

Living With Wrong Decisions

Air Dates: January 30 - February 3, 2023

Day One

What wrong decision are you now living with? I can assure you that I have made some wrong decisions along the way. Who hasn't? So, let's talk about living with wrong decisions.

The Bible gives us examples of people who made very wrong decisions.

Eve

Starting with Eve: Her wrong decision is infamous. Eve was ushered into a perfect world. No pain, no relationship problems, no hard work, no stress, no bad hair days—nothing bad, everything good. Eve believes the philosophy that if we give people the right environment, they will be good people and do the right thing. In the midst of Eden, she made a very wrong, very bad decision—to eat the forbidden fruit.

Why did she do this? Because she wasn't content with what she had. You see, we often think that if our circumstances were just more favorable, we'd be content. But I want to tell you this: If you're not content with where you are now, you're not likely to be content even if your circumstances improve.

If you're not content as a single person, you won't be content as a married one. If you're not content in the house you're in now, you won't be content in a bigger, better house. If you're not content with your mate the way he or she is, you won't be content with another one. If you're not content in the job where you are now, you probably won't be content with a better job.

Contentment is a choice we make, not a set of circumstances. The Apostle Paul wrote: "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances," (Philippians 4:11b). and you can learn contentment, too. Any area of your life where you are not now contented is a potential danger area—ripe for bad decisions.

With what or whom are you discontent? Your job? Your looks? Your financial situation? Your mate? Your lack of a mate? Your children or lack of children? If you don't learn to be content, you will walk right into a danger zone and that's when you are most likely to make bad decisions.

Day Two

Did you ever wonder why the Bible records all the mistakes and blunders of even the good people? It's because God wants to teach us how to deal with the mistakes and blunders of our lives. What wrong decisions have you made?

Sarah

Sarah made some bad decisions. You remember how she decided to give Hagar, her maid, to her husband so she could bear a child that would become Sarah's child and the child God had promised to Sarah and Abraham. Sarah thought that God didn't know about her biological clock, didn't understand that she was beyond childbearing years. So, she decided to get what she wanted her way.

But then, when Hagar gave birth to a son by Abraham, Sarah didn't like the decision she had made. She became extremely jealous of Hagar and the boy, Ishmael. So, what does she do? She heaps a bad decision upon a bad decision. She has Hagar banished along with Ishmael, and that began an enmity that has caused incalculable harm and pain since then.

When you've made one bad decision, don't let your emotions cause you to make an even worse one in order to try to correct the bad decision. Sometimes you have to live with your bad decisions. Sarah needed to live with Hagar and Ishmael. That might have been uncomfortable at times, but it would have been a whole lot better than what she did.

When we make a decision that affects our whole life—such as a decision to marry someone—the consequences of a wrong decision are even greater. I think of a woman I know who would probably say that her decision to marry her husband was not a good decision and her marriage has not been easy. But she has not heaped another bad decision on top of that decision. She has fought for her marriage, and while it may never be all she dreamed it would be, she has a marriage that works.

Even your bad decision can be used for good by our incredible God.

Day Three

I've noticed how easy it is for us women to make wrong decisions when it comes to men.

Bathsheba

Bathsheba's decision to have an adulterous relationship with King David was a very wrong decision. Was she intimidated by his authority? Or could she have been immensely flattered by his attention?

We need to be aware that we women are often prone to make very bad decisions when it comes to men. Our natural desire to have a husband and family can become an obsession that causes us to lower our standards, overlook obvious danger signals and end up in illegitimate relationships or wrong marriages.

I remember when a friend informed me of her engagement, and I rejoiced with her. She said, "He was well worth waiting for." She was in her early thirties and had watched friends and family members much younger than her get married. There were times of pain and loneliness, but now she is so grateful that she waited for the right man that God had for her.

I urge you to be extremely cautious about relationships with men. Don't make decisions based on your emotions or your needs. The consequences of those wrong decisions affect the rest of your life.

I've pointed out three women in the Bible who made wrong decisions, and they had to suffer the consequences. For Eve, it was banishment from Eden and a perfect life. For Sarah, she ignited an animosity between races that still troubles our world today. And for Bathsheba, she lost her good husband Uriah, whom David had killed. Then she lost the baby she and David conceived.

Decisions always bring consequences. And when we don't make good decisions, we cannot expect to avoid the consequences.

Day Four

Are you now living with the consequences of some wrong decision in your life? All of us face those consequences at times. Some of us perhaps made bad decisions out of ignorance. Obviously, if we had known where these bad decisions would lead, we wouldn't have made them. But in most cases, it wasn't that we didn't know better; it was rather that we chose to ignore the potential consequences.

Living with Wrong Decisions

So, you've made some wrong decisions. What do you do now? Is life over? Is there no way back? Yes, of course—our God can give you a life of hope and ministry, if you first:

1. Own up to your wrong decisions.

Don't live in denial. Don't keep shifting blame. Don't try to ignore it. Don't make up excuses. Just get it out in the open—first with God. Confess it to him. Then you may or may not need to talk about it with someone else. But call it what it is.

2. Refuse to live in despair.

You serve a God of second chances—many second chances. You don't have to live in despair, even over bad decisions that have affected your entire life. So:

You married the wrong person. You had an abortion. You committed adultery or fornication. You spent money you should not have spent. You lied to your boss. You chose the wrong career. You went to the wrong school. You walked away from God and the church. You bought the wrong house. You ate the wrong food. You chose the wrong friend. You went to the wrong church.

I don't know what is on your list, but I know that God wants to make an example of how he can still be glorified, even in the midst of your wrong decisions.

3. Start where you are and go forward.

Don't wallow in the despair of your wrong decision. Here are two encouraging passages from Isaiah:

Isaiah 51:3: The Lord will surely comfort Zion and will look with compassion on all her ruins; he will make her deserts like Eden, her wastelands like the garden of the Lord. Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the sound of singing.

Isaiah 58:11: The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.

Day Five

I've made many decisions that were wrong, some more so than others. The worst decisions were the ones I knew were wrong when I made them. But there have been others that were not so intentional, just misguided. For example, financial decisions that were made too hastily and ended up costing me money.

But I'm here to tell you that God remembers our frame and knows that we are dust, so it doesn't surprise him to see how often we make wrong decisions. What must, however, break his heart is to see how we wallow in those wrong decisions and allow them to keep us living in guilt and despair instead of taking our medicine and going forward. What must break God's heart is to see how we don't learn lessons that we need to learn from our wrong decisions, and we keep making the same ones over and over. It must indeed grieve God to see that we don't allow him to turn our deserts into gardens and our ashes into beauty.

God can give you the grace to live with whatever bad or wrong decision you have made, even the ones that last for a lifetime if you will allow him to do that in your life. And you will be amazed at how you can find joy and peace and fulfillment and be used of God even though you've made some wrong choices and bad decisions.

That's the kind of God we serve. He has all power. He can do anything. Are you willing to let him take your wrong decision today and make something good out of it? Are you willing to stop using your bad choices as excuses for not going forward with God and being a blessing to others? Are you willing to

allow him to put your past behind you so you can be all that God wants you to be? Are you willing to learn from those wrong decisions, so you don't heap bad decisions upon bad decisions? If so, you can find a fresh start today, even though you may have to live with the consequences of your wrong decisions.