

## **PART 21 – CONNECTING MY DECISIONS WITH GOD’S DESTINATION**

### **❖ BAD WIRING**

*I am sure that you have met someone who simply has no self-control when it comes to speaking their mind. It does not matter what the issue is, every discussion is a hill that they are willing to die on. In essence, **they have never figured out that the real issue is not to make a point, but to make a difference.** Now, there is a “physical” reason why they are this way, and why they will continue to be this way if nothing changes. Over their lifetime, they have developed a bad habit. That bad habit has literally become physically wired into their brain with their neural pathways. I want you to accept the fact that bad habits are able to break you and to destroy your life. In fact, if you do not pay attention to what hindered you today, you will quickly learn that it will hinder you tomorrow. Not paying attention to your bad habits and bad choices is simply bad wiring in your brain. I have never heard one good thing about bad and faulty wiring – and neither have you.*

Now, for the moment I want you think of a neural pathway as a kind of electrical circuit or an electrical wire in your brain. It can be a good wire or a bad wire. That is probably a gross oversimplification, but it will suffice for this discussion. Just think of a neural pathway as a wire in your brain that collects and retains two specific things. It collects and retains **information** and **inclinations**, and then it sends that information and your inclinations to the rest of your body. Your body always knows what your mind is thinking.

### **❖ I HATE TAKING TESTS AND I HATE GIVING TESTS**

*I have never enjoyed giving my students exams because I am not interested in how much they can memorize and remember, but in how much they can think on their own. I much prefer to grade an essay, even though it takes me much longer to grade. I want my students to develop a thinking process. If I can give them the right tools and then teach them how to think, then I have done my job as their professor. I only give tests because the accreditation service says that we have to as a school in order to be accredited.*

However, your brain is very different. It memorizes everything that you do – everything. Think of your neural pathways as that part of your brain that has “**memorized**” multiple things in your life. It has memorized your **feelings (or emotions), your life experiences, your predispositions, your preferences, and your tendencies**. It knows all about you. Your brain knows what you like, it knows what your favorite color is, how you like your steak cooked, what and who you do not like. It knows who irritates you and frustrates you, what kind of pie you like best, what you think about your boss, and how much you love your marriage partner – everything actually. All of that is physically wired into your brain, and so your brain is constantly communicating all of this information to every cell of your body.

Just as a for instance, I love good Mexican food, so every time that we decide to go out to eat, my brain keeps telling my body – go get some Mexican. However, my brain also knows that my wife is telling me that we have gotten Mexican the last three times that we ate out and my brain knows exactly how to interpret what she is really saying. She is saying “*no Mexican today sweetheart*”. I.e., your neural pathways are always “**emphasizing**” to the rest of your body what you are actually thinking and what

you are prone to do, so that is why you are inclined to repeatedly react and respond to life the way that you do.

### ❖ GOOD ADVICE FROM A BAD HABIT

Let us say that you have a bad habit of quickly becoming very angry. You are that person where almost anything can set you off. You can read something on your phone and get so irritated by what you read that your blood pressure skyrockets. That is certainly unbiblical and is not how God wants you to think. However, **the more** that you become angry, **the easier** it becomes for you **to continue becoming angry**. Your neural pathway just keeps getting stronger and stronger. So, what will eventually happen is that all of that negativity that you constantly verbalize to other people will literally find a way into the physical cells of your body and it will contribute to your not feeling well physically and emotionally.

#### **BRAIN FACTS:**

1. **What and how you think mentally affects how you feel physically.** How you think creates a “physical” connection to the rest of your body.
2. Negative thinking causes you to **age faster** and to **be more prone to disease**.
3. Neurological research reveals that the more spiritually minded that you become, the better that you will feel both physically and emotionally.

Now, the point is simple. Somewhere along the way, you have to realize that **life is all about making decisions**, or should I say, it is all about making **good** decisions. Think of your decisions as the steering wheel that you use to navigate through your life. **Making decisions, either good or bad, is how you actually regulate and control your life, and your decisions are what will determine both the direction and the quality of your life.**<sup>1</sup>

### **KEY PRINCIPLE 62: HOW YOU SEE LIFE IMPACTS HOW YOU WILL LIVE LIFE.**

### ❖ FLOATING DOWN A RIVER

*Have you ever been rafting or on vacation somewhere just floating down a river? Well, the truth of the matter is that the river is always headed toward the ocean. I hope you know that. If you go to the Mississippi River, the water is always flowing south to the ocean. If you go to the Savannah River, the water is always flowing south to the ocean. However, let's just say that you are in the water in a kayak or on a float, but you do not want to go south, then what will be necessary? Well, you have to head your raft in the exact opposite direction that you are going, get out your arm muscles, and start paddling north – right? The problem is that this will take a lot more effort than just floating down the river sipping on a lemonade.*

Well, life is eerily similar to all of this. There are a lot of people whose life is headed in the wrong direction. Simply stated, everyone is headed in a certain direction, and it may not be the direction that they want. So, just like deciding to go north on the Mississippi River, you have to make some strategic

---

<sup>1</sup> Stanly, Better, 7-8.

changes to alter the direction of your life. If you choose not to make any changes, then the direction that you are currently headed in will continue to take you exactly where it is headed.

**KEY PRINCIPLE 63: THE DIRECTION OF YOUR LIFE WILL ALWAYS DETERMINE  
THE DESTINATION OF YOUR LIFE.<sup>2</sup>**

For me this is really very critical to what we are studying because this principle is both inevitable and unavoidable. Right now, your life is headed in a specific direction toward a specific destination, and whatever direction you are headed in is where you are going to end up. Pretty deep stuff – right? However, listen to how Jesus stated this principle in [Matthew 7:13-14](#),

**Mt 7:13 (NKJV) "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. <sup>14</sup> Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.**

The phrase “lead to” is the one Greek word “*apago*” and it is a word that is intently concerned with direction. Specifically, it means to lead towards something, or to lead away from something. In this case, Jesus is very specific about the destinations associated with these two directions. One “leads to destruction” and one “leads to life”. Direction always determines destination.

Listen. You may have good intentions and great goals and be incredibly ambitious on reaching your goals, but if what you are doing is not headed in the direction that God wants it to be headed in, then you will ultimately be disappointed with the consequences of choosing the wrong direction for your life. It does not matter what you intended to do or what you wanted to happen. You always end up where your choices take you. For instance, Jesus said in [Luke 11:34](#),

**Lk 11:34 (NKJV) The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body also is full of darkness.**

You can see everything and everyone as bad, but that will only cause “your body” to be “full of darkness”. Everyone is not bad and every difficult moment is not bad. The issue is simple – how does God view your circumstances and the people that surround your life? From God’s perspective,

1. Problems are just challenges.
2. Difficult people are just thorns that lead you to God’s grace.
3. Delays are how God develops patience and endurance in your life.
4. Financial struggles teach you to seek God to help you manage your resources better.

You have always heard the age-old question “*Why do bad things happen to good people?*” The problem with the question is that presumes that something bad can never have a good result. That certainly is not true. Why? It is because [Romans 8:28](#) says that “**God is able to make all things work together for good**”. You can blame everything on God or someone else if you want, but that is really just bad thinking. For instance, [Proverbs 28:13](#) says,

---

<sup>2</sup> Stanley, Path, 15-16.

Pr 28:13 (NKJV) **He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes *them* will have mercy.**

The phrase “**his sins**” refers to your own predispositions, inclinations, prejudices, blind spots, addictions, and areas of temptation from which you never flee. The way that God sees your life is that there must be some point in your life where you take full responsibility for the choices you have made, and if you choose not to do that, your life will “**not prosper**” spiritually. You are actually covering that which God uses to set you free. You will feed that neural pathway, and it will only get larger and larger. The only way to overcome bad thinking is by learning how to think like God thinks. Every decision that you make should always be made on godly principles that you glean from God’s Word. For instance,

1. Is it okay for you to talk ugly and demeaning to people? Not if you think like God thinks.
2. Can you just borrow money without any constraints? Not if you think like God thinks.
3. Is it okay for you to neglect your health or your family? Not if you think like God thinks.
4. Is it okay for you to develop a few “questionable habits” along the way? Not if you think like God thinks.

I am convinced that most everyone knows what is the best thing to do in most circumstances, but **knowing the right thing to do is no guarantee that you are willing to do the right thing**. This is the law of sowing and reaping personified in your life. The law of sowing and reaping is really very simple to understand. What you put into your life is what you will get out of your life. **If you make bad decisions, you will get bad results. If you make good decisions, you will get good results.**

1. If you ignore your health now, you will not be pleased with your health later.
2. If you neglect your marriage now, you will not be pleased with your marriage later.
3. If you mistreat good friends now, you will not have any good friends later.
4. If you neglect brushing your teeth now, you will not have any teeth to brush later.
5. If you do not prepare for the future now, you will not be prepared for the future later.
6. If you spend more than you can afford now, you will not be pleased with what you can afford later.

The handwriting is always on the wall.

**KEY PRINCIPLE 64: TO THE PERSON WHO IS REALLY WISE, LATER IS NOW.**

This is not rocket science. If some area of your life is headed in the wrong direction, you do not need someone to give you a solution to fix the problem. What you need to do is to change the direction in which your life is actually headed. Just assume that you are going somewhere that you have never been for a meeting, and in that process, you made a wrong turn. Sooner or later, you realize that you are headed in the wrong direction and are now over 50 miles from where you were supposed to be. You did not get lost intentionally, but because you were headed in a certain direction, you wound up in the wrong location. At this point in your day, there is nothing you can do about where you are. You cannot change where you are. You are 50 miles from where you wanted to be and you are going to miss the meeting. **You cannot change where you are. You cannot change where your decisions have brought you.**

Just think of all of the people who make the wrong decisions regarding their spiritual life. They ignore God, they ignore His Word, they ignore His principles and precepts, they ignore His truth, they ignore His church. Life just kept rolling along, and the direction of their life has invariably led them towards a specific destination. At that point in their life, that is where they are. That is where their decisions have brought them. All of a sudden they are awakened to where they are and how many bad decisions they have made, but unfortunately, they are in the last stages of their life and there is no time to make the corrections that they needed to make much earlier in their life. Their children are all lost, their finances are a mess, their health is awful, and their marriage fell apart years ago. They cannot change where they are, they cannot change the destination at which they have arrived. It is way too late for that. There is no quick “fix” for their bad choice years ago. Every one of you are making decisions today that will land you in a particular place later on in your life, and you do not have to have a crystal ball to know exactly where you are headed.

**KEY PRINCIPLE 65: EVERY CHOICE CREATES SPECIFIC CONSEQUENCES.**

❖ **DR. PEPPER SOFT DRINKS**

*I worked with a guy one time who brought a six pack of Dr. Pepper drinks to work each day and drank all six drinks every day. On average, he drank one can of Dr. Pepper every 90 minute. How dumb is that? He made a really bad choice, and I imagine he became a diabetic and is no longer alive. Why? It is because every choice has consequences associated with it.*

Every choice you make creates specific consequences, and those outcomes can be either good or bad. Direction always determines your destination. For instance,

1. You can choose to be a faithful follower of Christ or you can choose not to be faithful. It is your choice.
2. You can choose to eat healthy or you can choose to consume junk food all day. It is your choice.
3. You can choose to exercise or you can choose to not exercise. It is your choice.
4. You can choose to obey God’s Word or you can choose to disobey God’s Word. It is your choice.
5. You can choose to be financially prudent or you can choose to be financially wasteful. It is your choice.
6. You can choose to live a moral life or you can choose to live an immoral life. It is your choice.

So please, do not blame God when your choices take you to exactly where you always knew they would take you. Do not point your finger at God and say “*Why did You let this happen to me?*” Every really bad choice that you make will one day have really bad consequences, so do not blame God. Once again, this is the law of sowing and reaping at work.

So, no matter what you choose to do, it would still be very wise to at least recognize that your choices always have consequences. They cannot be avoided. There is no “life-eraser” that just lets you remove the negative results of bad choices. It does not exist. You can close your eyes and your mind to your choices, but that will not change the consequences. [Galatians 6](#) is clear that everyone reaps in life what they sow in life. You must understand that **everything in life is connected – everything**. You cannot just make decisions in a vacuum. **The choices you make today are directly connected to the**

**consequences they will create tomorrow**. You can save or you can spend. You can trust God or you can worry. You can commit your life to Christ or you can commit your life to your own ideas. With each choice (good or bad), you are creating a life path that is inevitable and probably irreversible past a certain point.

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Stanley, Andy. *Better Decisions, Fewer Regrets*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2020.

—. *The Principle of the Path*. Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2008.