

CONNECTING MY MIND WITH MY LIFE

❖ OH MY, THAT WAS A REALLY BAD DECISION!

Have you ever looked back over your life and said “Man, I made some really stupid decisions.” Well, I certainly have. After my wife and I came back from the seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, we were very poor. I had been in Clemson and the seminary for a long time, and we really had no income to sustain us. I started working for a local architect when we got back home, but barely made enough to live on for the first several years. When I first started working for them, I only made \$4/hour or \$640/month. One time we bought two steaks. We thought we had died and gone to heaven. As it was cooking on our little hibachi grill, I had to go inside for a minute. When I came back out, the dog had dragged the steaks off the grille and was getting ready to eat them both. I quickly intervened, almost killed the dog, and washed the steaks off so they could finish cooking. I was not about to lose those steaks.

Obviously, God sustained us and my in-laws bought us a single wide trailer that we lived in. Unfortunately, however, I made a very, very bad decision and decided it would be okay for us to get a credit card to help us get through some of the difficult times that we invariably were facing. It was a really, really bad decision. Before we knew it, we were nearly \$10,000 in credit card debt and had no idea how we would ever pay it off. Obviously, I did not understand much about compounding interest at the time. It took us several years to get out of debt because of one very bad decision. Eventually we did get out of debt, and to this day we pay off our bills and credit card expenses every month. We owe no one anything, but it was not always that way. Why? It is because I made a very bad decision.

❖ SO WHY ARE MY DECISIONS SO IMPORTANT?

Proverbs 23:7 says that “**As a man thinks in his heart, so is he**”. However, we could also say that “**As a man decides, so is he**”. Today your life reflects the decisions that you have made, and those decisions were based on how you think. Many times you make decisions based on the following question – “*What does God want me to do?*” However, the better question to ask is not “*What does God want me to do?*”, but “***What does God want me to become?***” Once you become the person that God wants you to become, it will be much easier to determine what God wants you to do. Until that happens, you may always be struggling with how you make decisions, and many of them may invariably be the wrong decisions. Every believer has to make decisions. Jesus made decisions, Paul made decisions, Peter made decisions. Let me say upfront that your “feelings” are a terrible, terrible guide for making decisions. They will lead you in the wrong direction more often than they will lead you in God’s direction. Your feelings and emotions are prone to change every day. They fluctuate and they are very fickle. Trusting your feelings is like trusting quicksand. You want your guide for decision making to ALWAYS be God’s Word, to ALWAYS be the “**mind of Christ**”. So, we want to look at two super important aspects of decision making you must understand that can really help you to make not only the right decisions, but godly decisions.

First, **decisions create direction**. Everyone’s life is headed in some direction based on the decisions that they have been making. Any decision that you make, small or great, good or bad, will create a certain trajectory for your life, so you have to be very careful that you make godly decisions. **If you**

make ungodly decisions, you will experience unpleasant results. It should be evident that people make a lot more small decisions than they do big decisions. Every day you have to make a lot of small decisions about a lot of different issues –what will you eat for supper, when do you need to get gas, what will you wear to work, will you read your Bible, did you pay your electricity bill, and will you respond godly in a difficult situation. It is very seldom that you have to make major life-changing decisions.

What you need to take away from this reality is that your smaller decisions are probably driving your life in a certain direction more than your major decisions. Just from experience, it appears that when people make a bad life-changing decision that it is because they made a lot of bad smaller decisions. They had developed a very strong neural pathway in the wrong direction. They were not thinking like God wanted them to think and not making decisions based on God’s Word. So that wrong mindset was consistently propelling their life in the wrong direction. Eventually, they reach a point of utter frustration and discouragement, and from that negative outlook they make a very tragic life-changing decision. The principle is simple: **small choices lead to big consequences.** Listen very carefully. **Once your small decisions head you off in the wrong direction, it is not easy to change that direction** (i.e., credit card debt). Our having a credit card was not a life-changing decision – not at all. It was a very practical thing to have. However, it was the many small decisions of charging things on the credit card when we selectively ignored that we did not have the money to pay for them that propelled us in the wrong direction. If you want to be spiritually successful in your life then **you must do the small things to achieve the big things.** Listen to how Jesus described this in [Luke 16:10-11](#),

Lk 16:10 (NKJV) **He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.** ¹¹ **Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?**

At that time in my life, there was not much God could do with me. Why? It was because I was consistently making a lot of bad small decisions regarding our finances. I had not learned to think like God thinks. Unfortunately, it was during this time in my life that I made one of the worst decisions that I have ever made, and God disciplined me for 12 years. God gave me what I wanted, and that is not always a good thing at all. [Song of Solomon 2:15](#) says that it is “**the little foxes that spoil the vines**”. It is the little bugs that hurt my garden the most.

KEY PRINCIPLE 22: YOU MUST DO THE SMALL THINGS RIGHT IF YOU WANT THE BIG THINGS RIGHT.

You cannot ignore the small, mundane, everyday choices that God wants you to make and expect that the larger things in your life will just fall into place. Nothing in life works that way. Nothing in business works that way. Nothing in your marriage or your family works that way. Nothing in your spiritual life works that way. Your decisions and your decision making process are so important. They cannot be neglected. Listen very carefully because what I am going to say next is so super important. **The best decision is a God honoring decision. The worst decision is a self-serving decision.** This is your spiritual battlefield. This is a major place where your life succeeds or fails, and it is all about how and what you think. You need to accept that **the greatest mind is God’s mind.** I can assure you that He knows what works and what does not work. Left to your own ideas, you can only hope that something

will work, and more often than not it will not work. **The more of God's mind that you put into your mind, the greater will be your success.** The mark of a true believer is that He always wants God's thinking to trump his thinking. You never want to think that your thinking is better than God's thinking. That is why [Philippians 2:5](#) commands us to **"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus"**.

So, before you make a decision, and especially a life-changing, irreversible decision, you need to ask yourself the following question – *"If I make this decision, where will it take me and how will it impact my life?"* You must understand the trajectory that your decisions will place you on because your decisions always create a "landing zone". Let us say that you decide that you want to smoke, then that decision will produce very negative results in your life that will not be recognized today, but they will be later. I was at the hospital recently and I saw an EMT who was outside her ambulance smoking and I thought to myself how crazy that was. Here is someone who sees cancer patients every day and they still do not get it. Smoking is physically an insane habit. Smoking is bad thinking – right? You start with just one, and decades later you are smoking two or three packs a day. Years ago this lady made a small decision that will have really bad consequences in her life. Serious health issues is her "landing zone". My father made a small decision to start drinking, and very quickly became an alcoholic, lived in fornication with another woman, divorced my mother, forsook his children, and died at the age of 55 from irreversible heart disease caused by his drinking. When he decided to drink, he never saw that coming. Small decisions lead to big consequences – some good, some bad.

Secondly, **decisions reveal values**. Your values are basically what you believe. Your values reveal what and how you think. They reflect principles you live by, your morals, and your standards. Many people have bad morals and bad standards for their life. For you as a believer, be excellent in what you do, live with godly purpose, be trustworthy, dependable, gracious, kind, caring, faithful, responsible, respectful, forgiving, and generous. Your life is about developing godly values and making godly decisions because the more godly your values, the more godly will be your decisions. **You need these kinds of biblical core values because your values control your behavior**. Why? It is because you make decisions based on what you value the most and what you want the most. Show me what a man values and I will show you what a man loves. What a man loves is what he chases. Jesus said the following in [John 14:15](#),

Jn 14:15 (NKJV) **"If you love Me, keep My commandments.**

Jesus is telling you to pursue obedience because it is the greatest evidence of your love for Him. Jesus is clearly saying that the person who loves Him can be seen by how much they value obedience to His Word. Jesus is not addressing good values, but God's values. Whatever God wants to do in your life must be built on God's values. When you read God's truth you are reading what God values, so pay attention to what He says. What Scripture so clearly teaches is that **most times the hardest thing and the right thing are the same**.

Now, what you will discover if you choose to fully commit your life to Jesus Christ is that **godly values make your decisions much easier**. If you are a committed follower of Christ, then you should not have any trouble making godly decisions. **When you have biblical values they will give you biblical strength**. You will not be afraid to live out your Christian life before others with deep conviction. Godly

values are one of the means by which the Holy Spirit gives you His strength. His work builds godly values into your life so that “**His strength can be made perfect in your weakness**” ([2 Corinthians 12:9](#)). Let me say this in a different way. **Values create foundations and foundations create strength.** If you are a godly person with godly values, you will make godly decisions. That is the inevitable result of having and maintaining God’s values. **When you know who you are in Christ, you will know what to do.** It is not hard to make godly decisions when you have godly values. However, even if you make a wrong decision, you will learn and grow from it. God will always teach you more from your failure than your success. Listen very carefully. This is super important. **There is a great difference between a wrong decision and an ungodly decision.** A wrong decision does not mean that you have wrong values. It just means that you made a mistake. However, an ungodly decision reveals that you have unbiblical, self-centered values. That is much greater than just a mistake. **Your values are what sustain you or they are what destroy you.** Godly values will always give you strength when you need it, but ungodly values will always lead you to the wrong result.

What that means is that if you do not have godly values, then your decisions will lead you further away from God. They will take you to their “landing zone”. It is inevitable that an ungodly person with ungodly values will make ungodly decisions. When you do not make decisions based on biblical values, in essence you are leaving God out of your life, and that is not a good decision. **Most poor decisions are self-centered and not God-centered.** That is so important to understand. So, if you are struggling in your Christian life, this may be one of the major causes – your life is self-centered and not God-centered. You cannot hide your values. Your values let everyone know who you really are, what you really believe, what you really love, and what you really want. If you are an immoral person, I already know where that will lead you. I know your landing zone. If you are an angry and bitter person, I already know where that will lead you. If you are an unforgiving person, I already know where that will lead you. If you are an irresponsible person, I already know where that will lead you. If you are an unfaithful person, I already know where that will lead you.

So, exactly where will ungodly values lead you? Well, it is very simple. **Ungodly values will always lead you deeper into sin and further away from God.** **Godly values will always lead you away from sin and closer to God.** Think about this for a second. Jesus never made any bad decisions because Jesus never had any bad values. Every decision that Jesus made was based on the overriding value of honoring his Father in everything that He did. Your life is a continuous reflection and indication of what you value the most. **What you value the most will always determine what you live for the most.** It is not hard to make godly decisions when you have godly values.

I know many Christians who simply do not know how to make good and godly decisions. You could say that they are very good at making bad decisions. Why? It is because they have never learned how to think like God thinks, and because of that they are not prone to make good decisions. Their life is just one bad decision after another bad decision, and their lives just continue to spiral out of control. The dilemma is easy to see. Bad decisions always create bad direction. Bad decisions always reveal bad values. Bad decisions and bad values will always move you in the wrong direction.

Let me ask you two really important questions. First, “*In what direction is your life currently headed?*” Secondly, “*Is it a good direction or is it a bad direction?*” How would you answer those two questions? Could you honestly say to someone “*I love the Lord my God with all of my heart, with all of my soul,*

with all of my mind, and with all of my strength.” Well, that is the direction that you want your decisions to take you. **Your life is always headed in the direction of your decisions and your values.** I do not want you to be the norm. To the contrary, I want you to be “**more than a conqueror**”. I believe that is very achievable if you just learn how to think like God thinks. Listen to [Romans 8:35-37](#),

Ro 8:35 (NKJV) **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." ³⁷ Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.**

These verses are exactly how God wants you to think. They were written by the most spiritual man on the planet, and these are the kind of values that you want to learn, develop, and build into your life. God clearly says that in whatever happens to you – “**tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword**” that you can be “**more than a conqueror**”.

However, let us rightly assume that you are not living in tribulation, not being persecuted, not starving, not without clothes, and not in danger of being killed. If that is the case, then I would suggest that you make your own list of what stresses you out and write it down in place of these words. You could be dealing with anger, financial stress, immorality, unfaithfulness, worry, anxiety, fear, relational issues, selfishness, bad attitudes, lack of discipline, lack of love. Whatever troubles you and hurts you, just exchange your list with the list in these verses and then read it. It will say the same thing to you – “**You can be more than a conqueror through Him who loves you!**” That is God’s truth and that is exactly how He wants you to think. This is an amazing truth, but it has to be believed before it will ever benefit your life. The average Christian only believes these kind of verses in theory, but rarely in reality. If you only believe what God says in theory, then you will never even consider implementing it into your life. When you choose not to believe God’s Word and live by His truth, you are making a decision, and that decision will propel your life in the wrong direction. Unfortunately, you will find that out after it is too late. Trust me, but many Christians make wrong decisions every day because they are not willing to think like God thinks. They do not believe God or His Word. Our Christian culture has conditioned us to say the right things without believing the right things. You may be that person – that someone who is not willing to believe God and to trust that His ways are much better than your ways.

Let us take this one step further. If someone were to ask you “*What is it in your life that you value the most?*”, how would you answer them? Would you say that you value having a nice home, that you value having financial security, that you value having a good job with great benefits, that you value being able to travel, or that you value getting a great education? None of those are necessarily bad, so how would you answer that question? Here is the point. **You have to decide what it is that you value the most in your life.** Why? It is because your values impact your decisions, and your decisions propel your life in a certain direction. So, if you will determine what you truly value the most in your life, then you can quickly have a clear picture of where you are headed. If you are a faithful follower of Christ, and you cherish His values over your own, then you are headed in the right direction.

Another critical principle is that **your values determine how you behave.** This is so super important. Just think of someone you know who is lazy, undisciplined, uncaring, and resentful. Then compare that person with someone who is hardworking, very disciplined, cares for people, and is very forgiving.

Obviously, those two people have exact opposite values, and almost immediately you can discern what direction their life is going to take. Who do you believe will be the most successful? Obviously, person number two! If you know what someone values, then you can know how they think and what kind of decisions that they will make. Your life is always reflecting what you value the most.

To keep all of this in perspective, we are addressing spiritual values, values that you should always be developing in your life. Do you value character and integrity, do you value hard work, do you value kindness, do you value patience, do you value marriage, do you value forgiveness, do you value faithfulness? Well, I hope you do. Why? It is because those are the kind of attributes and qualities that God values. If you do not value what God values, you can never be spiritually successful in your life. Just figure out what God values and then build your life and your thinking around those values. You will never be disappointed with that decision. Why? It is because **God always has a better plan for your life than you do.** So, here is Key Principle 23.

KEY PRINCIPLE 23: YOUR LIFE IS ALWAYS HEADED IN THE DIRECTION OF YOUR DECISIONS AND YOUR VALUES.

So what have we addressed today? What were the key points of this study today?

1. **Decisions create direction.**
2. **If you make ungodly decisions, you will experience unpleasant results.**
3. **You must do the small things to achieve the big things.**
4. **KEY PRINCIPLE 22: YOU MUST DO THE SMALL THINGS RIGHT IF YOU WANT THE BIG THINGS RIGHT.**
5. **The best decision is a God honoring decision. The worst decision is a self-serving decision.**
6. **The more of God's mind that you put into your mind, the greater will be your success.**
7. **Decisions reveal values.**
8. **Godly values make your decisions much easier.**
9. **When you have biblical values they will give you biblical strength.**
10. **Values create foundations and foundations create strength.**
11. **When you know who you are in Christ, you will know what to do.**
12. **Your values are what sustain you or they are what destroy you.**
13. **Most poor decisions are self-centered and not God-centered.**
14. **Ungodly values will always lead you deeper into sin and further away from God. Godly values will always lead you away from sin and closer to God.**
15. **What you value the most will always determine what you live for the most.**
16. **Your values determine how you behave.**

17. God always has a better plan for your life than you do

18. KEY PRINCIPLE 23: YOUR LIFE IS ALWAYS HEADED IN THE DIRECTION OF YOUR DECISIONS AND YOUR VALUES.