

THE BIBLE VIEW

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Theme: Decisions

Decisions and Their Cost

Bill Brinkworth

What makes the difference between a strong Christian and a weak one? Much of the time, it is a Christian making the right decisions, sticking with convictions, and, as a result, growing spiritually.

The pastor of a church usually made the right decision in his life. He had to make the right choice of going to church, attending Sunday school, not working on Wednesday night so he could attend services, reading his Bible, and daily praying. After showing himself faithful with what God wanted him to do, God knew He could trust the man with further tasks.

Somewhere in that man's life, God spoke to him about full-time service and serving the Lord. The man not only heard His call, but obeyed the summons and sacrificed whatever it took to please the Lord. He, too, may have been tempted financially to work another job rather than trust God with what little he earned, so he would be available to preach and pastor. The right decisions were made.

One of the most spiritual people you know most likely also came to similar decisions in their life and chose the right, godly direction. Few wake up one morning and say, "I will be spiritual today from now on," and it instantly happens. One's faith and obedience to God grows as testings strengthen that person.

Most likely, the person had a choice of prosperity and a tempting opportunity, but chose the direction of serving and living for God. No matter the cost or how their life would deviate from their desires, they made the right choice that they would not regret.

Perhaps the one seeking to serve the Lord faced medical trials where he put his faith in God above physical limitations. Maybe ridicule of family or friends about his faithfulness to the things of God was an obstacle that had to be battled.

However, the right decisions were made, showing the Lord that He was more important to what this temporary world offered. Faith and obedience to God grew as the right choices were made through each trial and tribulation that was faced.

Sunday school teachers had to make the right decisions. Sometime in their lives, the burden of teaching others became so important to them that the service to God as a teacher was more valuable than their own free time. Their teaching ministry became more precious to them than their attending a football game during their study hours. It became more precious to them than the money they had to give up to buy study material or treats for their class. Because of paying

the right price their decision required, they were entrusted to be in the position they are today to be a blessing for the cause of Christ.

The faithful members of a church also made the right decisions. They could have easily missed church, stayed home, and watched television. However, the hearing of the Word of God and their edification in the things of God became more essential than other pleasures.

No one would have missed the church attendees if they had gone to another church because of hurt feelings. Still, the urgency God gave them to join, take part, and attend His local assembly of believers was so needful to them that they made the right decisions not to miss services.

On and on the list could go of people who did without or did what was not convenient for them to do to please and obey God. Obedience was most important to them. Unfortunately, they are the minority in the body of Christ. Too many do not have their priorities the same as the above examples. Something in their lives became more important than God and obedience to Him.

Perhaps it was the first step after they were saved that was not crucial to them. The young Christian also received the heart-tug to be baptized, start praying, or daily read their Bible, but something was more important to them than obedience.

Maybe the fear of what others would think if they became “religious” scared them away from obedience to the Lord. Possibly, they may have chosen not to sacrifice driving to church to hear the Gospel because an extra hour of sleep was more important to them. They had the same amount of time as those previously described who obeyed and live for God. However, they hoarded that time for themselves and decided not to make God a priority in their life.

Some may have started out making the right spiritual decisions. They may have been convicted about something God wanted them to change or do, but chose not to. Their wrong decision to not obey the leadership of God was a blunt “No” in God’s ears. That refusal cost them further help from God. What would be the sense of the Lord telling them other things to do if they were not doing what the Lord had already shown them to do? Because of that wrong decision, the rest of their lives may be spent far from God, with only their self-interests being served and not God’s.

Eventually, they may find themselves far away from hearing the whisper of God’s calling in their lives. They may still attend church, but the preacher’s words do nothing to stir them anymore. Their hardened hearts make them “used-to-be’s” or “once-I-was-gonna’s,” and now they sit and do not serve. They had the same opportunities to obey and serve as did others, but they chose the temporal rather than that which would please God and allow Him to work in their lives. They, unfortunately, made the wrong decisions.

If you have to sadly admit you have made the wrong decisions in the past, it may not be too late to make the correct choice. God is a second, third, or even a hundred chance God. Just the fact that you have a conviction about making wrong choices is a light showing that your heart is not completely hardened — yet. There may still be an opportunity to make the right choices and serve God today. Doing it tomorrow will be the wrong decision. Saying “Yes” to God’s commandment that rings in your heart will be the right one. Decide and obey now!

“Obedience to God is the most infallible evidence of sincere and supreme love to Him.” — Emmons

Spurgeon's Right Decision

Good News Broadcaster

Years before the death of Spurgeon, an American lecture bureau tried to engage him to come to America and deliver fifty lectures in all the large cities of the country. As compensation, the bureau offered to pay all of Mr. Spurgeon's costs and the expenses of his wife and his private secretary to come with him until they returned. In addition, they would pay \$1,000 per night for each of his fifty lectures.

Mr. Spurgeon promptly declined this tempting offer to make \$50,000 in fifty days, saying, "I can do better. I will stay in London and try to save fifty souls." No wonder he succeeded so marvelously in winning souls! No wonder that at his death, over 12,000 converts rose to bless his memory and thank God that Spurgeon ever lived!

"If you don't walk with God, you're walking in the wrong direction."

Nothing Less Than the Best

Sunday School Times

Before the 1939-45 war, a school for the children of "untouchables" in India received a shipment of Christmas presents from English children each year. Each girl received a doll, "whose clothes took off and on," and each boy received a toy.

One year, Doctor Sahib from a nearby mission hospital came to distribute the presents. He told the children about a village not far away, where the children had never heard of Jesus or Christmas and suggested that they might each give one of their old toys to be taken to those children.

They readily agreed, and he came the following Sunday to receive them. The boys and girls filed past him and handed a doll or a toy each. It was the new presents that they gave. When asked why, a girl said, "Think what Jesus gave for us, and what He has done for us. Could we give Him less than our best?"

At His Mercy

Heart and Life Bulletin

George Atley, a young Englishman with the heart of a hero, was engaged in the Central African Mission. A party of natives attacked him. He had with him a Winchester repeating rifle with ten loaded bullets in the chamber. He could have killed them all. The party was entirely at his mercy.

Calmly and quickly, the missionary summed up the situation. He concluded killing them would do the mission more harm than if he allowed them to take his life. So, like a lamb to the slaughter, he did not fight back. When his body was found in the stream, his rifle was also found with its ten rounds still loaded. Soul future destinies were more important than his own life.

"... and if we obey God, we must disobey ourselves ..." — *Herman Melville*

How Livingston Took a Criticism

Dr. Peloubet

Misjudged by a fellow missionary, Dr. Livingstone gave up his house and garden at Mabosta with all the toil and money they had cost him. He did so rather than have any scandal before the heathen and began in a new place, building a new house, school building, and gathering the people around him.

His colleague was so struck with his generosity that he said had he known Livingston's intention, he would never have spoken a word against him. Parting with his garden cost him a great pang. "I like a garden," he wrote, "but Paradise will make amends for all our privations here."

Jesus Christ sacrificed also. He gave His life on the cross so that we could live eternally.