

Life Coach: Helpful Habits

Count-the-Cost Decision-Making (Luke 14:28-33)

Introduction: Decisions determine destiny. The outcome of our lives hinges upon the choices we make. Life, then, consists of the sum total of our decisions. Therefore, developing good decision-making skills is vital to success in every aspect of life.

- I. Observations about Choices
 - A. Not every choice is of equal weight.
 1. Some decisions are far more significant than others. Such decisions include salvation, marriage partner, career, etc.
 2. Some decisions are less weighty, but they still contribute to the general outcome of life: what to wear, where to shop, what brand to purchase, etc.
 - B. Some choices are more important under certain circumstances than they would be at other times.
 1. Choosing clothes to wear on a given day may appear neutral—unless you have a job interview that day.
 2. Deciding what to select from the menu may seem unimportant—unless your doctor has restricted certain foods for health reasons.
 - C. Many decisions/choices do not require immediacy.
 1. Society places us under false pressure or “urgency” regarding many matters that, in reality, we could defer to the future. (Example: advertisers make everything seem urgent.)
 2. False immediacy fosters impulsiveness—often leading to poor choices. Being “decisive” does not require snap decisions.
 - D. Typically, we make our worst decisions when driven by emotion and passion. Dispassionate decisions may delay gratification, but they also spare us a world of heartache later.
- II. Count-the-Cost Decision Making
 - A. Rely on Bible principles
 1. Be familiar with the principles of Scripture and purpose to never violate them. Allow the Bible to make decisions for you before you are confronted with the choice.
 2. Don’t ask, “What should I do?” Rather, ask, “Does the Bible address this matter directly or in principle?”
 - a. Example of direct instruction: Whether or not one should engage in an extra marital affair is already settled in the Bible. (See the 10 commandments.)
 - b. Example of principle instruction: Whether or not one should purchase a big screen T.V. at this time.
 - B. Choose Conservatively

1. “Count the cost” decision-making inherently implies a conservative approach.
 2. While resources may not be an issue (you have the money), wasting resources violates principles of good stewardship.
 3. Conservative choices leave reserve for the unexpected complications of life. They take into serious account our inability to predict the future.
- C. Be Informed
1. Wisdom is the correct use of knowledge. Therefore, before we can make wise decisions, we must be informed.
 2. Knowledge is power. Research is king. We should diligently research every significant decision. Examples: The car we purchase, the medicine we take, and the people we trust. Con men thrive on the ignorance of their victims.
 3. Seeking sound counsel from knowledgeable people helps us make informed decisions (14:31).
 4. The Internet, when used with caution, provides free education on a wide variety of issues.
- D. Consider Consequences
1. Every decision results in consequences.
 2. Count-the-Cost decision-making limits the number of “unintended consequences” by projecting into the future. Examples:
 - a. How will my decision affect my relationships: wife, children, friends, and co-workers?
 - b. How will my decision affect my financial future and goals?
 - c. How will my decision affect my health?
 - d. Do the negative unintended consequences outweigh the immediate benefit of my decision?
- E. List Benefits and Liabilities
1. When pondering significant decisions, make a list of clear, certain benefits—the “pros.”
 2. Secondly, make a list of clear, certain liabilities—the “cons.”
 3. Do not unfairly weigh pros against cons in order to obtain an emotionally pre-determined outcome.
- F. Examine Your Motives
1. Kingdom of Self:
 - a. Greed: decision based on acquisition mentality
 - b. Pride: decision based on image mentality
 - c. Lust: decision based on fleshly mentality
 - d. Slothfulness: decision (or indecision) based on lazy mentality
 2. Kingdom of God:
 - a. God: decision based on God’s glory (or at least not detracting from it)
 - b. Others: decision based upon God’s best in the lives of other people
 - c. Love: decision based on love for God and His purposes