

Choosing Discipleship 11-03-19 AM

Between the age of about 13 and 25 we make the most important critical moment (choices that we make in a short amount of time) that we make in our lives. Some have said that the most important choices in life are made by teenagers. Spiritually, there are seven important choices that we make in this age group that affect the rest of our lives and our spiritual destiny. Too often we fail to see that these are critical choices, and that we need to have the most wisdom possible in making them. We can break these critical choices into three areas: our spiritual choices (discipleship and church membership); our relationships (friendships, dating/marriage and how we treat ourselves); and our vocation (education and work).

The most important decision we make is the Decision to Follow Jesus - Luke 9:57-62, Mark 4:3-20, Luke 14:25-35.

For those who have decided to follow Jesus, we have made the most important decision of our lives. We have made a decision that few people make (Matthew 7:13-14). Sadly, many who make this decision will not remain faithful to that decision. Jesus taught us this in Mark 4 and the parable of the soils. In that case, four people heard the Gospel, three responded to it, two began to grow, but only one was successful.

Jesus taught us to count the cost of this discipleship in Luke 14. He used the example of building a tower; one did not commit to it without knowing what it would cost. When we committed to Christ, we need to understand that the cost is uncertain; it could even cost us our lives. It is not that Jesus wants us to reconsider our commitment, as He will provide us with all the things necessary for our success. He gives us a complete manual of Christian life (2 Timothy 3:16-17) and a support group to enable our success (Hebrews 10:23-25).

Jesus uses the term "disciple" to describe being His follower. It means that our entire life is within a pattern that He has created in Himself. In effect, we live a life that asks at every decision "what would Jesus do?" Everything else has to come second to that. Our families, our work, our hobbies are all under the umbrella that is Jesus. Being a Christian is not just a book on the shelf that is your life; it is the shelf itself, and every part of your life must fit into that shelf.

There are three important things that we need to convey to young adults in making this decision. First, the sooner that this decision is made, the better the consequences of that decision (Ecclesiastes 12:1). Consider that the earlier one chooses the Way of Christ, the fewer "bad habits" that they must break. They have begun their journey already making good habits. At the same time, sooner means that they have fewer consequences of sin to carry with them. Sin leaves weight and encumbrance; the longer we wait to follow Christ the heavier the consequences of sin become. As well, the consequences of righteous decisions give us a greater likelihood of spiritual success in all of our choices; choosing Christ first makes our relationship choices and vocational choices more successful.

Second, we need to convey the importance of having a genuine faith, such as Paul commends Timothy for having in 2 Timothy 1:5. A genuine embracing of The Way means that we need to make Faith our own. Our Faith must define and encompass all aspects of life. We can not choose Christ because of others.

Finally, we need to make it understood that there will be hardships in Christ (2 Timothy 3:12, Matthew 16:24), and we must bear them. We must be committed despite adversity. Too many are faithful until

something else gets in the way, such as another Christian hurts their feelings or some difficulty of life arises. We must commit to Christ despite adversity. We should teach and preach and hold that NOTHING will stop us from being faithful:

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord Romans 8:38-39

There is a great reward in Choosing Christ. That reward is both in this life and the next; the best reward is in the next. The sooner you choose the better the benefit, but you must make it your own!