

Voices & Choices: Life Choices

We live in a world of advertisements that attempt to persuade us to choose (purchase) a world of products. Each day people are offered billions of products to choose and they end up making billions of purchases/choices. Even at lunch in the cafeteria, you, have many many choices. But beyond choosing what to buy, we face 100s of choices each day: when to get up, what to eat, what to wear, what to do after school, what game to play, what show to watch, who to hang out with, who to talk to, what to say, what not to say, etc. These choices may seem small & inconsequential & many of them are. Of course there's bigger choices in life that you don't actively make every day or at this stage of middle/ high school: where to go to college, what to study, what career path to follow, where to live, who to marry, etc. Life is full of small & big choices.

You might think that the choices of small & little things is not really important & that these small choices will have no impact on your life. But the truth is that the seemingly small things can impact the big things. In fact, small, everyday choices are like training grounds for bigger choices. If you choose well on the small things, you're more likely to choose well on the big things. And of course the opposite is true to. (Twinky's vs. Navy seal story). Also, if you make good, wise, godly, brave, life-honoring decisions in the small things, you'll be much more inclined to make those kind of choices in the bigger things. Making good, wise, godly, brave & life-honoring choices will make a huge impact in your life in in the lives of those around you. Again, the exact opposite is true.

A great example of this is a woman in the Bible who had a decision to make. She was a Hebrew (Jewish) slave in ancient Egypt during the time of the Pharaohs, ruthless kings who ruled with absolute authority. The Hebrews, God's chosen people, had come into Egypt about 400 years earlier under the leadership of Hebrew official Joseph. His people were welcomed & became prosperous. After many generations, the Egyptians forgot about Joseph. They began to see the Hebrews as a threat, since the Hebrews were multiplying rapidly. The Egyptians decided to enslave the entire Hebrew population. But the Hebrews kept multiplying. Around 1500BC, the Pharaoh decreed that all male babies born to Hebrew women should be killed by throwing them into the Nile River. Around that time, one of the Hebrew women had a baby boy. She could save her life by following the Egyptian law & giving up her baby boy to be killed. Saving herself would have been understandable, since self-preservation is one of the strongest instincts. But she chose to do the good, wise, godly, brave life-honoring thing; she hid the baby from the Egyptians. For 3 months she was successful. But the word got around that she was harboring the boy. Again, the woman had to make a choice: give him up & live, or do something else & risk death. She decided to place the baby in a specially-prepared, tar-covered basket & placed him in the edge of the river where the king's daughter bathed each day, hoping that she'd take the child & raise him safely. The mother did all this & the baby was soon discovered by the king's daughter. She indeed took the child & raised him in the king's house. The child was adopted into the king's family. This child, whose name was Moses, would one day grow up & lead the entire Hebrew nation out of slavery in Egypt & to the edge of the Promised Land, Israel. Through Moses, God's people were saved. But without the brave, good, godly & life-honoring choices of his mother, Moses would have died as a baby.

We don't know much about Moses mother, but we know this: she was a human being just like us. She had the opportunity to make good, wise, godly, brave, life-honoring choices or bad, foolish, evil, cowardly, life-cursing choices, just like we have. We don't know much about her, but we can surmise that from the brave & bold decision to hide Baby Moses (which risked her own life & the lives of her entire family), the young woman more than likely made wise, good, godly brave & life-honoring decision in the little things too. Because she was good, wise, godly, brave & life-honoring in small decisions, it helped her to be good, wise, godly, brave & life-honoring in the big decisions. And we can thank her for the decision to save Baby Moses, because through his leading, all 12 tribes of Israel survived in freedom. The Tribe of Judah survived & about 1400 years later another young mother, Mary, came from that tribe. Moses' mother's brave choices led us to Mary, who gave birth to Jesus... **Choices matter.**

So is it just some story from 2400 years ago that has no bearing or relevance on life today? Or can we learn a lot from Moses' mom? I think it's the latter. No one can see into the future, no one knows what tomorrow will bring, let alone what your children will do. But we can impact the future by our daily choices. Making good, wise, godly, brave & life-honoring choices in the small things affects the big things later. Something as simple as choosing who to hang out with can have a big impact on your life: *Show me see your friends & I'll show you your future*

Good, wise, godly, brave & life-honoring choices have an impact. You're all here tonight because your parents choose to do the right, moral & godly & life-honoring thing: they chose to bring you into this world. They could have said, "Kill the baby." But they didn't; they did the right thing.

God's Word offers great direction on life's choices: **Mt 7:12a**; **Phil 2:3-4**. Love people and treat them the way you'd want to be treated. Don't be selfish, but help those around you. Of course, this is exactly what Jesus did when He gave his life for us (**Mk 10:24** TLB). When making decisions, ask yourself "Will this decision cause trouble? Will it hurt others? Does this choice honor God or does it go against His Ways? Does this choice preserve life or does it bring destruction & death?" This isn't a dress rehearsal for real life; your life is now. Your choices impact life now & later. Sometimes the choices are hard & go against popular trends. But right is right, whether it's hard or not. So where do you want you choices to lead you: to life or to death? The choice is totally up to you.

BIBLE VERSES

Mt 7:12a (CEV) *Jesus said, "Treat others as you want them to treat you."*

Phil 2:3-4 (NCV) **When you do things, do not let selfishness or pride be your guide. Instead, be humble and give more honor to others than to yourselves. Do not be interested only in your own life, but be interested in the lives of others.**

Mk 10:24 (TLB) *Jesus said, "For even I, the Messiah, am not here to be served, but to help others & to give my life as a ransom for many"*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Every day we are faced with 100s or 1000s of choices. Name some basic daily choices & what guides you in making them.
2. Dan said the everyday, small choices are training grounds for life's bigger choices. Is he right or wrong? Explain your answer.
3. Read Mt 7:12a & Phil 2:3-4. How can we tell if a choice is good, wise, godly, brave & life-honoring or the opposite?
- 4A. Let's list some good, wise, godly, brave & life-honoring choices & some bad, foolish, evil, cowardly, life-cursing choices.
- 4B. Have you ever made any choices (either good or bad) that impacted your life? Tell us what happened.
5. In ancient Egypt, Hebrew women like Moses' mother faced brutal choices: save yourself or risk your life to save your baby boy.
 - A.) What would you have done if you were in her situation?
 - B.) How does Moses' mother's story relate to the modern life-&-death choice of abortion?
6. Read Mk 10:24. A.) How can Jesus show us how to make life's best choices? B.) How can Jesus help us in making good life choices?
7. Jesus chose to sacrifice himself to save you from sin, death & hell. Choosing Jesus is the *single best choice* in life. Will you chose Him?