

Introduction:

1. Why is it that some people seem to have it all together in life? They live stable, consistent lives. When trouble comes, they seem to deal with it without their lives being turned upside down.
  - a. Do those people just by chance get the breaks in life? Or is there something more?
  - b. Both good and bad can come by chance to anyone—but our lives aren't controlled by chance.
2. A bigger factor than chance is choice. We are creatures of choice. Our choices are the most powerful determinate in life. You are what you are today because of choices you made yesterday.
  - a. Our choices can be wonderfully constructive or horribly destructive to our lives. Maybe we make bad choices because we don't see or don't consider the outcome of our choices.
  - b. Here are nine choices, guaranteed to be beneficial, that cannot produce bad consequences.

The Lesson:

**I. Choose to follow the Bible.**

- A. Two kinds of people profess to follow the Bible: those who say; those who do, James 2:22.
- B. When you follow the Bible, and allow it to rule your life, it can change the direction of your life.
  1. The Bible is God's blueprint for human happiness; it can satisfy the deepest longings of your soul. God's word empowers you to dismiss evil and resist temptation.
  2. Without the Bible, you're lost in the dark. With it, you can find your way home. You will find satisfaction, fulfillment and contentment in life. Don't say it won't work for you. It works!
- C. However, some people—who say they follow the Bible—minimize its importance.
  1. They treat it like a tray of hors d'oeuvres—picking a little of this and a little of that.
  2. Many see it like health insurance—glad to have it, but hope they don't have to use it.
  3. Some view it like a seat belt—you have to have it, but it's a nuisance that cramps your life.
  4. For some folks, it's like high school algebra—it may be accurate, but of no practical value.
  5. Some see it as a hobby, or like a phase you go through in life—but it's not real life.
- D. You need to make the choice that the Bible will be the authoritative book in your life.
  1. It came from your Creator and it shows how life really works. Do you know how it works?
  2. Make reading, studying, memorizing, and meditating on it a high priority in your life. Build a habit of reading a chapter a day for the first 31 days of this year—from Proverbs.
  3. Apply the Bible's messages, using it as your guidebook for life. Examine yourself by it. Let the Bible challenge your thinking and change your direction. This is a good choice!

**II. Choose Jesus Christ as Lord.**

- A. Everybody chooses to serve somebody; most people choose to serve themselves. Choosing Him now will lead to the best life for you now and the only life in eternity, John 10:10b.
- B. If you choose Jesus, choose the real thing; don't settle for following a caricature of Jesus.
  1. Jesus is not your buddy or your pal; He is your Savior, the sacrifice for your sins.
  2. Jesus is not your safety net or good luck charm; He is not there just in case this religious thing turns out to be true in the end. He is the real thing, the only begotten son of God.
  3. Jesus is not a religious artifact, something left over from bygone days but irrelevant to your life now. He is the present Lord of the universe and has the right to rule your life.
- C. Choose the real Jesus. Learn who He truly is by studying what the Bible reveals about Him, then give your allegiance to Him. Bow to His authority by obeying His commands. Be willing to submit your will to His when your will and His are in conflict. Let His will take charge of *all* the areas of your life—your relationships with family and friends, your work, your play, your dreams and hopes for the future. Realize that all you are and have ultimately belongs to Him.

**III. Choose to trust.**

- A. Trust God with your future—your life now and your destiny in the age to come, Proverbs 3:5-6.
  1. We were made to trust God. There is no other option that truly works in life.
  2. This is the answer to frustration, disappointment and discontentment with life. Lack of trust in God always leads to a misdirected life.
- B. Trust and obey—or “obey and trust.” Do God's will, trusting that you have made the right choice in doing so. God honors obedience to His will. Trust Him; He is worthy of your trust.

#### **IV. Choose forgiveness from God.**

- A. One of the things that hinders the lives of many people—even Christians—is the dark cloud of guilt and regret over bad choices made in the past. You need freedom, Hebrews 9:14.
- B. The only thing that sets men free is forgiveness from God. If there is something standing between you and forgiveness, let it go. Acknowledge your past sins and repent of them.
  1. It is what God wants for you to make you whole. God loves you in spite of your past.
  2. Our God is a God of forgiveness, but He only forgives those who come to Him and seek His forgiveness. God does not want you to go through life with a burdened conscience.

#### **V. Choose to forgive others.**

- A. If you are unwilling to forgive others, you put a ball and chain on your own life. There is freedom in forgiveness of others—a liberation of our own souls.
- B. An unforgiving, bitter spirit is poison to our souls. Let your gratitude for God's forgiveness for your sins motivate you to obey His command to forgive others, Matthew 6:14-15. To hold on to past sins against you causes you constant pain. Make the right choice—forgive others.

#### **VI. Choose to be authentic.**

- A. Are there gaps between the person you say you are and who you actually are? Then close the gaps, Titus 1:16. Avoid hypocrisy. Make sure that what you say and what you do match.
- B. Forget about trying to impress others or living up to their expectations; instead, choose to live faithfully as a way of expressing your love for God and passion for Jesus. Live to please God.
- C. God sees beyond your outward behavior; He looks into your soul. You may be able to fool other people, but you can't fool God, so don't try. Surround yourself with people who are genuine and who hold each other accountable to living authentic lives.

#### **VII. Choose to be a servant**

- A. People who choose to be servants to God and to others achieve greatness in God's eyes. Jesus said so, Mark 10:43. Greatness is not found in position or power, but in serving.
- B. When you get up in the morning, how do you dress yourself? Do you put on a bib or an apron? Do you intend to be a servant, or are you looking for others to serve you? It makes all the difference in the world. If you are looking to be served, you will never be happy!
- C. And remember also, we serve to be noticed by God, not by people, Matthew 6:1.

#### **VIII. Choose to love your family.**

- A. After God, let your family be your highest priority and choose to love them first and best among all others in your life, Genesis 2:24. Cleave to your family above all others.
- B. In all your choices ask whether it shows love for your family. There is no hobby, activity or pursuit that is worth harming your family. Treasure each member of your family.
  1. Pray with them and for them. Create a culture of love in your home; it will bind you together. Find creative ways to communicate love in your family.
  2. Instead of asking what your family can do for you, ask what you can do for your family.
  3. Forgive and reconcile after conflicts, and stay committed to family relationships.

#### **IX. Choose to stand.**

- A. This may be a summary of all we have said. Stand for Jesus instead of walking away when life gets hard. The new year will bring challenges to your faith. There may be times for some of you when you will feel like throwing in the towel. Give yourself no option to quit.
- B. God has called you to stand, Ephesians 6:13-14b.
  1. No one ever made a mistake by standing with Jesus. In times of disappointment, stand! In times of pain, stand! In times of suffering and sorrow, stand! In times of temptation, stand! In times when you have messed up, turn and stand! In times of prosperity, stand!
  2. No matter what comes in life, choose to stand with Jesus. You can't make a better choice.

#### Conclusion:

1. Life isn't about luck, or being in the right place at the right time. It is about choices. No other factor has such bearing on your life as the choices you make. It is imperative that you make right choices.
2. Make the choice to become a Christian. If you are away from God, choose to come home!