

Weighing Our Options

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- “Life is not a matter of chance; it is a matter of choice.” *(Ka)*
- “It is our choices that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities.” *(J. K. Rowling)*
- “I discovered I always have choices, but sometimes it's only a choice of my attitude.” *(Judith Knowlton)*

Weighing Our Options

- Discernment and good judgment are important for children of God.
- Proper priorities are critical for a successful Christian life.
 - Matt. 6:33 - “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”
- Discerning between good and evil is crucial.
 - Heb. 5:14 - “But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

Weighing Our Options

- Going a step beyond that and discerning between what is good and what is better is one of the marks of growing toward spiritual maturity.
- How does one choose between two “goods”?
 - Luke 10:42 - “Mary has chosen that good part.”

To Obey Is Better Than To Sacrifice

- 1Sam. 15:19-22 - “‘Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD? Why did you swoop down on the spoil, and do evil in the sight of the LORD?’ 20 And Saul said to Samuel, ‘But I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. 21 But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal.’ 22 Then Samuel said: ‘Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams.’”
- Note the important question: “Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD?”

To Obey Is Better Than To Sacrifice

- One cannot atone for disobedience by doing good works.
 - Isa. 1:11-17 - “‘To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?’ Says the LORD. ‘I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams And the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, Or of lambs or goats. 12 When you come to appear before Me, Who has required this from your hand, To trample My courts? 13 Bring no more futile sacrifices; Incense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies-I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting. 14 Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; They are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them. 15 When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood. 16 Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, 17 Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow.’”

To Obey Is Better Than To Sacrifice

- One cannot substitute good works for obedience.
 - Prov. 21:3 - “To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.”
 - Jer. 7:22-23 - “For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices. 23 But this is what I commanded them, saying, ‘Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.’”

The Little That The Righteous Have Is Better Than All Of The Riches Of The Wicked

- Psalm 37:16 - “A little that a righteous man has is better than the riches of many wicked.”
- Even if riches were morally neutral.
 - Prov. 15:16 - “Better is a little with the fear of the LORD, Than great treasure with trouble.”
 - Prov. 16:8 - “Better is a little with righteousness, Than vast revenues without justice.”
 - 1Tim. 6:6 - “Godliness with contentment is great gain.”
 - Luke 12:15 - “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.”

The Little That The Righteous Have Is Better Than All Of The Riches Of The Wicked

- Abundance is seldom morally neutral.
 - Luke 16:19-31 - The rich man and Lazarus
 - 1Tim. 6:9-11 - “But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 11 But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.”

It Is Better To Be Drown In The Sea Than To Lead One To Sin

- Matt. 18:6-7- “But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. 7 Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!”
- Saving our own lives is less important than saving the souls of others.

It Is Better To Be Drown In The Sea Than To Lead One To Sin

- Rom. 14:7 - “For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself.”
- Rom. 15:1-3 - “We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2 Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification. 3 For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me.”
- Heb. 11:4 - “By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.”

It Is Better To Have Never Known The Truth Than To Turn From It

- 2Peter 2:21 - “For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.”
- This is not a defense of ignorance, but an emphatic rejection of apostasy.

It Is Better To Have Never Known The Truth Than To Turn From It

- Heb. 2:3 - “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him?”
- Luke 12:47-48 - “And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. 48 But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask more.”
- Those who abandon the faith will be tormented more keenly by the eternal remembrance of the opportunity they cast aside.

It Is Better To Trust God Than To Put Confidence In Any Man

- Psalm 118:8-9 - “It is better to trust in the LORD Than to put confidence in man. 9 It is better to trust in the LORD Than to put confidence in princes.”
- Ecc. 7:5 - “It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise Than for a man to hear the song of fools.”

It Is Better To Trust God Than To Put Confidence In Any Man

- We must begin with the premise that we are utterly dependent on God; otherwise, it is inevitable that we will fail at some point.
 - Jer. 10:23 - “O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.”
 - Jer. 30:11 - “‘For I am with you,’ says the LORD, ‘to save you; Though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, Yet I will not make a complete end of you. But I will correct you in justice, And will not let you go altogether unpunished.’”
- We must trust that God works unceasingly for our spiritual well-being.

It Is Better To Suffer For Christ Than To Be Praised By Men

- Suffering for Christ glorifies.
 - 1Peter 3:17-18 - “For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.
18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.”

It Is Better To Suffer For Christ Than To Be Praised By Men

- Suffering for Christ glorifies.
 - 1Peter 4:12-16 - “Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. 14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people’s matters. 16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.”

It Is Better To Suffer For Christ Than To Be Praised By Men

- Praise from men diminishes.
 - Matt. 6:2 - “Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.”
 - John 5:44 - “How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?”

Is It Better To Marry Or Remain Single?

- I call this the “Happy wife; happy life” principle.
 - Prov. 25:24 - “It is better to dwell in a corner of a housetop, Than in a house shared with a contentious woman.”
 - 1Cor. 7:9 - “For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.”

Illuminating The Standard

- Discerning between good and better, while occasionally and partially dependent on circumstances, is a function of spiritual maturity.
- Choosing good over evil shows that one is in Christ.
- At some point, those in Christ must choose between the good and the better.
 - Those who choose the good over the better show that they have yet to grow up in Christ
 - Those who choose the better over the good show that they have matured in the faith