



Ransom Notes

Choices

Make Up Your Mind

Decision Time: Yes, I was sitting in The Lighthouse, a restaurant in Rochester, Illinois, with four friends. The waitress was waiting for my decision. Thoughts of biscuits and gravy made my mouth water, but a scrambled egg and toast would be more healthy. My eyes spotted a pair of waffles reaching out to me but should I really choose my favorite breakfast meal —

a pancake dripping in maple syrup? No time to waver. The egg won out, but did I make a totally healthy choice? Absolutely not, as I also ordered hash browns and a grilled bagel. Adding to my joy was a bit of blackberry jam. Of course this was not a major, earth-shattering, life-threatening choice. My head did spend a few moments, however, struggling. Every day, each of us faces far more important choices. Shall we take job A or B? What college would be best for our grandchildren, but also affordable? Should we sell our home and move to a senior community, where some day-to-day stress would be reduced, or stay in our home? The doctor suggests a surgery option vs. taking additional pain medicine and continue to live with discomfort in the knee? You add your items to this list of tough choices.

As meaningful and important as these daily options are, we glance in the scriptures and feel ashamed that we even thought we were being brave as we made our decision, in light of what some of God's children had to decide.

Stop for a moment and remember Abraham, the guy who was promised to be the father of many nations. He is 99 and yet he and Sarah have no children. God speaks to him, and then in Romans 4:18-20 we read, *"Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, 'So shall your offspring be'. Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead — since he was about a hundred years old — and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver."*

Imagine this pair of senior citizens sitting in their home, discussing the possibility of becoming parents. "Sarah, shall we believe God and get the nursery ready, or should we shout out to the Master in heaven, 'No, no, no'? Please, no baby at this home. We choose retirement. They, however, made the right choice. With unwavering faith, they believed, trusted, and became parents.

Choices are often tough. Christ prayed to His Father, asking that this cup of suffering be taken from Him. Obviously Jesus knew of the pain of crucifixion, and would have preferred not to suffer. Eve made a bad decision, ate from the wrong tree at the bidding of Satan, and got thrown out of the Garden of Eden. Job continued to be faithful to God, in spite of his wife telling him to curse God and die. Even the short guy, Mr. Z up in the tree, had to decide, shall I come down as the Master has asked to come to my home today, or shall I ignore Him, and stay up here? Probably he worried a bit that the house might be a mess and not ready for unplanned company. Bless him, however, he did take Jesus home.

Think what was going through Peter's head as he saw the Master walking on the water. The impetuous one must have debated, for at least a moment, the option of staying quietly in the safety of the boat, or jumping overboard and walking toward Christ. Sometimes each of us gets a bit crazy in the head with some of our decisions as they relate to following the Master. Have you ever debated staying under the warm covers and watching the Sunday service on tv? When planning the family budget for the year, how carefully do you debate the amount to place on the line marked "CHURCH"? Does your faith drive you forward as you debate helping the widow or single mom next door, or going to the grandkid's baseball game? It can get a bit tricky in the head as we think about sitting next to a homeless fellow or sitting by our best friend? Wonder if the Good Samaritan debated a bit? Could he have said to himself, "Why should I, a Samaritan, help this man in need, when he cares not at all for me, the guy from the other side of the country?" Not an easy choice to help an enemy.

We are children of God. Let us be wise in our decisions so that our Father will be proud of us.

Which would you choose?

lessonslearnedinlife.com

A 8 hours of solid sleep every night	B your house cleans itself
C personal chef	D a year of free coffee at Starbucks

Which would you choose?

A Conversation with fisherman, Peter, regarding strategy for fishing in Sea of Galilee.	B Lunch with little boy whose sack lunch fed 5000-plus, hungry people.
C Fifteen minutes in quiet conversation with Christ.	D Chat with Moses regarding challenges of leading the C of I for 40 years in