

LifeCode

DAVID H. MCKINLEY

CHOOSING WISELY, Part 1

Life is filled with an endless series of choices. Everyday we are bombarded with a variety of decisions, even in the simplest tasks: paper or plastic? regular or decaf? hot or cold? etc. Sometimes we have so many choices, we don't know how to choose the best option. However, wise decision-making is one of the most important life skills for everyone of us.

In his recent book, *The Paradox of Choice*, Barry Schwartz wrote, "There is no denying that choice improves the quality of our lives. It enables us to control our destinies and to come close to getting exactly what we want out of any situation. Choice is essential to autonomy, which is absolutely fundamental to well-being. Healthy people want and need to direct their own lives. On the other hand, the fact that *some* choice is good doesn't necessarily mean that *more* choice is better. As I will demonstrate, there is a cost to having an overload of choice. As a culture, we are enamored of freedom, self-determination, and variety, and we are reluctant to give up any of our options. But clinging tenaciously to all the choices available to us contributes to bad decisions, to anxiety, stress, and dissatisfaction—even to clinical depression."

"Nothing is more difficult, and therefore more precious, than being able to decide." —NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

"Countless questions about a decision's immediate and ultimate consequences can be avoided by testing each alternative this way: does it fit my ethical framework?"

—ROBERT GILBREATH

Decisions in Life:

Specific Moral Decisions. Once you trust God and obey His commands, it is a simple matter of *application* to live a moral life. In other words, you don't have to spend time praying about a relationship with someone else when you already have a spouse or stealing something, etc.

Select Relational or Vocational Decisions. These decisions include who to marry, when to marry, what career path to take, etc.

Simple Functional Decisions. Some choices we make everyday do not require the same standard of obedience as others. These would include what to wear, what to eat, etc.

KEY THOUGHT: Recognize that unwise decisions can lead to many of the same consequences as wrong decisions in life.

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways acknowledge Him,
and He shall direct your paths.*

—PROVERBS 3:5-6 NKJV

Exercise the Essential Principle of Faith

For many, life's greatest opportunity can become life's greatest obstacle. It is a matter of faith. What is the object of your faith? You, others, God? Divided hearts are anxious hearts; surrender and *trust in the LORD*.

Eliminate the Practice of Independent Thought

Stubbornness, pride and independence cause many to make unwise decisions. In order to succeed in life, you have to come to the end of *your own understanding* and begin to live in the realm of His sovereign care.

The wise inherit honor, but fools are put to shame!

—PROVERBS 3:35 NLT

The wise are glad to be instructed, but babbling fools fall flat on their faces. —PROVERBS 10:8 NLT

Fools think they need no advice, but the wise listen to others.

—PROVERBS 12:15 NLT

Wise people don't make a show of their knowledge, but fools broadcast their folly. —PROVERBS 12:23 NLT

Wise people think before they act; fools don't and even brag about it! —PROVERBS 13:16 NLT

The wise look ahead to see what is coming, but fools deceive themselves. —PROVERBS 14:8 NLT



Tuesdays, 11:45 a.m. | Main Street Cafe | Prestonwood Baptist Church
6801 W. Park | Plano, TX 75093 | (972) 820-5000 | www.prestonwood.org

Hear this message over the internet! www.prestonwood.org/powerlunch

David H. McKinley is Teaching Pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church.