



Main idea: Every choice has a direction and destination.

Scriptures: Ephesians 6:1-3, Galatians 6:7-8, Romans 6:23

Tonight we begin a new series, and I am very excited about it! I want to take some time this month and talk about choices! This may be obvious, but we make choices every day.

Many of you chose to be here right now, your families choose to be here for worship on Sundays. You chose what shoes you're wearing now, you chose how to fix your hair. You chose what snack you might eat tonight.

Some of these in my opinion are important choices, big ones even (coming to youth group/church). Some are not all that life changing. Like I don't think choosing pepperoni over cheese pizza will alter your life drastically, even though it is the superior choice. All this is to say, life is an ever unfolding series of choices, and in this series we are going to be talking about how to be a people who make good choices.

Now, this is not going to be me giving you a bunch of rules the Bible says you need to follow. [Tell a personal story of parents you to make good choices; where what they were really saying to you was along the lines of, "Don't do something stupid or dangerous. Don't get into trouble. Don't be disrespectful and make us look bad. Don't make bad choices."]

These kinds of choices are pretty straightforward. If your friends think it's a good idea to do a backflip off the roof, it would be a bad choice to participate, and a good choice to walk away, or better yet, stop them. And we can apply that same logic to anything going on with your friends. But not all choices in life come down to what is right and wrong. Not everything choice boils down to good and bad, black and white. And so, since life is complicated and choices sometimes can be tough, we want to be a people who seek wisdom, godly wisdom, and that's what we will dive into next week. The following week we'll talk about the grey area decisions, things that aren't always black/white, good/bad, and how God left us a helper, the Holy Spirit, to guide us.

But before we dive into all of that, I want to make clear two simple truths. And I'm going to do something totally crazy and let you decide which truth I start with!

[This is an intentionally misleading exercise that is fully in your control. Tell them; "Raise your hand if you want me to start with Truth 1 or Truth 2." The slides are not specifically labeled one or two, so carry on with the lesson as planned and let them think they're decision swayed your direction.]

Truth 1: You have the power of choice.

As teenagers, no matter how old you are, you have the power to choose more than you might realize. When I was your age, I couldn't wait to be an adult so that I could make my own choices and do whatever I wanted. But I didn't realize that I was gradually taking on those responsibilities as I aged. Let me give you a little lesson in child development;

As toddlers (Ages 1-3), you begin with very basic choices (waffles or cereal?) to foster control and simple preferences.

When you get to be Preschool/Early School Age (Ages 4-6), you can handle more complex choices like choosing outfits or toys, learning basic cause-and-effect (choosing a warm coat for a cold day).

At Elementary School age (Ages 7-10), you develop your understanding of consequences and start managing daily responsibilities, requiring guidance on criteria for good choices.

Once you reach Adolescence (Ages 11+), that's you guys, you start making significant life decisions (time, money, social choices) with a growing ability to weigh pros/cons, though still needing support for risks and complex information.

All this to say, whether you can feel it or not, you have the power to make some very important decisions in your daily life. You are literally adults in training. This isn't something that magically comes upon you when you turn 18, this is happening to you right now. The Bible acknowledges this stage of development and your ability to make decisions. In Ephesians 6:1-3 it says...

Ephesians 6:1-3 (NIV)

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise— “so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

Here, the Apostle Paul told us to honor our parents. It is a choice to honor and obey our parents, whether we fear the consequences of disobeying them or not. And Paul even pointed out that this command is the first to come with a promise. In Deuteronomy, which is the passage Paul was quoting from, was the first command where God told the people, if you do this (honor your parents), you will live long and prosper. That would be a good choice, to honor and obey your parents, but it is ultimately a choice that you have.

This power of choice may be more or less extreme for some of you. For most of you, coming here and being a part of this youth group is your choice. For most of you, coming to Sunday morning worship is your choice. Coming to our events and outings is up to you. That may not be the case for all of you, but many of you have far more influence than you realize.

But each one of us has the power to choose how much time we spend with God. You can choose how you will treat other people, and how you will present yourself as a Christ follower. You get to choose whether you believe what the Bible says and put it into action. You get to choose to surrender your life to Christ through baptism and repentance in response to the gospel. These are all big choices we all have. These are not adult issues, these are things you all get to wrestle with right here, right now. You have the power of choice.

Truth 2: The choices you make impact your life.

Making good choices is important, because the choices we make impact our lives! Let's turn to our main passage for tonight...

Galatians 6:7-8 (NIV)

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

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