



## Decisions

### Decisions: A More Excellent Way

Originally taught by Joseph Brown, November 2014.

Decision making can be challenging, even for Christians. Have you ever asked yourself the questions, “Which way should I go? What will happen if I make that choice? Is it the best choice? Am I strong enough to deal with the consequences?” and so on. Agape - the Christian Code of Conduct - can remove many of the challenges of godly decision making. Agape is the more excellent way.

God’s perspective on decision making:



(James 4:13) Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:

Making choices for where to live were just as important in the first century as they are today. Decisions, decisions, decisions. They can be complicated, but James provides some guidance.

(James 4:14) Whereas ye know not what shall be on

the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

James teaches that we won’t know what shall take place tomorrow. We hope that our hard work and choices will produce gain, but we really don’t know what the future will hold.

We also learn that God sees life as a vapor, a mere puff of air on the timeline of eternity. Usually, we don’t see life this way. Often, that ‘puff’ seems to last a very long time.

(James 4:15) For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.

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Because of how short life really is, we are asked to consider decision making like this: “If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.”

This motivation should be behind every decision a Christian makes! We want God’s blessings on all of our decisions. Our choices with God’s blessings take them into the realm of more excellent possibilities.

## Choose God’s way:

The Word goes further to say in 1 Corinthians 16:

*(1 Cor 16:15) I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,)*

The house of Stephanas followed

these principles. They were addicted to ministering to the saints. They choose to care for other saints. *They made their choices based on what God wanted them to do.*

If you’ve ever helped someone with an addiction, you know that addictions are very challenging, very powerful. That’s why there are so many support groups focused on helping afflicted people. Imagine what would happen in our societies if these support groups were to disappear. That would have a very negative effect on everything in our lives.

In Christianity, what would happen if fellow Christians stopped helping other Christians? It would be terrible. How would something like this happen? After serving with such a helpful attitude, what would destroy the desire to continue? What force is powerful enough to “un-addict”

a Christian from a lifestyle of ministering to others?

*(Mark 4:19) And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.*

The answer to ‘what force is powerful enough to “un-addict” a Christian from a lifestyle of ministering to others?’, Mark 4:19 provided us with a most probable answer—the Word was choked out of their heart. The stage was set by the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things. Once these enter a person’s life, the Word of God could easily be choked from a Christian. This, then, creates a lack of fruit. Godly desires take a back seat, directly affecting one’s choices. The Christian becomes trapped in a spiritual stranglehold. The bottom line

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is that satan entered in and influenced the person. Their choices became self serving.

*(1 Pet 5:7) Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*

How can a person be rescued from these spiritual chokeholds? A great start can be by casting all his or her care upon God—because he cares for us! This is one way of keeping worldly cares from entering and gaining chokeholds.

*(1 Pet 5:8-9) Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: {9} Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.*

We are asked to be sober minded

and vigilant! *A spiritual, roaring lion is working hard, day and night, to choke the fruitfulness of God's Word of out of existence!* His modus operandi is through worldly cares, deceitfulness of riches, and lusts of other things. Resist this creature by remaining steadfast in the faith! Resist by making godly choices. Stay addicted to the ministry of the saints.

## **Function, Function, Function:**

Know the work and functions in the body of Christ. What work is available? What functions are available? Let's turn to Romans, chapter 12 for the answer.

*(Rom 12:4) For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:*

“Office,” means, “function toward others.”

*(Rom 12:5-6) So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. {6} Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;*

“Gifts” means, “spiritual abilities and functions.”

It is God's desire that we all become involved functioning, helping and ministering to others. There is no end to what Christians can do for each other.

In verse six, “gifts” comes from the Greek word, charismata. It means, “spiritual abilities given by God's grace, from God to man.” They have been given to us. These spiritual abilities

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from God become ministries in the Church as the believers operates them. As these spiritual abilities are operated, they then become gifts to the body of Christ! Therefore, it is up to each Christian to learn them and then choose to act. *By serving spiritually and ministering to others in these capacities, worldly chokeholds can be destroyed.*

(Rom 12:6-10) Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; {7} Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; {8} Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with

cheerfulness. {9} Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. {10} Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

The proceeding verses provide specific, Christian instructions. When operating these abilities he is also supposed to conduct himself according to these guidelines.

## A More Excellent Way:

(1 Cor 12:31) But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way.

As Christians earnestly desire these spiritual abilities, he is tasked with living according to the agape code of conduct as listed in 1 Corinthians 13. The more excellent way is the

lifestyle of agape.

Live according to agape and godly choices will be clear. Because of how short life really is, we are asked to consider thinking about it like this: “If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.”

Choose to addict yourself to helping other Christians. Help undue chokeholds placed on others. Cast your cares on God. Resist that roaring lion. Above all, function in the body of Christ like there’s no tomorrow, delivering godly gifts to those in need. There are many functions available in the body of Christ, but especially seek the agape lifestyle—the more excellent way!

Much love in Christ!

Joseph Brown