

Choices Of Life

Joshua 24:15-18 - NIV

¹⁵ But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. **But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.**"

¹⁶ Then the people answered, "Far be it from us to forsake the LORD to serve other gods!

¹⁷ It was the LORD our God himself who brought us and our parents up out of Egypt, from that land of slavery, and performed those great signs before our eyes. He protected us on our entire journey and among all the nations through which we traveled.

¹⁸ And the LORD drove out before us all the nations, including the Amorites, who lived in the land. We too will serve the LORD, because he is our God."

LIFE IS MADE UP OF CHOICES

Life is made up of choices.

Everything you do in life is the result of some **choice that was made.**

- **Your being here** in service today is the result of a choice.
- **What you are wearing** today was a choice you made.
- **The place you are sitting** is a place you chose to sit.
- **Your spouse, or lack of a spouse,** is a choice that you made.
 - **All of life is made up of choices.**

Your life today is *affected by choices you made yesterday*; and **your life tomorrow** will be affected by the choices you made today.

In his book, **The Life God Blesses**, Gordon MacDonald **illustrates how one's choices affect one's future.**

Using first a parable and then a true story, MacDonald ***effectively illustrates the importance of building a life with storms in mind.***

- **In the Autumn of 1992**, Michael Plant, a popular American yachtsman, set sail for France on his state-of-the-art sailboat, *The Coyote*.

- Every aspect of his equipment was the epitome of modern sailing lore.
- Additionally, Plant had purchased a brand-new 406-megahertz emergency position-indicating radio beacon (EPIRB), which was capable of transmitting a message to a satellite in the event of difficulties.
- When Plant set sail, he had everything – the best of expertise, experience, and equipment – and he and his friends were confident that absolutely *nothing* could go wrong.
- But something did go wrong...eleven days into the voyage, radio contact with Michael Plant was lost.
- Initially, the radio silence raised little alarm, because it was known that there were violent storms on the track of Plant's course, and everyone assumed that he was too preoccupied battling the weather to establish contact with his home base.
- However, after several days of radio silence, the confidence of family and friends waned and was replaced by growing apprehension.
- A search was launched; and as airline pilots and ships came into the general area of Plant's course, they were on alert for any emergency signals from Plant's EPIRB, but days passed with no signals or sightings; and it was discovered later that Mr. Plant never even registered his EPIRB signal with the Coast Guard.
- And then the news that no one had ever expected was received – *The Coyote* was found, floating upside down, by the crew of a freighter 450 miles northwest of the Azores Islands, with no sign of Plant.
- **Everyone in the sailing world** must have been surprised that, when the *Coyote* was found, it was upside down in the water.
- ***Sailboats, it is said, do not capsize...normally.***
- They are built to take the most vigorous pounding a sea can offer.
- Sailors allege that a sailboat is the most natural of all sailing vessels, and it will always right itself even if a wind or wave were to momentarily push it over on its side or even upside down.
- **The answer** to why Michael Plant's sailboat was discovered floating upside down in the Atlantic Ocean would soon become clear.
- You see, in order for a sailboat to maintain a steady course, and **in order for it not to capsize** but to harness the tremendous power of the wind, ***there must be more weight below the waterline than there is above it.***

- When the Coyote was built, an **8,000-pound** (4-ton) weight was bolted to the keel for this very reason; however, when the Coyote was found floating upside down, the 4-ton weight was simply missing.
- Whenever and however that happened, the boat's stability was compromised.
- The first wave or wind of any magnitude became the probable deathblow.
- And when it came, it may have happened so fast that Michael Plant had no time to send any kind of signal.
 - **No weight below** the waterline to ensure stability.
 - **No emergency Radio** in operational condition.
 - **No time** to take counter-measures.
 - **The result?** A very capable, experienced, and much admired man lost at sea.

Listen:

- **When storms happen**, we learn more about what's below the waterline of our own existence than we could have learned in any other way.
- **"Sub-waterline issues"** seem so unimportant when the seas are calm and the winds are favorable.
- **So it's only when the storms hit and something catastrophic happens that we are likely to ask a different set of questions.**
 - **Why wasn't** the weight better distributed?
 - **What happened** to that keel?
 - **Where did** the boat's designer or the boat's builders make their mistakes?
 - **Why wasn't** the radio operational and properly registered?
 - **Why would** an experienced person sail into a potentially stressful situation for which **they was not** optimally prepared?

To be sure, **life can be understood backward** but ***it must be lived forward***.

To be successful in dealing with **the storms** of life that will **certainly arise**

- One must **plan ahead**...
- You need to deal with the **"sub-waterline issues"**
- ***Those things beneath the surface***, in the hidden crevasses of your heart and mind - ***long before the wind begins to blow.***

If you **prepare NOW for the future storms** that will surely arise, you will be able to withstand the storm.

To do that, **you must anchor your soul** to the **power** and **stability** and **wisdom** of **Jesus Christ**.

THE AFFECTS OF OUR CHOICES

Life Is Like A Tube of Toothpaste

Anyone that is familiar with **Forrest Gump** recalls that his mother told him that ***Life is like a box of chocolates.***

Well, I propose to you, instead, that ***life is like a tube of toothpaste.***

A **brand new tube of toothpaste** is full and smooth – **it's never flat and wrinkled** when you bring it home from the store.

Wouldn't you agree that ***life is much like a tube of toothpaste?***

When a person is born –

- they are **full of promise** and ***their conscience*** is **clean and smooth**.
- We are all **fresh and new**.
- We are **full of potential** and **possibilities**.
- We are full of **something beneficial** – **something good** – ***to give to a world that waits to welcome us.***

Life comes with no wrinkles; and through much of **our youth**, **we remain smooth and full**.

We are full of **ideas**, **feelings**, and **energy**.

But as life goes on, just **like a new tube** of toothpaste, ***if you are going to be worth anything*** –

- You will have to **make choices** that will **bring out of you what's on the inside...**
- **These choices affect you spiritually, mentally, and even physically.**

[HOLDING UP A TUBE OF TOOTHPASTE]:

- Imagine that this tube of toothpaste is your life, and **every time you make a decision** – good or bad – ***a little of you is squeezed out.***
 - Some choices are small.
 - Some decisions are big.
 - But **ALL of them have an emptying affect!**

[ILLUSTRATE WITH PEOPLE AND THEIR TUBE OF TOOTHPASTE]:

- **Squeeze** out this toothpaste as though ***it were decisions*** you were making in life – ***good or bad, big or small.***
- Make **several piles of toothpaste** over the paper plate – these different piles of toothpaste will **represent the different choices that you are making.**
- Do only as much as you want, and **YOU determine** whether they are good or bad, big or small.

[AFTERWARDS]:

- **Now...imagine** that **ALL of these choices** you made were ***BAD choices.***
- **What you want to do** is to **try getting the toothpaste back into the tube.**

NOTE – **Once you have made a choice** – good or bad, big or small – your life has been affected by that choice; and part of you has been emptied out.

- You can never really change the results of your choices.
- You cannot change the outcome of your decisions!

I once heard a quote: ***“Be careful as you slide down the banister of life, lest you get a splinter in your career.”***

If all the choices you make in life **are bad choices**, you are going to have a very messy life!

The advice I would give to someone like that is this: ***If you had your life to live all over – don't do it!***

Life is like a camel – it won't back up.

The great purpose of life **is to make something good that will outlast us** – and **that won't happen unless** we make more **good** choices than **bad.**

You can **never** dedicate your life **to making excellent choices** that will secure your future, and that of your family (children and grandchildren), **unless you have a solid relationship with Christ**, and have a **firm grip** on the big picture.

There are four steps to **accomplishment in life**:

Plan purposefully.

Prepare prayerfully.

Proceed positively.

Pursue persistently.

One has to learn to **take the good with the bad**, because **life will certainly give you** a fair amount of both.

Our choices in the **good AND bad**, however, **will determine** in the end of life **whether we have a surplus or a deficit**.

You see, life is like a bank. You **can't** take out what you **haven't** put in.

Correct decisions result from **knowing God's purpose** for you, and **understanding why it is better** than **anything you can come up with yourself**!

For this reason, choosing **God's will** is always best.

CLOSE : THE IMPORTANCE OF RIGHT CHOICES

Since **the choice** you make today **will affect your future**, it is imperative to understand **the importance of RIGHT CHOICES!**

The people you surround yourself with and call friends can have **an effect on your choices in life** - they can either make you **bitter or better**.

I know it's **YOUR choice**, but please make the **RIGHT CHOICE!**

Joshua 24:15 – **"...choose you this day whom ye will serve...but as for me and my house , we will serve the LORD."**