

Our characters are the accumulation of the decisions we make

When we're dissatisfied with what's going on in our lives, we're tempted to blame circumstances that are beyond our control. We tend to think we'd be better off if life had "dealt us a better hand." Yet in all the most important ways, we are each the product of decisions we have made in the freedom of our wills. We certainly do have circumstances that we have to deal with, but the quality of our lives is determined primarily by our character, not our circumstances — and our character is something that is within our control.

Our characters are the accumulation of the decisions we make. Whether we realize it or not, each time we make a choice, we add a little bit to our character. Depending on whether we make a good choice or a bad one, we either add something good to our character or we add something bad to it. Either way, our characters are constantly growing and changing.

The Bible teaches that there are only two directions in which our characters can grow: we either grow in the direction of righteousness or the direction of wickedness (**Rom. 2:6-11**). And ultimately, our eternal destiny will be the completion of whichever path of growth we're choosing right now, whether good or bad. Heaven and hell will simply be the end of the road we're traveling by the decisions we're presently making. Our "destiny" can't be anything other than the "destination" that we have traveled toward.

One reason why our moment-by-moment choices are so important is that these make it either easier or more difficult for us to do what is right in the future. If I take the easy way out and make a bad choice right now, I change my character just a little bit, and I will find it that much harder to do what is right the next time. Late in life, I will find it either very easy to live a godly life (because I've been making many choices in that direction) or I will find it very difficult.

It's wise to be careful with our decisions. They all count, every single one of them. They all go into making our character. And our character is what God will judge on the last day. Right now is the time to build a godly character. Eventually, we will reap whatever choices we have sown.

Monday: Romans 2:6-11; 6:16

Key Idea: Our character is growing either in a good direction or a bad one.

Questions for Family Growth: What are the only two alternatives presented in this passage? In **2:6**, what is God's judgment of us based upon? If people don't start out wicked, how do they get to be that way when they are grown?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 27:21.**

Tuesday: John 8:42-47

Key Idea: With every choice we make, we are becoming more like God or more like the devil.

Questions for Family Growth: In regard to spiritual matters, what choice do we have as to who will be our “father”? In v.44, whose “desires” did Jesus say these people wanted to do? What point did He make in v.47?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 27:22.

Wednesday: Ephesians 5:15-17

Key Idea: Life is serious business — it pays to live carefully.

Questions for Family Growth: What does it mean to live “circumspectly” (NKJV)? Why are the decisions we make each day so important? Are there any unimportant choices or decisions? What did Jesus say in Mt. 12:36 and Lk. 16:10?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 27:23-27.

Thursday: Galatians 6:7,8

Key Idea: In eternity we will “reap” whatever we’ve “sown” by the decisions we’ve made.

Questions for Family Growth: What are the two things we can “sow” to? What are the only two kinds of “reaping” that are possible? What determines our inner character as individual human beings? Who chooses what our eternal destiny will be?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 28:1.

Friday: 1 Corinthians 15:9,10

Key Idea: We can begin to make better choices and grow in the direction of a better character.

Questions for Family Growth: As a young man among the Jews, what kind of choices did Paul make? What did he do when he realized he was headed in the wrong direction? Why should Paul’s example be encouraging to us?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 28:2.

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