

Are You Making The Right Choices?

(Part II)

➤ = next PowerPoint Slide

➤ 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

➤ - PP: review

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

➤ We choose whether to have a good or bad reputation – name – good reputation from God’s perspective not the world

- **Pr. 22:1a** we should “desire” a good name (reputation) more than wealth
 - **illus.:** written by Solomon who didn’t have a good name, but had great wealth
 - to be wealthy without a good reputation is to be poor – opposite of world’s perception
 - to be poor but have a good reputation is to be rich – opposite of world’s perception
 - it’s better to die poor with a good reputation, than to die rich with a bad reputation
 - choices

➤ - **Ec. 7:1a** good name is better than good ointment (ointment represents everything that is good and pleasing to be body, physical)

- better to have a good reputation than to have enjoyable physical things in life
- choices

➤ - characteristics of a person with a good name (reputation):

- **1 Cor. 6:18-20** flee immorality, glorify God in our body – behavior, adornment, speech, actions

➤ - **Tit. 2:10** adorn the doctrine of God – make God and His word look good

- dependable, trustworthy, reliable, honest, integrity
- your word is your bond:
 - yes is yes, and no is no – do what you say, people know they can depend on what you say
 - **illus.:** securing warehouse in Alabama, handshake, no contract
- people know you’ll do what you say, unless something comes up that is totally out of your control, then you will bend over backwards to do everything possible to make up for it
- people don’t hear excuses from you all the time – “not my fault”
- you take responsibility for your mistakes, and don’t blame other people

(next page: continue point - illus.: learn about a man / illus.: Kenny Owens)

- good reputation is developed by people observing what we do

- illus.: Six ways to learn everything you ever need to know about a man before you decide to marry him

(Lois Wyse, Good Housekeeping, April 1985)

- **1) watch** him drive in heavy traffic
- **2) Play** tennis with him
- **3) Listen** to him talk to his mother when he doesn't know you're listening
- **4) See** how he treats those who serve him (waiters, maids)
- **5) Notice** what he's willing to spend his money to buy
- **6) Look** at his friends.

- And if you still can't make up your mind, then **look at his shoes**. A man who keeps his shoes in good repair generally tends to the rest of his life too.

- people watch us to see our character, whereby they **develop an opinion** about us, which **becomes our reputation**

- illus.: Kenny Owens, member of the church in Camden, SC

- **used to work for a company that had a break room**
- **when he was on break, he'd talk to people** who were in there about God and the Bible
- **got a reputation: Kenny's in the break room, don't go in there unless you want to talk about the Bible**
 - **some people think that's a bad reputation**, and **others think it's good**
 - **result: converted more people** to Christ in this day and age than anyone else I know
- **we don't always want a good reputation with the world, but with God**
 - good reputation with the world will not always be good with God (Ja. 4:4)

- it takes a lifetime to build a good reputation, but it can be lost in a split second – takes years to get it back

- as Christians, we have good reputations because we act the way God commands, so we possess the characteristics of a person with a good reputation

- choices

- We choose **how we deal with mistakes** – how deal with bad choices
 - **Phil. 3:13-15a** attitude, not dwell on the past, press on for the upward prize
 - **How do we deal with our own mistakes?**
 - **realize:**
 - **everyone makes mistakes**
 - **Theodore Roosevelt** said, "The only man who **never makes a mistake is the man who never does anything.**" – expound
 - **illus.: Edison** spent more than \$100,000 to obtain 6000 different fiber specimens, and only three of them proved satisfactory. Each failure brought him that much closer to the solution to his problem.
 - **illus.: Henry Ford** was right when he said that failure was the "opportunity to begin again, more intelligently." (Warren W. Wiersbe, Confident Living, September, 1987, p. 22.)
 - **everyone has had to repent** – great men and women do it
 - **illus.: Peter** after denying Christ 3 times, Jesus asked 3 times if he loved Him
 - **illus.: Paul** after persecuting and killing Christians
 - **illus.: Peter** after Paul confronted him about being a hypocrite in Antioch
 - **illus.: a Virginia volunteer fire department** (Ronald D. White in Washington Post, Reader's Digest, March 1980)
 - **members of a Virginia volunteer fire department had a new "Jaws of Life"** (explain)
 - **they held a special demonstration** to show how it could **cut into an automobile and rescue** people trapped inside
 - **two fire- fighters quickly ripped a door from a 1966 Buick**
 - **they pulled its steering wheel through the windshield and knocked out all the windows**
 - **At that point, a voice cried out, "Hey, what have you done to my car?"**
 - **the man was very upset**
 - **the firefighters, in their enthusiasm, had cut up the wrong car**
 - **their president promised that the department would pay the owner for the loss of his car**
 - **"It was just a mistake," the chief kept saying, "just a mistake."**
 - **God already knows about the mistake, can't hide it, shouldn't avoid praying about it**
 - **illus.: Jonah** tried to hide from God so he didn't have to preach to the Ninevites, so the Israel's enemy would be destroyed by God, repented and obeyed
 - **it's only when we exercise our right to choose, that we exercise our right to change** – be saved
 - **illus.: sinners (we) have to save themselves** – "be saved" or "save yourselves" (Acts 2:40)
 - choose to be saved, obey – repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38)
- - **Acts 17:30, 31** we must repent and obey God to deal with our mistakes – reward / punishment
 - **choose to stop doing the wrong things, and start doing the right things**
 - **illus.: Paul** chose to stop persecuting Christians, and to start obeying God – baptized
- - **Eph. 4:26, 27** the quicker we deal with our mistakes, the easier it is to deal with them – move on
 - **not let the sun go down** before you deal with it, **not give Satan opportunity**
- - **Ja. 5:14-15; Rom. 15:14** often times we need to talk about it with others who can help
 - **call for elders and other brethren** who can help
- - **Heb. 12:5b-7** we should learn from our mistakes – that's why God disciplines (chastens) us
 - **Ps. 119:71, 72** good for us when we are afflicted, so we learn God's statutes

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

- How do we deal with the mistakes of others?

- realize:

- **they make mistakes, just like we do**, though their mistakes may be different
- **we've let others down, like they let us down**, though our mistakes may be different
- **we've hurt other people, like they have hurt us**, though our mistakes may be different

➤ **- Jas. 2:8 we must live by the golden rule, forgive others (Col. 3:13)**

- **illus.: Marghanita Laski**, one of our best-known secular humanists and novelists (John Stott in The Contemporary Christian)

- **before she died in 1988**, in a moment of surprising candor in television, she said
- **"What I envy most about you Christians is your forgiveness; I have nobody to forgive me."**
- **Christians live by the golden rule**, when the world often fails to abide by it

➤ **- Jas. 2:12-13 we must be merciful toward others, or God will not be merciful toward us (Jas. 2:8)**

- Jas. 2:13 mercy triumphs over judgment

- **as Christians, we make mistakes** like everyone else, but we deal with them properly when they occur
- **choices:** how to deal with our mistakes, and deal with other people's mistakes
- **repent and obey God**

End Part II

- stop here, so we can group the next three choices together

- **choose:** happy or sad, positive or negative, friend or enemy, good or bad reputation, how we deal with mistakes

- **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**