

Decisions: Who is Controlling Your Life?

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I regularly sit and talk with people who are facing difficult decisions. Perhaps they are deciding if they need to confront their cruel mother-in-law, or work on setting more limits and discipline with their 13 year old, or maybe they are wondering if now is the time to discuss years of emotional neglect in their marriage.

We all face difficult decisions. Difficult decisions are unavoidable. There is one filter that many people run their decisions through that has the capacity to deter them from God's best. It is the question, "How will they react if I make that decision?" "What will my mother-in-law say about me if I confront her?" "But I can't tell my husband I am unhappy or he won't talk to me for weeks." "If I set limits on my 13 year old, she will make my life miserable."

Many people, unfortunately, make their decisions based on how others will respond to them. Character, honor, courage, and integrity are characteristics of a mature person who makes decisions based on principles and God's direction in life. It is wise to anticipate outcomes of our decisions, but it is a huge mistake to make our decisions based on how others will respond.

If we base our decisions on the reactions and beliefs of others, we are controlled by others. If we are controlled by others, then the loudest, strongest person in the room will have control of our very decisions.

I recently witnessed a teenager make a very difficult decision in which his friends disagreed. He made a very brave decision based on what was right, mature, and what he knew to be true. I admired his bravery in the midst of ridicule.

Even in others' anger and disagreement, there can be much peace in pursuing the path that is led by the Lord. When we make decisions by listening to God and searching our hearts, we can go forward standing tall. God calls us to be wise, to obey his commands, to get the input of wise counsel, and to trust in Him.

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