

CHOOSE WISELY **Small Choices Can Have Large Outcomes (Ecc. 10)**

—Bill Turner

“We stand at the crossroads, each minute, each hour, each day making choices. We choose the thoughts we allow ourselves to think, the passions we allow ourselves to feel, and the actions we allow ourselves to perform. Each choice is made in the context of whatever value system we’ve selected to govern our lives. In selecting that value system, we are, in a very real way, making the most important choice we will ever make.” - Benjamin Franklin

1. What Value System will You Choose? This Choice Can Seem So Small—

—but it Has Big Implications! —That Decision Will Determine Your Destiny

- a. This is What Jesus meant about the man who built his own on the sand...
- b. Man-made Ideologies blind people to the truth—until the Storm hits...
- c. Build Your House on the **Rock of Christ**—the Rock of TRUTH—BEFORE the Storm hits

Choose Wisely—Because Small Choices Can Have Large Outcomes

I. SMALL CHOICES CAN HAVE BIG OUTCOMES (v1–3)

A. ONE FOOLISH ACT CAN TARNISH A GOOD REPUTATION (v.1)

1. One small choice can ruin a good reputation...

- a) One sin can destroy much good (9:18)
- b) One Bad Apple can spoil the whole barrel

2. The Bible is full of small decisions that had bad repercussions...

- a) Esau sold his birthright for a bowl of porridge
- b) Moses was not allowed into the Promised land because he struck a rock
- c) Aaron helped the people build a golden calf

3. But We Too Are Faced with Small Choices that can have big outcomes

“Between Stimulus and Response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.” (Viktor Frankel)

B. WHAT DIRECTION ARE YOU GOING IN LIFE? (v.2–3)

1. A small choice of Direction Has Huge Outcomes...

- a) Like a plane only 1 degree off course ends up hundreds of miles off course over time

2. What Direction are you Going in Life?

C. IT IS A DECISION THAT CAN DETERMINE A DESTINY

1. Abraham’s and Lot’s servants were arguing over limited pasture for flocks

- a) Abraham was a peacemaker and gave Lot first choice...
- b) WHY? Because Abraham was going to follow the Lord regardless
- c) Lot made an unwise choice—he looked and saw the land of Sodom

2. That 1 choice was made in the context of a value system Lot chose already

but that 1 choice was the beginning of the end for Lot and his family

Choose Wisely—Because Small Choices Can Have Large Outcomes

“Watch your thoughts for they become words. Watch your words for they become actions. Watch your actions for they become habits. Watch your habits for they become your character. And watch your character, for it becomes your destiny.” - Margaret Thatcher, Former Prime Minister of the U.K.

II. GUARD AGAINST OVER-REACTING (v.4)

A. KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON (v.4)

1. Even after choosing the right value system—Wisdom: The Rock of Truth
2. we will face pressure situations where we may not know what to do...
and are tempted to over-react...

B. ON THE JOB (v.4 NLT)

1. This applies to employer / employee relationships...
 - a) I got a job at K-Mart and that summer a couple friends got jobs there with me
 - b) We got our fork-lift license for the Garden Center and One of them had to move big pallets of soda to the front of the store every morning
 - c) One day the boss was standing there directing him where to go...
2. Don't Over-React When Your Boss Gets Mad...
 - a) Employees should ride out the temper tantrums of their employer. If we quietly do our work and don't get upset, the employer will probably get over his or her anger and calm down. (Life Application Study Bible)
3. You may need to apologize later, but don't quit over 1 mistake!
 - a) The Boss got over it... everyone makes mistakes, but we can all learn from them!

C. IN THE HOME

1. We must also guard against over reacting in the home...
Sometimes Parents get upset and say harsh words...
 - a) Children should not run away from home in that situation
 2. Sometimes A Husband or Wife gets upset and harsh words are spoken...
 - a) A spouse should not abandon their marriage and family if harsh words are spoken
 - b) This isn't about abusive relationships—it's about real life!
- GUARD AGAINST OVER-REACTING...Peace-makers are calm and give grace**
c) NIV: "calmness can lay great offenses to rest."

Sometimes the Best Response to anger is NO response—Keep Calm and Carry On

III. DON'T PUT YOUR FAITH IN WORLDLY RULERS (v.5-11)

A. RULERS ARE FLAWED PEOPLE AND THEY WILL DISAPPOINT YOU

1. They often Surround themselves with fake people attracted to power
2. Friends of the ruler who get placed in positions of power
3. But care more about themselves than the people they are supposed to

B. HAMAN WAS A STATUS SEEKER NOT QUALIFIED TO BE NEAR POWER

1. He worked his way up to the court of Xerxes, King of Persia
and the King elevated Haman above all the other officials

2. **But Esther’s uncle Mordecai refused to bow to him so Haman began to Hate Mordecai—and plotted to have Mordecai killed**
 - a) He even had a Gallows Built so that he could hang Mordecai
3. **But Mordecai had uncovered a plot against the king and told the kings officials and the kings life was saved**
 - a) One night the King cannot sleep and asks for the royal records to be read to him... and he hears the record of Mordecai... and asks what was done for this loyal citizen? His staff said: Nothing has been done for him...
4. **So the King asks who is in the Court? Haman had just walked in... So he asks Haman, How shall I Honor someone who I am pleased with?**
 - a) Haman thinks the king is talking about Himself!
 - b) So he says, have the man dressed in the royal robes of the king...
 - c) and placed on the Kings horse brought out and parade this man through the streets
 - d) declaring “This is what the King does for someone he wishes to honor”
5. **The King tells Haman to do this for Mordecai! TOTAL HUMILIATION!**
 - a) Haman manipulates the King to have Mordai and all the Jews Killed
 - b) In the end—it is Haman who is hung on the very gallows he built for Mordecai!

C. DON’T PUT YOUR FAITH IN POWER OR RULERS OR PEOPLE...

1. **Put Your Faith in God Who Cause Rulers to Rise and to Fall**
2. **Be Still and Know—that God is in Control!**

IV. DON’T BE OVERCONFIDENT—THINK AHEAD (v.8-11)

A. OVERCONFIDENT IN WORK—THINK AHEAD (v.8-11)

1. **Costly Mistakes arise from Being Over-Confident—and not thinking ahead**
2. **Some are hurt by the arrogance of other co-workers: Drinking on job**
3. **Some are hurt by their own Over-Confidence—rushing ahead...**

B. OVERCONFIDENT IN LIFE—THINK AHEAD...

1. **Those who dig pits for their enemy—may fall in the pit themself!**

“While spoiling his neighbour’s property, he himself may come to greater mischief.” (Adam Clarke)

- a) Or if Pulling Down the Wall of Self-Discipline, he may bring the snake-bite of intoxication or addiction (**Proverbs 23:31–32**)

2. **Overconfidence Invites Addiction: I Can Handle It...**

- a) Just One more Drink w/ friends — Just one more for the Road...
- b) Just one more click on the internet — Just one more Lie, I won’t do it again
- c) Just one more pain killer — Just one more angry swear word to Get my way
- d) Then there’s one more person mumbling with themself—they took it to far
- e) one more Husband who Lost His Wife and Family—He took it to far

C. SOME ARE SO OVER-CONFIDENT THEY DON’T NEED GOD

1. **I Can Do This By Myself... I Don’t Need God, I Only Need Me...**
2. **Don’t Be Over Confident — Think Ahead — You Need God!**

V. DON'T BELIEVE EVERYTHING PEOPLE SAY (v.12-15)

A. JUST BECAUSE SOMEONE SAYS IT—DOESN'T MAKE IT TRUE

1. Notice this Attribute of a fool (Proverbs 18:2)
 - a) He doesn't care about understanding—he just wants to be heard
2. They think the universe is out of balance if they don't give their opinion
 - a) —and then somehow the universe is back in balance when they do
3. You Have to Consider the Source—A Tree is Known by it's Fruit
(Proverbs 22:13) The lazy *man* says, “*There is a lion outside!*
I shall be slain in the streets!”
4. If Somebody Wants an Excuse Not to Do Something—ANY Excuse will do!
 - a) It Doesn't Have to be True—or REAL...
 - b) it just has give ME the excuse to not carry our my responsibilities to God

B. DON'T BELIEVE EVERYTHING PEOPLE SAY ABOUT THE BIBLE

1. Faith is not based on Feelings—it is based on Facts
 2. People Find All Kinds of Excuses NOT to Believe the Bible
 3. And if Someone wants an Excuse—Any Excuse will do!
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VI. SELF-CENTERED PEOPLE ARE HARMFUL (v.16–19)

A. ONE OF THE FATAL FLAWS OF POWER POLITICS

1. Often a ruler is put in place by the help of his friends...
2. So once in power, he is obligated to give his friends positions of power
3. And once his friends are in power, they milk it for themselves!

B. SOLOMON'S OWN SON REHOBOAM MADE THIS MISTAKE...

1. Rehoboam was Self-Centered and unyielding,
and His Pride Resulted in Dividing the Kingdom of Israel
 - a) Rehoboam was made King and the People asked for their burden be lightened...
 - (1) Rehoboam asked the advise of the older wiser counselors who had advised his father Solomon... They said: your father was hard on the people but if you lighten their burden they will be loyal to you and your reign will succeed...
 - (2) Then He asked his friends of his generation... They said, you need to show the people who's boss. Tell them: My little finger is bigger than my fathers waist... My Father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions...
 - b) The People Rebelled and the Kingdom Was Split between Israel and Judah
2. Times have changed but Human Nature his the Same...
 - a) Any Totalitarian Rule by Men WILL be used for their Own Advantage
 - b) Whether it's Communist China or Communist Russia, or any Totalitarian Regime

HEADLINE: The CCP 'Will Kill as Many as It Has to Kill, to Preserve Its Power': Historian
“If you concentrate power over the lives of human beings in all domains, economic, political,

educational, social ... what you attract are the unscrupulous, the pathological, the socio-pathological,” explained History professor Alan Kors, citing libertarian economist and philosopher Friedrich Hayek’s book, “The Road to Serfdom.” (“The CCP ‘Will Kill as Many as It Has to Kill, to Preserve Its Power’: Historian”; Epoch Times; Feb 3, 2022)

C. SELF-CENTERED PEOPLE ARE HARMFUL TO OTHERS

1. **Power corrupts—and absolute power corrupts absolutely**
2. **Whether it is in the realm of government, or on the job, or in the home**
3. **Self-Centered people Divide Nations, they Divide Churches, Divide Families**

VII. ANYTHING YOU SAY OR DO CAN AND WILL BE HELD AGAINST YOU (v.20)

A. NOTICE THIS WARNING OF WISDOM

1. **Under Totalitarian Regimes, the local people are oppressed by fear...**
 - a) I worked with a Ukranian who grew up under the former Soviet Union
 - b) Even your neighbors turned you in to the local KGB and were rewarded for it
 - c) Not only neighbors were informants for the KGB but even priests in the Russian Orthodox Church would turn in members of their own congregation!
 - d) Why? Because the Denominational leadership was replaced w/ Communist Puppets
2. **The System is Enforced Through a Surveillance State**
 - a) Now Christians in the churches of Christ in eastern Ukraine have been persecuted and some are fleeing west
 - b) Churches in China are Persecuted by a Chinese Surveillance State created with the Help of Silicon Valley Techno Firms like google, apple and Microsoft
3. **Anything You Say or Do Can and Will be Held Against You by the State**

B. BUT CONSIDER HOW AMAZING IT IS THAT ANYTHING YOU’VE EVER SAID OR DONE CAN BE FORGIVEN YOU BY THE JUDGE OF UNIVERSE!

1. **God Not Only Knows Everything About You—He Loves You w/ a perfect love**
2. **He wants to forgive! Imagine being forgiven of everything you’ve ever done**
3. **He want to set you free! — from sin, shame, guilt, condemnation**
4. **He Sent Jesus to Save You From Your Sins—by Dying in your place**

CHOOSE WISELY! A Small Choice Can Have a Big Outcome!

Only Jesus Can Save —> (John 8:32; 36)

**Sometimes the smallest step in the right direction
—can be the biggest step of your life!**