

Practical Bible Principles for Living

Life's Greatest Choice

By J.L. Caldwell, Pastor
New Jerusalem
Baptist Cathedral

Life has been defined as the sum total of a person's choices. We design our lives for the good or for the bad by the choices we make or don't make. Uninformed decisions make for bad choices. Not being able to make choices which defer gratification can do much to muddle up our lives. Choices should not be made based upon "feelings" only, but by careful examination of the possible outcomes of each decision we make. From the cradle to the grave we face many great decisions.

The decisions as to who to marry, what school to attend, and what job to take, are but a few of the important decisions a person will have to make in his or her life. However, these types of decisions are important, but not the most important. Life, itself, will also present us with the opportunity to make great choices instead of just important ones. What will be your great choice? Have you made any great choices lately?

A limited list of what would be considered examples of great human choices would be, to embrace life or death; to abort or birth; to murder or walk away; to commit adultery. These are but a few, but not limited choices which somebody, somewhere, will have to make. If one would take the time to look at such previously mentioned examples of choices, one will find that they fall under what would be considered "moral category" choices. Moral choices are always important choices for they deal with what is right and wrong based upon accepted community standards. But still there are choices to be made that would be considered greater than these.

There are some choices which are important but not a priority. There are choices which are priority but are not important. There are choices which are important but are also considered a priority. Yet such choices may not still be the greatest decision one will have to make.

The greatest decisions anyone will have to make will always be those of a "spiritual nature,"— issues dealing with and effecting the highest, purest moral or intellectual



qualities of man, which are not earthly or sensual. For an example, to believe in God or not to believe in Him. To believe that God's only Son died to cancel our moral sins on the cross is a great choice. To believe that God does not exist is not as important as believing that He loves us.

Our greatest opportunity for choices comes when we have to choose what is most important to us. Here is where things get a little "sticky." There are some people today who fail to truly know what is really important to them. For an example, we read Proverbs 14:1, "every wise woman builds her house: but the foolish plucks it down with her own hands." Was this an important choice she made or a great one? Would this be a moral choice or a spiritual one? It was a great one with great consequences. Making great choices is a life changing event. A person can usually rebound from a bad important choice, but it is often very difficult to rebound from a great bad choice. Great bad choices can ruin our lives for good and forever. Therefore we must be very careful in the choices we make throughout our lives. All Christians should focus upon making good, and great choices for their lives. Every person must choose for or against God. To refuse or neglect to make a choice is to make one.

No one can make choices for you, nor should they, unless you are without knowledge and they are interceding for you for the good. And those who allow others to make life

choices for them have put themselves in a position to be used and taken the advantage of. The old saying goes, "Every tub must sit on its own bottom." You see the truth is, we are individually responsible to God, ourselves and we must individually choose. We must consider the fact as to whether or not we are bought with a price and do not own ourselves, as we think (1 Corinthians 6:19-20, 7:23). Otherwise, we make ourselves our own god and do not have to make any choices at all.

Often when we make our greatest choices, they are filled with a sense of urgency and not necessarily a sense of emergency. Yet, when we make choices, they carry a long way into our lives. For example, which road should we take in order to arrive where we want to go. Choices for our lives work the same way — we can end up in the desired or right place or in the undesirable and wrong place for ourselves. Life is uncertain and death

is sure. Since we have no guarantee of tomorrow, we had better do what we ought to do today.

When you consider all that God has done for you, it is logical that you would choose to serve Him.

The servant Joshua was put in a position having to make a great choice. It was a necessary choice, it was a personal choice, it was an urgent choice, it was a logical choice when he said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Joshua was an old man now stricken with much age. The children of Israel had long arrived in the Promised land and was enjoying the peace and prosperity God had promised those who reach the Canaan land. Joshua had observed the pending danger about to fall upon the spiritually blinded Hebrews. The Hebrew children were being corrupted by the intimacy of the Canaanites who still lived in the land (Joshua 23). Joshua reminded the people what

God had done for them and the fact that they promised to obey all that God had commanded. Joshua called all the elders (leaders), and judges and leaders of the tribes of Israel and reminded them to not forget their promises to God but keep them lest worse things begin to come upon them.

Until then, the people did not realize that they had a great choice to make. Living the good life of God's promise to Abraham, they felt that they had no more choices to make. Believing God had already made the choices for them which they believed would last forever. Not so! Even under the best of circumstances, life will always present us with choices.

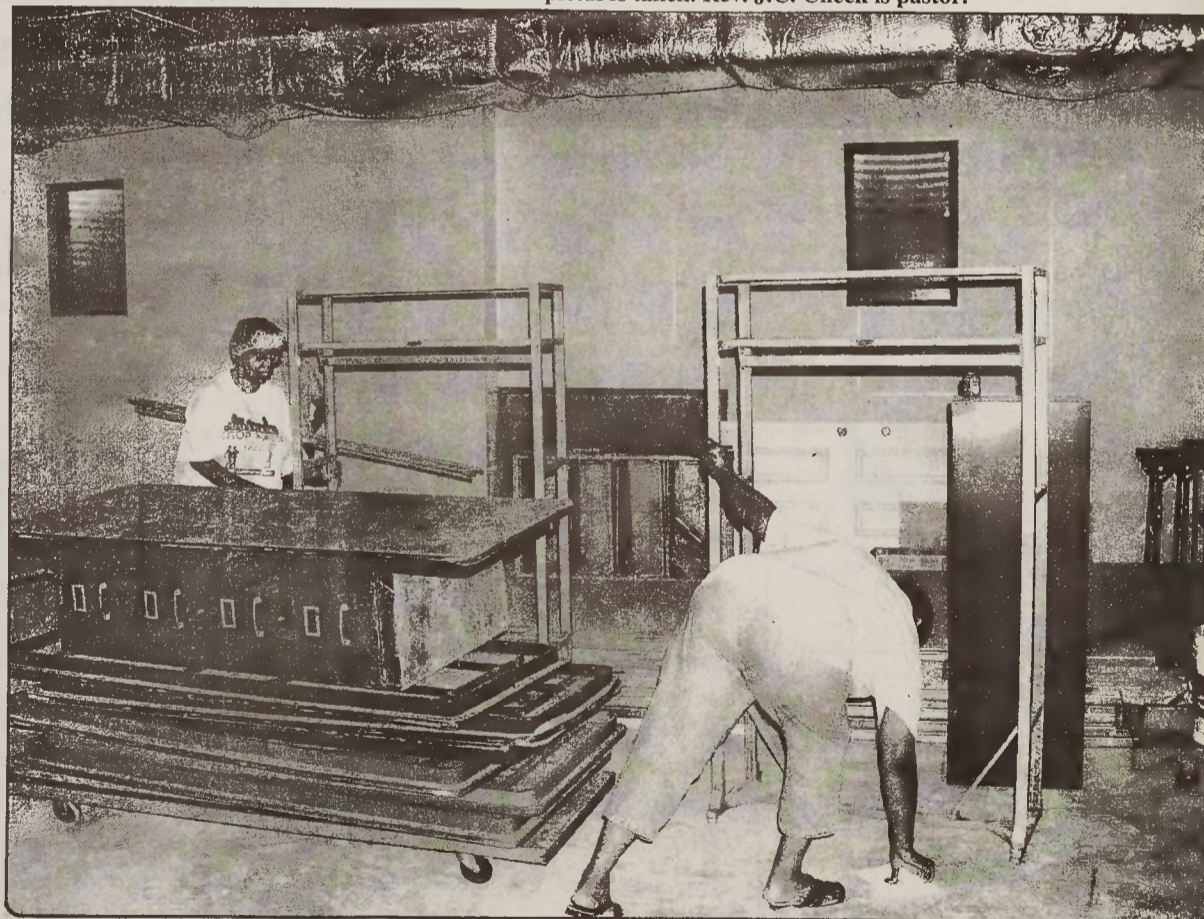
Joshua related the events whereby God cared for them until now. After that God's "riot act" was presented to them for consideration. "You cannot promise God again and go back on your promise to Him as you had done before." He will neither forgive you of your

transgressions nor your sins anymore (Joshua 24:19). You have a spiritual choice to make. "If it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose you this day, whom you will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you live: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." The question now for all Christians, "What's your choice?"

It was Moses, some years earlier, who declared God's words to the people about choice. People who constantly sin are incapable of making good choices for themselves. In this case, God, through Moses, made the choice for them. "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessings and cursing: therefore choose life, that both you and your offspring may live (Deuteronomy 30:19)."

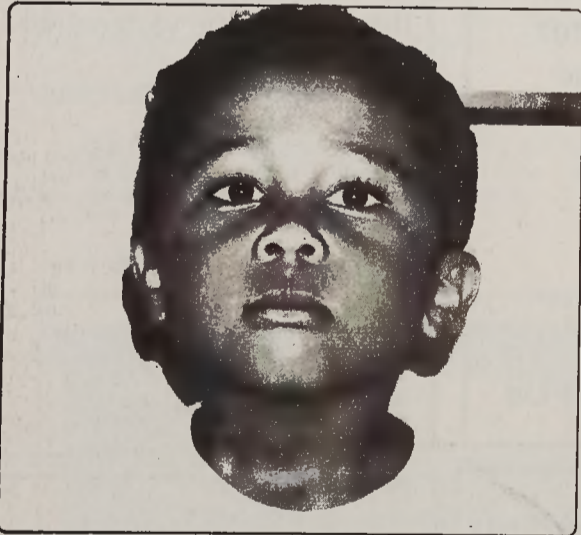


Mrs. Lenora Thorpe moves some furniture in the new fellowship hall at Mt. Calvary United Church of Christ. Volunteers worked Aug. 20 to clean up some of the construction debris. Because the ladies weren't in their church finest, they were "reluctant" to have their pictures taken. Rev. J.C. Check is pastor.



Alex and Associates

P.O. Box 71133
Durham, N.C. 27722
475-3716



A young Alex McDuffie is selling subscriptions this summer for *The Carolina Times*. He was helped in this endeavor with his grandfather and "Number 2" James McDuffie of 302 Seven Oaks Road. The elder McDuffie is using Alex's business to introduce him to the entrepreneurial lifestyle.

You may see him out in his neighborhood and surrounding areas. Young Alex does not drive, we're told he has a "chauffeur" named James McDuffie.

Smoking

(Continued From Front)

director of the Virginia Lottery, which gets as much as 10 percent of its sales from North Carolina. South Carolina gets 12 percent of its sales from its northern neighbor.

Both the Senate and the House will return to Raleigh this coming week, although they're not scheduled to do much more than tie up loose ends before formally adjourning. If there's no vote then on a lottery, it's a sure bet lawmakers will resume their debate next year.

"As long as the budget remains tight, and you're going to get a pent-up demand for new school construction, that will keep the lottery debate alive," Guillory said.

And until then, players from North Carolina will find a place to wager on a lottery's bouncing balls.

N.C. Lottery

(Continued From Front)

"The Health and Wellness Trust Fund strongly supports the commitment of all restaurant owners who understand the health benefits that come as a result of making their establishments smoke-free," said Alison K. McLaurin, HWTF's public affairs and marketing director.

DeMario Smith, a freshman at NCCU, represented the teen program Teens Against Consuming Tobacco (TACT). The program

gets teens involved to help get their peers to stay away from tobacco or to get help in quitting using tobacco products. Smith has been involved with the program for two years.

Smith is a 2005 graduate of the Durham School of the Arts. His parents are Mr. and Mrs. Lester and Lenora Smith.