

RIGHT DECISIONS

By Jerry L. Henderson

Every day individuals make many decisions about various aspects of their life. Some decisions that are made are critical to our very existence. Just think of all the decisions that an individual makes every time they drive an automobile on our streets and highways. Then there are decisions that must be made regarding medical care: which doctor will we use; should we take the medicine the doctor prescribes and the list goes on involving decisions that could very well determine whether we live or die. Of course, there are decisions that are made that are not of a critical nature and many of these are made with very little or no thought about the outcome; such as: what time shall I get up; what shall I wear; what shall I have for breakfast, lunch or dinner; what TV program shall I watch, etc., etc., and the list goes on. So, it is obvious that each individual makes many, many decisions each day, some conscious, deliberate decisions and some without any conscious deliberation.

In 1 Kings 18:21 Elijah called upon the people to make a decision that was critical to their spiritual well-being. He said: "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God follow him: but if Baal, then follow him." Elijah called upon Israel to make the "RIGHT DECISION." Of all the decisions we will make and must make, the most important decision of all (The "Right Decision") is the decision to follow the Lord, to be just a Christian. Jesus said "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Matt 6:24. So, the "RIGHT" decision, that is, deciding to have Jesus Christ as our master and serve Him is a conscious, deliberate decision which has eternal consequences. However, in making this "RIGHT" decision we need to understand several things that are involved in making "RIGHT" decisions.

Right Decisions Require Courage: In Judges chapter seven there is the example of Gideon demonstrating his courage in making the decision to follow God's plans even though to human minds it would seem very bad judgment. God called upon Gideon to take only three hundred men and go against the armies of the Midianites. Even though, from a human standpoint this would have seemed foolish, yet Gideon had the courage to make the right decision and follow God's plan and as a result he was able to defeat his enemy. He had the courage to depend on the strength of God, not on numbers and arms. You will also note the courage of Elijah in 1 Kings 18. He had the courage to stand with God even though he stood alone against a powerful and wicked king who had been seeking him with full intentions of killing him. God cannot use the "fearful and trembling" Deut 20:1, 8. The "fearful" will be lost, so says Rev 21:8. It takes a lot of courage to make the "RIGHT" decision, the decision to follow the Lord and do as His word directs.

Right Decisions Require Intelligent Consideration: Jesus, in Lk 14:28-33, teaches the importance of counting the cost of a particular course of action. We must consider every aspect of a given situation before we make a decision to act. Gospel obedience is not by "accident" or "blindly" made decision, there is teaching, hearing and learning that must be done Matt 28:19; John 6:45. One cannot just take some man's word for what they must do to make the "RIGHT" decision, but must search and examine the Scriptures to determine if what they are told is true Acts 17:11. We must count the cost and be willing to accept heavy sacrifices, which may involve going against what we have been

taught in the past Luke 14:26-33. We are not promised an easy road, in fact, just the opposite 2Tim 3:12. However, the rewards are great, if we remain faithful to our decision to follow the Lord.

Right Decisions Impose Obligations: A pledge to serve God, while keeping our idols, is meaningless according to Josh 24:14-24. And the word "idols" does not just refer to some kind of little statue or image, they can be anything that stands between us and God. Remember Jesus said you cannot serve two masters, you cannot serve God and material things at the same time Matthew 6:24. Jehovah is a holy God, a "jealous God." He will not accept service from those who are not willing to give up their pride and vanity and give themselves in selflessness to him. We must put away any rival affections and incline our hearts to Jehovah, hear Him Josh 24:23. This might involve giving up some forms of recreation, entertainment, in some cases our jobs, or possibly some of our family members.

Right Decisions Must Be Made Wholeheartedly: Neither material considerations nor any earthly obligations are first. Remember, Jesus said: "No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" Lk 9:62. To be a Christian means that we must be willing to give all that we are and have to God and his cause. The apostle Paul said in Romans 12:1, 2 that we are to present our bodies a "living sacrifice". This means that we give our whole lives to God completely and totally. The decision to serve the Lord is a "long term" decision -- it is for all time. Those who start and look back are not suited for the kingdom of God.

The decision to serve God requires mature judgment, it is not a child's game. One should not be rushed by unreasoned emotions or influenced by family, business or social considerations. One must be convicted by God's word of their sins and their need to obey the gospel of Christ. Yet, despite the cost, it is the best and greatest decision that one can make, because it alone has to do with the destiny of our eternal soul. If not to Christ, to whom shall we go? Jhn 6:66-69. (JLH)