

Decisions that Glorify God

Colossians 3:11-17 NLT Most things have been decided for you. Being born, where and when, to whom – their DNA both physical and spiritual, their economics, and their extended family. In the midst of this test, we make decisions. Everyone in this room can make decisions that glorify God.

- I. Choose Christ over self.
 - a. Storytelling at the family reunion. They gave me the parameters, but I alone chose the storyline.
 - b. God has only given the parameters – He allows in His sovereign choice to allow us to choose our own story line. We can either be an inspiring story of redemption or a cautionary story of tragedy.
 - c. Being an inspiring redemption story.
 - i. 3:11 NLT “In this new life, it doesn’t matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile,^[a] circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized,^[b] slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us.” *Why doesn’t it matter? Because we are not defined by our past but by our future. 2Cor. 5:17 NIV “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:^[a] The old has gone, the new is here!” Only the enemy focuses on your past and tries to get you to agree on a ceiling short of your destiny.
 - ii. 3:2-4 NIV “Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ, who is your^[a] life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.” Your story is just beginning down here because it spans for all eternity. These light, momentary afflictions cannot be compared to the weight of glory that’s coming!! Paul writes this from prison.
 - d. Two types of tragedies.
 - i. The self-made person. Mark 8:36 NIV “What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?” *Getting to the top and realizing that you valued the wrong thing.
 - ii. The victim. The one talent person buries what they have because they know the master to be harsh. I have an excuse because I am oppressed – others have it easier or have been given more so I will bury my life in excuses. Those in power are evil so God is the worst of all. *We do not choose to be victimized, but we do choose to be victims. Matthew 25:30 NIV “And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”
 - e. It will be your choice, not His. Romans 2:4-5 NIV “Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God’s kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? But

because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed." We can't choose Him without His drawing us – in His kindness He came from heaven, lived a perfect life as a human, and then offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for our sin – then He actively knocks on our door. He chooses those who open.

i. Regis Philbin – is that your final answer – sometimes God gives people over in this life and sometimes it seems they have right until the point of death.

ii. My observation – people don't often say "no" directly to God, they just don't say "yes". Then their life is built around "no" so it becomes harder and harder to say "yes." My advice – say yes early and often!!!

II. Choose radical love over offense.

a. Because we're His chosen, holy, and beloved people we can clothe ourselves with radical love. He's calling us to have tough skin and a tender heart. *Rob Reimer in Soul Care – why foundations are so important and why so much time is spent on them. My value is determined by the cross so I don't need other people to give me my value. I am free to love them regardless of how they treat me. John 8:31-32 Holding on to the truth until it frees you.

b. Choosing to forgive instead of harden. I received Alice's permission to tell this story.

III. Choose to be filled with peace instead of anxiety.

a. Colossians 3:15 NIV "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful." What do you mean "let the peace of Christ rule"? It sounds so easy! It actually is. The peace of Christ is available to us right now!

i. Because He won it for us. Isaiah 53:5 NIV "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed." Jesus died so that you and I would not only be forgiven, but could have His peace.

ii. John 14:27 NIV "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." *It sure sounds like we are the ones who choose!

iii. John 16:33 NIV "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." *One is conditional and the other is guaranteed.

- b. Where are we supposed to go? Which spouse, which job, which career, which car, which house, or aren't we supposed to buy? Which church etc.
 - i. Be filled with the word of Christ and with the Spirit of Christ and then do whatever you want for His glory.
 - ii. This is remarkably close to John 15:7 NIV "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you." *It's about union with Him.
- c. A shortcut to His peace – thanksgiving. Three times in three verses – why is that?
 - i. The center of the gospel is God's grace or His generosity, so the center of our response is simply to be thankful and to live grateful lives.
 - ii. Philippians 4:6-7 NIV "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Hold on to this truth and pray it as many times a day as you too – it's a change of focus. Anxiety is the result of focusing on our ability to make things right; peace is the result of focusing on God's ability to make things right in His time.
 - iii. His time is not our time so we have to trust in His love and wisdom. 1Peter 5:6-7 "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. ⁷Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." NIV Waiting for His timing. His love casts out all fear – humility chooses to let God be God!