable.

Now at the end of his life, **Joshua shares some parting words** for the people whom he loves and whom he has served. He offered a short summary of their past and then moved to a strong challenge that he wanted to leave with them. It was a statement about the future and the part that each one would play.

To put it mildly, he said to them, *It's Your Move. Choose well.*

READ Joshua 24:14-15 Three things . . .

1. There is a clear directive (14)

In verse 15 Joshua is actually going to use the word **choose**. Yet, even in verse 14 there is a choice to be made. It centers on **what each man, woman and child would decide about God**. Joshua makes clear what the right choice is. And that is to trust, obey and serve God. Yet, he acknowledges that each person must decide.

Joshua outlines the most pressing choice every man, woman and child faces. ***How will you respond to your Creator?***. This comes before all other things. The first priority is ***what will you do with God?*** Joshua makes it clear that there is only one right response. ***Will you trust Him, honor Him, love Him, and serve Him? Yes or No!***

In the next verse Joshua is going to mention another choice. But it will only come after you decide what you will do with God. You've got to make up your mind about God, first.

When choosing a spouse. Date around early in the process but then your get serious about one person. Zero in on that person and decide yes or no about him or her. You determine if this is the right person for you. If they are not, you move on. But you don't seriously date 3-4

persons, considering them all as a potential spouse until you decide on one. That would not be wise. You decide about the primary one first.

The directive is to make a firm commitment to God. It is a call to be all in. For them, it was decision time. What will you do with God, who has loved you, delivered you, provided for you, and has given you this land? Interestingly they were already believers. They had proven some allegiance to God. But there is still a need for a **recommitment**.

Rededication is a Biblical concept. It is helpful to renew our commitment to Christ from time to time, not to secure our salvation, but to keep our focus. Joshua is calling upon them to make a renewed commitment to God. To once more declare their trust in God. He spells out **three necessary components** of such a commitment to God.

1) Fear the Lord

This is not a fear where you cower away from someone. **Not like a child cowers away from an abusive parent.** This is a reverential fear. An awe, a wonder, a desire to please and not disappoint.

Awareness that you are constantly in the presence of a holy and awesome God who sees everything you do and knows all about you. Knowing that He is with you, watching and hearing.

Encourages right behavior. Sometimes fear leads you to do the right thing. **When you see a police officer parked on the side of the road it can cause you to fear getting a ticket and motivate you.**

2) Serve the Lord

If you have chosen to join the kingdom team, you are expected to serve. You are expected to be involved, not just sit on sidelines.

Sincerity – transparent. Be the same with everyone. No hidden agenda. For His glory and not for our own benefit.

Truth literally refers to faithfulness. In other words our service is to be consistent and dependable. We are not to vacillate in and out of service to the Lord. **Are you serving Him? Or are you a spectator? Get off the bench and into the game. It's your move!**

3) Put away other gods

Finally, if you choose God, you must put away all other Gods. You cannot share your allegiance to the true God with other gods. He calls for us to have the kind of relationship that is exclusive. Think of it like this. **You can have as many friends as you would like, but you can only have one spouse.** You don't make a vow to a friend that you are forsaking all others, but you do for your spouse. God will never be satisfied to simply be one of many.

1. There is a clear directive

2. There is a meaningless choice (15a)

But what if you choose to not trust and serve God? This secondary choice is only offered to those who have said **no to God**. If you reject the living God, the only true God, then you must decide which false god you will serve. We all serve someone or something. Joshua offers a couple of options which are interesting.

The gods of their fathers. (more conservative) **The gods of the Amorites.** (more progressive) Joshua's point is clear. At that point **it really doesn't matter**. Once you have rejected God, any other god that you might choose will be meaningless and vain. Just pick one. **Matthew Henry has written this: Take your pick from these dunghill deities.**

If you reject the one true God, just pick any old god. Worship whatever you want. **Self, Money, Work, Sports, Relationships, Pleasure, Entertainment, Friends.** Each one will be equally disappointing. None can satisfy your heart. **You were made to be in a relationship with your creator.** Nothing else will do.

1. There is a clear directive
2. There is a meaningless choice

3. **There is a bold statement (15b)**

Joshua then declares the choice he has made.

As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

1) **It's a clear statement**

I like the clarity of that statement.

It is not complicated. This was not a partial commitment. There is **no if in this statement**. A simple statement of commitment and intent.

2) **It's a bold statement**

I like the boldness of that statement.

Regardless of what others might choose, he would follow God. He did not wait to test the winds of public opinion. He made a decision. He did not look around to see what others were doing. He stepped out and declared his faith & allegiance even if he was the only one.

3) **It's a leadership statement**

I like the inclusiveness of this statement.

Joshua was not only speaking for himself but for his family. He was the leader of his family and determined to lead them in the right way. Dads and Moms, you are leading your family. The question is where are you taking them?

Dads, I want to challenge you to make that statement & commitment. Make it for yourself and your family. Some may think they cannot make that decision for their wives and children. You not only can but you should. Some wives and children are waiting for you dads to do so. Hoping and silently pleading for you to do so.

Ultimately it comes down to **who will be the Lord of your life**. It begins with your decision about the one true God. What will you do with Him.

If you have never made a conscious decision to trust Jesus, I invite you to do so today. ***Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.***

Maybe you were saved years ago, but like the Israelites under Joshua, it is time for a rededication, recommitment, reaffirmation of your faith and commitment to God. Will you make it today?

19th century Scottish theologian, P.T. Forsyth wrote:

The first duty of every soul is to find not its freedom but its Master.

He's not wrong. You can serve any master you want.

But only one is gracious, benevolent, merciful, loving and kind. And only one has the power and desire to give you abundant life both now in forever. And we know Him through His Son, Jesus.