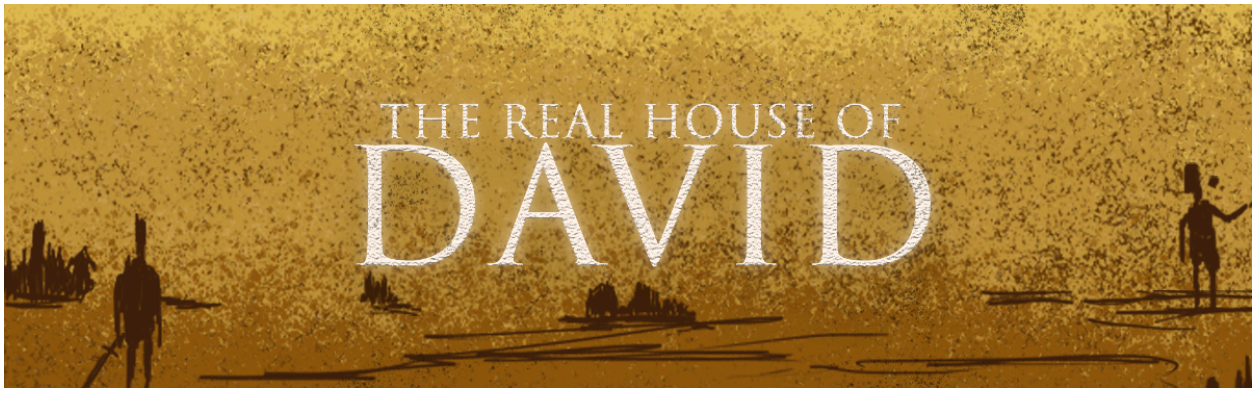


MAKE WISE CHOICES

2 Samuel 2:1 – 3:39

- **The Lord speaks to His people in order to give us direction, and to enable us to live strong and successful lives (2 Samuel 2:1).**
- **We need to hear God's voice in order to know His will and become the "Difference-makers" that He has called us to be.**
- **A "Difference-maker" is someone who "makes a difference" in the lives of others, and to become a good "Difference-maker" we have to learn how to make "wise choices" (2 Samuel 2-3).**
- **Choices are inseparably linked to consequences.**
- ***What are some wise choices we should make regularly?***

Wise Choices Would Include:

SHOWING <u>APPRECIATION</u> TO OTHERS

- *"When David heard that the men of Jabesh-gilead had buried Saul, he sent them this message: 'May the LORD bless you for being so loyal to your king and giving him a decent burial. May the LORD be loyal to you in return and reward you with His unfailing love! And I, too, will reward you for what you have done.'"* (2 Samuel 2:4-6)
- **Being appreciative towards others is a "lost art" in our world.**
- "The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated." (William James)
- *"Take delight in honoring each other."* (Romans 12:10)

Wise Choices Would Include:

FOLLOWING THE RIGHT <u>LEADERS</u>

- *"Abner, the commander of Saul's army, had already gone to Mahanaim with Saul's son Ishbosheth. There he proclaimed Ishbosheth king over Gilead, Jezreel, Ephraim, Benjamin, the land of the Ashurites, and all the rest of Israel."* (2 Samuel 2:8-9)
- **Ishbosheth was a leader who struggled with many character issues.**
- "Everything rises and falls with leadership." - John Maxwell
- *"Do not let anyone lead you astray."* (1 John 3:7)
- **The best "leaders" are those who love and live for the Lord.**

Wise Choices Would Include:

RUNNING AWAY FROM TROUBLE

- *"Joab, Abishai, and Asahel, the three sons of Zeruiah, were among David's forces…Asahel could run like a deer, and he began chasing Abner. He was relentless and single-minded in his pursuit. When Abner saw him coming, he called out, 'Go fight someone else!'…But Asahel refused and kept right on chasing Abner so Abner thrust the butt end of his spear through Asahel's stomach…He stumbled to the ground and died there."* (2 Samuel 2:18-23)
- **Lots of people in today's world are making the bad choice to "run towards" trouble rather than "run away" from trouble.**
- **Sometimes we need to run away from *Temptation*.**
    - **The Devil uses temptation to get us to forsake our values, commitments, relationships and best interests of others.**
    - **Joseph was a man who understood the need to "run away" from temptation (Genesis 39:8-12).**
    - *"You belong to God; so run from all these evil things, and follow what is right and good. Pursue a godly life, along with faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness."* (1 Timothy 6:11)
- **Sometimes we need to run away from *Troublemakers*.**
    - *"Run from anything that stimulates youthful lust. Follow anything that makes you want to do right. Pursue faith and love and peace, and enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts."* (2 Timothy 2:22)
    - **Running with the wrong crowd and developing the wrong friendships leads to disaster in our lives (2 Samuel 13:1-39).**
    - *"The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray."* (Proverbs 12:26)
    - *"I am a friend to all who fear You (O God), to all who follow Your precepts."* (Psalm 119:63)
- **The best way to stay out of trouble is to hang with right people and learn right principles in life; and the best place to do that is in a Life Group.**

Wise Choices Would Include:

CONQUERING FEAR IN OUR LIVES

- *"Abner became a powerful leader among those who were loyal to Saul's dynasty. One day Ishbosheth, Saul's son, accused Abner of sleeping with one of his father's concubines. Abner became furious and said, 'I should just go ahead and give David the rest of Saul's kingdom.'…Ishbosheth didn't dare say another word because he was afraid of what Abner might do."* (2 Samuel 3:6-11)
- **Fear is a discouraging and defeating emotion in our lives.**
- ***What "fears" have I struggled with in my life?***
- **Fear will keep us from: 1) Speaking up for what's true, 2) Standing up for what's right and 3) Showing up to obey God.**
- The Lord – *"Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God* is *with you wherever you go."* (Joshua 1:9)

Wise Choices Would Include:

LETTING GO OF <u>BITTERNESS</u>

- *"Abner went to Hebron to tell David that all the people of Israel and Benjamin supported him…Just after Abner left, Joab and some of David's troops returned from a raid…When Joab was told that Abner had just been there visiting the king and had been sent away in safety, he rushed to see the king. 'What have you done?' he demanded. 'What do you mean by letting Abner get away?' Joab sent messengers to catch up with Abner. They found him and brought him back with them. But David knew nothing about it. When Abner arrived at Hebron, Joab took him aside at the gateway as if to speak with him privately. But then he drew his dagger and killed Abner in revenge for killing his brother Asahel."* (2 Samuel 3:22-27)
- **Anger and bitterness will cause us to make bad decisions and harm others.**
- *"See to it that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many."* (Hebrews 12:15)
- *"Don't sin by letting anger gain control over you. Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a mighty foothold to the Devil."* (Ephesians 4:26-27)
- **We can overcome anger, bitterness and hurt when we seek to forgive and love others like the Lord has forgiven and loved us.**
- *"Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of malicious behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you."* (Ephesians 4:31-32)

- ***What are some 'bad choices' I've made in the past, and what steps do I need to take to undo or overcome them?***
- *"People who cover over their sins will not prosper. But if they confess and forsake them, they will receive mercy."* (Proverbs 28:13)
- ***What are some steps that I need to take to make better choices today and in the days ahead?***
- *"Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek His will in all you do, and He will direct your paths. Don't be impressed with your own wisdom. Instead, fear the LORD and turn your back on evil. Then you will gain renewed health and vitality."* (Proverbs 3:5-8)