

DECISIONS

We are constantly faced with the task of making decisions, the outcome of which may affect our quality of life here, and determine our eternal destiny "over there". Decisions, which have to do with right and wrong, are of great importance.

We cannot be free from the responsibility of decision-making. The following are a few guidelines, which may be of help to you in your decision-making.

1. **Does the Bible specifically mention this thing? If so, is it condemned or condoned?** Two examples of sins specifically forbidden would be (1) sexual relations outside of marriage (Heb. 13:4) and (2) lying (Col. 3:9; Rev. 21:8).

2. **Does this fit within the framework of the Bible's perfect principles?** For instance, one of the more basic principles of the Bible teaches that man is to work for what he has (Gen. 3:19; 2 Thess. 3:10). One who expects to live off the wealth of others, or receive "something for nothing", would be in violation of this principle.

3. **Will this harm my body?** According to inspiration, we are not our own, we are the Lord's (I Cor. 6:19-20; Rom. 14:7-8).

4. **Will this help (or hurt) my Christian influence?** In all that we do or say, we must be "an example of the believers" (I Tim. 4:12; Phil. 2:14; Matt. 5:15).

5. **Will it strengthen (or weaken) my fellow Christians?** "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Rom. 14:19).

6. **Will this be injurious to anyone's health or reputation?** Paul tells us that "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor" (Rom. 13:10).

7. **Are my motives pure?** In Christianity, not only are actions important, but the motives behind the actions are important as well (I Cor. 3:1-3; Gal. 5:26; Matt. 6:1-18).

8. **Ten years from now will I look back on having done this with sorrow or rejoicing?** "The memory of the just is blessed" (Prov. 10:7).

9. **WHAT WOULD CHRIST DO?** This provides the acid test. The mind of Christ is to be our mind (Phil. 2:5); He is to be our example in all things (I Cor. 11:1; I Pet. 2:21).

BUSY WITH THE WRONG THINGS

In the twentieth chapter of the book of First Kings, we read of the account where God delivered the Syrians into the hand of king Ahab of Israel. When Benhadad, the king of Syria saw that he had been defeated, he went to king Ahab to seek life for himself. Ahab made a covenant with him and sent him away. God was displeased that Ahab had spared he whom God had placed in his hands and had a prophet stand beside the road, disguised as one who had been wounded in battle. He called to the king with a story of how a prisoner had been put in his custody with a sentence of death if he allowed him to get away. He then said, "And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone. And the king of Israel said unto him, So shall thy judgment be; thyself hast decided it" (I Kings 20:40).

There is a great lesson in the above story for every child of God. Though the story was somewhat a parable, the truth illustrated cannot be ignored. We, as Christians have been put in trust with doing the work of the Lord. In fact, the commandments of God tell us that to fail in this trust is will result in death (Rom. 6:23). Though many may well not realize the importance of the job that has been give us and therefore fail to put forth much effort, it would seem that another great cause of failure on our part can be seen in the prophets words. He said, "thy servant was busy here and there". Busy, but busy doing the wrong things.

We would certainly not want anyone to misunderstand, thinking that we advocate Christians to forsake their responsibilities to provide for their material needs and those of their family, but there is far too much emphasis put on "things" in our society. Admittedly, no society previous to ours has had available as many luxuries, electronic devises and prosperity as we enjoy. However, it may be that we need to let a few of the "things" the Jones's have stay on the shelf, for if we are too busy making available all the newest and the best of these "things" to get the job done that has been assigned to us by the captain of our salvation (Heb. 2:10), we will end as king Ahab said, "So shall thy judgment be; thyself hast decided it". In the explanation of the parable of the soils, Jesus said, "And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection" (Luke 8:14). Beware of being too busy to do God's will!

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