

## **Your Next Step Is Crucial**

**Deuteronomy 4:29-31** - <sup>29</sup> But if from there you seek the Lord your God, you will find him if you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul. <sup>30</sup> When you are in distress and all these things have happened to you, then in later days you will return to the Lord your God and obey him. <sup>31</sup> For the Lord your God is a merciful God; he will not abandon or destroy you or forget the covenant with your ancestors, which he confirmed to them by oath.

### **Deut. 4:29-31 CEV**

- ***In all your troubles, you may finally decide that you want to worship only the Lord.***
- ***And if you turn back to him and obey him completely, he will again be your God.***
- The Lord your God **will have mercy**—he won't destroy you or desert you.
- **The Lord will remember** his promise, and he will keep the agreement he made with your ancestors.

I will grant you, that **there is a point in life** that you could get to, **where the next step that you take is crucial**. Life can:

- *Press - Shove - Pressure you - **Force you to *that place where it is critical*.***

**Things can happen** in your existence that can push on you, until you feel **that there is a choice that you must make** in order to proceed.

***Life can put the squeeze on you until there is a step you must make, and that step is a crucial one.***

It's like you or I have been traveling on a pathway up into the mountains and **the path has become narrow**.

- **The farther we travel the narrower the path becomes.**
- The farther we travel the higher we go.
- **The higher we go the more dangerous the trail.**
- **The more dangerous the trail the more on guard and aware we should become.**

**The enemy of your soul will start you off on a path in life away from God.**

- He will tell you how **easy** this path is to travel on.
- He will tell you how **wide** the path is and
- **How much liberty you have on this path.**

**You can do anything that you want to on this path.**

- But when you come to **the end of the trail** you will find out that he was lying to you.

**You will see that your next step is crucial.**

- You will be bound up in **sin** and the pleasures of this world.
- You will be hooked on **drugs**.
- You will be addicted to **the bottle**.
- You will be bound up in **immorality**.
- You will be bearing the heavy load of **the cares of your life all alone**.
- **And then you will realize that it wasn't worth going my own way.**

**The edge of the path drops off into a huge canyon on one side, while the other edge hugs the mountainside.**

*We come to a point where one step in the wrong direction **will lead to destruction** and one step in the right direction **will lead to safety**.*

- It is **an important step** to take.
- It is **a stride that will bring one result or the other**.
- **The next step is crucial.**

**The next step that we take is crucial, will it lead to destruction or safety?**

- **That's where some of us are in our walk with God - our life -**
- **That's where this church is in our existence today.**

**We have traveled to the place where the next step is an important one.**

**We have journeyed to a point where there is a choice to make concerning our walk with God. We are at a position in our life where we **must decide**.**

As a church we have got to decide whether we want to be a:

- Bible believing - Truth declaring - God fearing - Lost soul loving - **Church** or just **a social club**.

The next step is crucial.

***It could be today***, that you are at a point in your life, that you are looking for something more than you already have in your life.

- Can I suggest to you that you give Jesus a try?
- It is no accident that God has allowed you to be here today.
- He is reaching for you today in this service.

The next step is crucial.

***Deuteronomy Chapter 4*** is a prophecy that Moses is speaking to God's people.

He tells them that by chance:

- If they ever come to a place in their existence that ***they no longer serve God***, the way they do now.
- If you ever find that you have been corrupted by the things of the world.
- If you discover that you are not in obedience to the word of God.
- If you find out that you have taken the wrong pathway for your life.
- If you are doing evil in the sight of almighty God.

***Moses says***, there are some things that are going to happen to you as a people.

- **God will** scatter you.
- God will not prolong your days.
- God will cause heaven and earth to bear witness against you.
- **You will serve** gods of wood and stone.
- You will serve gods that cannot see and cannot hear.
- **You will be in** a big mess.

***Moses says***, that when you get to the place that you are being influenced by other gods, **you had better beware** because that is idolatry.

*The definition of idolatry, according to Webster, is “the worship of idols or excessive devotion to, or reverence for some person or thing.” An idol is anything that replaces the one, true God.*

The most prevalent form of idolatry in Bible times was the worship of images that were thought to embody the various pagan deities.

*Idolatry is always a corruption of the heart.*

- Idolatry always begins in the heart.
- It is an issue of the heart.

From the beginning, God’s covenant with Israel was based on exclusive worship of Him alone.

Before you point your finger at Israel and say how could they do such a thing. **We had better examine our own life first.**

Our modern idols are many and varied.

*Even for those who do not bow physically before a statue, idolatry is a matter of the heart—pride, self-centeredness, greed, gluttony, a love for possessions and ultimately rebellion against God. Is it any wonder that God hates it?*

Nobody can make you backslide away from God. Choices!!!

But if you do backslide it’s because **you backslide in your heart first** and you allowed idolatry to creep into your heart.

**Verse 29** of our text begins with four words that I want to draw your attention to. These are four powerful words in reference to this passage of scripture.

**But if from there!** But if from that place of idolatry...

In other words, when you get to a position where you recognize that there is idolatry in your heart then **there is something that you can do about it**.

But if from there – your next step is crucial.

- The enemy has invaded our ranks- **but if from there.**

- There has been influence from other gods – **but if from there.**
- We have corrupted ourselves with the things of the world – **but if from there.**
- We have done evil in the sight of the Lord – **but if from there.**
- We have provoked the Lord to anger – **but if from there.**

Moses said that it is possible *through the corruption of the heart* that you could get to this place... **but When you recognize it – Your Next Step is Crucial!**

**It is possible today in this service that you could recognize your dilemma or the situation that you are in. Choices!**

- I'm lost – never repented...
- I've stayed away from God.
- I have allowed things to get into my spirit.
- I've done some things that are wrong, I can't break the hold sin has on me.
- I've lost my relationship with God.

If from that point you are able to see where you have drifted and recognize your condition...**YOUR NEXT STEP IS CRUCIAL.**

- If you become aware of **your condition.**
- If you receive a **wake-up call.**
- If you recognize **your dilemma.**
- If you **acknowledge the predicament** that you are in.

**The Next Step is Crucial! - The Bible says that even in the latter days if you will just call out upon his name...**

**Some people here today are close to the edge.**

- You're close to **losing your soul.**
- One step in **the wrong direction** would mean destruction.
- One step in **the right direction** would mean safety.
- **Before you do anything, I remind you that your next step is crucial.**

*Somebody here today needs to say, "I'm not going to take that step to destruction." Somebody needs to call out upon the name of the Lord today.*

**2 Chronicles 7:14** - <sup>14</sup> if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

- I know you may be **hurting right now...**
- I know you may be **in trouble right now...**
- I know it might be **difficult right now...**
- But **the next step is crucial.**

***If you'll just take a step toward: Deliverance – Victory – Safety - The right road - In the right direction – Repentance.***

**The next step is crucial... He never forces himself upon anyone. He never makes anyone live for him.**

- He calls us - He prompts us - He pulls for us - He reaches for us.

**God never forces us or makes us do anything that we do not want to do.**

- **Who goes to church?** Those who want to go to church.
- **Who doesn't go to church?** Those who don't want to.
- Who receives the Holy Spirit - Serves God – Prays - Reads the Bible - Lives for God. **Those who Choose too!**

***The critical issue or dilemma is*** that not one person will take that crucial step of deliverance unless it is in your heart to do it.

- You will not take that first step **until you deal with the heart.**
- Most people, when the preaching hits too close to home, **shove the heart issue aside and refuse to consider the heart.**
- That's why you're not listening today. That's why you turn off the preacher.

**That's why** people resist the Holy Spirit **because they will have to change.**

- **That's why** people resist the presence of God.
- **You can fool man** sometimes into thinking that **everything is all right,**
- **But you can't fool God.**
- **Man looks on the outward, but God looks at the heart.**

**1 Samuel 16:7** - 7 But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. *People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.*”

***The heart is the seat of your feelings and emotions.** That’s where your feelings come from and that’s where your emotions come from.*

*The Bible says that the issues of life are in the heart.*

**Proverbs 4:23** - Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

- **Don’t let anything into your heart that is not right.**
- Don’t let corruption in - Don’t let the world in - Don’t let evil in.

**Because when it gets into your heart it’s hard to deal with and it’s hard to get it out of your heart.**

- **Your heart today will determine your next step.**

**What should your next step be?**

- You need to **find out what is in your heart!**
- The Holy Spirit **will help you** do that.

**Psalms 37:4** - Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

**The Bible says to delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart.**

*We like the desires of our heart, but we don’t like delighting ourselves in the Lord.*

**CLOSE:**

**Isaiah 55:6-7 - God's Words Are Powerful**

6 Turn to the Lord! He can still be found. Call out to God! He is near. 7 Give up your evil ways and your evil thoughts. Return to the Lord our God. He will be merciful and forgive your sins.

**You don't have to solve all the problems of your life today! Choose!**

- But you must take a step in the right direction.
- You can't fix everything today even if you wanted to,
- but **you have got to do something**. Choose!

***It's like some dummy riding around in the bumper cars at the amusement park –***

- Just banging around through life.
- **Until God gives you direction** or brings the issues of the heart to bear.
- We must take some kind of a step. Choose!

**The next step is crucial.**

**When Mike Tyson was asked by a reporter whether he was worried about Evander Holyfield and his fight plan he answered,**

**“Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the mouth.”**

**What Tyson said is like the old saying “no plan survives first contact with the enemy”.**

**Revelation 3:20 - Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.**

- **Jesus is knocking** on the doors of people's hearts today.
- **He is knocking on the heart of** someone who has never really repented.
- **He is knocking on the heart of** a person who has strayed away from him and he is saying - **come home**.
- **He is knocking on the heart** of the Christian whom he desires to get closer to.
- He is knocking on your heart today.

***The next step is crucial – don't ignore your heart.***