

Are You Making The Right Choices?

(Part I)

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➤ Intro:

- **illus.:** before his death, Joshua called on Israel to make a “choice” (Josh. 24:14-15)
 - believe in God and serve Him, or serve pagan gods and idols of earth
 - warned, they would have to live with the consequences of their decision
- we have to make choices in life, and each one effects our salvation and eternal home in some way

- We choose to have joy or sadness – joy (a feeling of happiness), rejoice, choose how we feel
 - **Ja. 1:2-4** count it all joy, various trials, testing of faith produces endurance which has it's perfect result, complete, lacking nothing
 - we choose to be joyous (feeling happy) during hard times, because of benefits
- - **Phil. 4:4-7** rejoice in the Lord, gentle spirit, not anxious, prayerful, peace of God
 - we choose to rejoice during hard times, because of God's power in our life, and blessings
 - **illus.:** a lot of things we don't have a choice (parents, where born, etc.), but we always have a choice about our attitude
- there is always a reason to be happy (rejoice in the Lord), but sometimes we have to look a little harder
- as Christians, we are joyous and rejoicing all the time because of the strength and blessings God gives us
 - living testimonies to His power in our lives
 - choices

- **We choose our attitude toward self and others** – reflected in all we say and do
 - **choose a positive or negative attitude**
 - **Phil. 3:13-15a** attitude, forget behind, press toward goal of the upward prize
 - **Phil. 4:12-13** positive attitude, confident, excel in every circumstance in Christ
 - **illus.: David against Goliath and the Philistines vs. Israel** – paint picture, everyone negative but David
 - **positive attitude and brave leadership makes us leaders of men** – boy David vs. adult Israelites
 - - **choose an attitude that builds people up or tears them down**
 - **Rom. 15:2-3** please, edify neighbor, as Christ did for us
 - **Col. 4:6** speech with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so **know how to respond**
 - **Eph. 4:29** speak words good for edification, according to need of the moment
 - **every word and every action impacts people around is, for good or bad** (family, friends, brethren)
 - our choices help people get to **heaven or hell**
 - - **choose an attitude that leads people to Christ or to Satan**
 - **1 Pet. 3:13-17** attitude and actions required to lead people to Christ through His word
 - **vs. 13** zealous for what is good
 - **vs. 14** not fear or be troubled by people who persecute us
 - **vs. 15** sanctify Christ in our hearts
 - **vs. 15** ready to make a defense – studied, practiced
 - **vs. 15** to everyone who asks – not prejudice, talk with everyone
 - **vs. 15** answer with gentleness and reverence
 - **vs. 16** keep a good conscious at all time, even when being slandered
 - **1 Pet. 2:21** following in the steps of Christ, honoring God at all times, even when suffer
- **as Christians, we are positive** about God, the church, our lives, and positive spiritual leaders in our communities
 - **have an attitude that builds people up**, rather than tears them down
 - **have an attitude that leads people to Christ**, rather than Satan
 - **choices**

➤ We choose **whether to be a friend or an enemy** – good neighbor or bad

- **Matt. 5:43-45a** Jesus, love enemies, feed and care for them – be friends to our enemies

- **loving our neighbor sums up the law**

- **Rom. 13:8, 10** owe nothing to anyone except to love one another, for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law - love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law

- **illus.: parable of the good Samaritan** – good Samaritan chose to be a good neighbor, priest and Levite didn't

- **illus.: Student at Kamiakin Junior High (Seattle, Washington) raise money for baby's bone marrow transplant**

- **Jeff Leeland**, teacher, Kamiakin Junior High in Seattle, Washington.

- **Spring, 1992**, told his baby had cancer - **Michael** needed a bone marrow transplant

- **Michael's 6-year-old sister** was a perfect match for the transplant

- **Jeff's insurance wouldn't pay** for it - he had to work 1 year before would cover transplants

- **needed \$200,000** - had 2 months to raise it

- **a teacher (Joe Kennedy) told his class** about Mr. Leeland's baby

- **Dameon, a seventh grade boy** who walked with a limp and struggled in special education classes, heard about Mr. Leeland's son, Michael, and made a visit to Jeff's house.

- "Mr. Leeland, don't make a big deal out of this...if your baby's in trouble, I want to help out."

- Dameon, the kid others teased, reached out his hand and stuffed **12 five-dollar bills into the hand.**
— his life's savings

- **Word got out about "Dameon's gift."**

- Some kids **organized a walk-a-thon.**

- Others **contacted a local newspaper.**

- Others **held a car wash.**

- **the kids' wave of compassion poured out** across Seattle.

- **On Friday, May 22nd**, a man **walked into the bank with a check for ten thousand dollars.**

- **One week** after Dameon's gift, Michael's fund grew to **\$16,000.**

- **By May 29th**, Michael's fund grew to **\$62,000.**

- **On Friday, June 5th**, the fund had grown to **\$143,000.**

- **Monday, June 8th: \$160,000.**

- **Tuesday, June 9th: \$185,000.**

- **Only four weeks after Dameon's gift of \$60**, the Michael Leeland Fund totaled over **\$220,000.**

- **Michael got the marrow transplant. He lived.** (Adapted from Jeff Leeland, One Small Sparrow (Multnomah, 2000) and from a phone interview with Jeff Leeland, Sisters, Oregon; submitted by Clark Cothorn, Tecumseh, Michigan)

- **When is the last time you chose to be a good Samaritan?** - had mercy on someone and did something for them they needed, and couldn't do for themselves – **not a friend or family**

➤ - **Ja. 2:8, 12-13** judged as to whether we were good neighbors – Jesus gives example of the good Samaritan

- **as Christians, we are friends with everyone**, even our enemies – good neighbors to everyone

- **God chose to be our friend while we were enemies with Him, as His children we are to love people as God loves them (Matt. 5:45a)** – choices

choose: happy or sad, positive or negative, friend or enemy

End Part I

- **choose:** happy or sad, positive or negative, friend or enemy, good or bad reputation

- **inv.:** also **choose** whether to be a Christian or not

- **Josh. 24:15** “choose for yourselves today whom you will serve” - “but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord”

- **illus.:** song #280, **I Have Decided To Follow Jesus**