



OTHERWISE



Touching Lives
with James Merritt

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Touching Lives with Dr. James Merritt

Series Summary

There are only two types of decisions we can make. From a human perspective, we could call them either good decisions or bad decisions. From God's perspective, He would call them wise decisions or foolish decisions. Just as every parent wants to train their children to make wise decisions, God wants His children making wise decisions. God wants us to live otherwise. And in order to do that, we need to come to understand that the wisest decision we can make is to seek God's wisdom for every decision.

On The Other Hand

Otherwise | 2 Chronicles 1:7-12

INTRODUCTION

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The challenge we all face every day is confronting the things in life we can change and making the right decisions about those changes. Life really comes down to making decisions. You are who you are today, what you are today, and where you are today because of the decisions you have made in the past. Nobody understands the importance of being able to make wise decisions more than a king. As one of the greatest kings who ever lived, he clearly understood the value of decision making and made a decision that, in turn, made him the great king that he was. God did something for this king that He will do for us, and if we will follow this king's example, we can make decisions fit for a king.

KEY POINTS

1. Admit You Need It

The first step to having the wisdom you need to make wise decisions is to admit that you need that wisdom. So often, the reason why we make bad decisions is because we stubbornly refuse to admit that we need to ask for advice, both from God who gives wisdom, and from others, who are wiser than we are. Admitting you need wisdom will save you a lot of heartache.

God doesn't give wisdom to the people who think they know it all. He only gives it to the person who admits he doesn't know enough. Our problem is we have enough knowledge to make foolish decisions, but we don't have enough wisdom oftentimes to make wise decisions. Therefore, if we're going to make good decision, we need to admit that we need wisdom.

2. Ask For It

Understand that the reason that Solomon asked for wisdom first and then knowledge is that wisdom is the ability to take the knowledge that we gain and use that knowledge to make wise decisions that will be best for us and best for those who are impacted by our decisions.

One of the marks of wisdom is being wise enough to realize that knowledge alone is not enough to make wise decisions. Wisdom is knowing there is a difference between knowledge and wisdom. Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad!

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On The Other Hand

Otherwise | 2 Chronicles 1:7-12

All of that to say, if you want wisdom, you can do exactly what Solomon did. You can ask for it. You don't have to be a king to need wisdom and you don't have to be a king to get wisdom. The same deal God made with Solomon He will make with you, for He wants you to be wise and to make wise decisions.

3. Apply It

Solomon did not ask God to make him smart enough to make a living. He asked God to make him wise enough to make a life. The word that is used for "wisdom" literally means "skill." It is used in the Bible often to describe people who are skilled in working with their hands. God gives you wisdom not so you can show others how much you know, but so you can show others how to live otherwise.

That brings us to the definition of wisdom. Wisdom is seeing life through the eyes of God and living life in the will of God. And where do you find this wisdom? And how do you discern this will? The great news is God's will and wisdom is found in His Word. That is why getting into God's Word daily is so important to making wise decisions. If we're going to live life God's way, we need to know what that way is and apply it to our everyday lives.

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Otherwise | 2 Chronicles 1:7-12

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. When was a time you made a not-so-wise decision? What did you learn from that experience?
2. Is there a decision you need to make soon that you're seeking wisdom about?
3. Which of the three actions we discussed today do you struggle with most when it comes to wisdom (admitting you need it, asking for it, or applying it)?

Some Other Time

Otherwise | Psalm 118:24; Ephesians 5:16-17

INTRODUCTION

There is only one of two ways you can use time: wisely or foolishly. Thankfully, God has not left us on our own to sort out how we ought to spend our time and how we ought to live our days out on this earth. He has given us specific advice on the best way to use every day and there is an encyclopedia full of wisdom on how to manage time wisely in a simple statement of Scripture. We’re going to take a look at that Scripture today, and as we do, we’re going to see that the most important use of your time is spending most of your time on what is most important. To make sure we do that, let’s discuss three steps we can take.

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KEY POINTS

1. Approach Every Day Thankfully

Every day is a day the Lord has made whether it is a sunny day or a rainy day, a hot day or cold day, a good day or bad day, it is a day the Lord has made. Interestingly the word “made” is the same one that is used throughout the first two chapters of Genesis to describe how God “created” this world. When God created space, God also created time. Just as God created a world for us to live in, God also created the time for us to live in it on a daily basis. In other words, every single day you live is a God-given day. It is a gift of God, and you ought to be thankful for that gift.

When you live otherwise, you will approach every day thankfully. When you have a heart full of God’s wisdom you will number your days, because you will realize your days are numbered and therefore you will be thankful for every day that you get.

2. Spend Every Day Usefully

The only day you can really enjoy is today. You can’t enjoy yesterday; it is just a memory. You can’t enjoy tomorrow; it is just a possibility. You can only enjoy today. That is why we must be careful in how we spend every day. The time we have today can only be used today. We talk about “saving time” or “making time” or “borrowing time.” You can’t do any of those things with time. The time you waste today is gone forever. The time you don’t use today cannot be carried over until tomorrow. This is the day the Lord has made-- spend it usefully.

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Some Other Time

Otherwise | Psalm 118:24; Ephesians 5:16-17

3. Live Every Day Joyfully

Let's face it. We all have bad days. I can guarantee you that you can count on at least one bad day a month. The psalmist is plain that every day God gives us we should enjoy and enjoy the time we have in that day. Every day there is a rose you can smell somewhere. Don't let the bad things that happen in a given day take the joy away from all the good things that happen to us every day.

From the moment we wake up we have a choice as to whether we are going to enjoy the day that we have. No matter what else is going on in our life today, we can rejoice that God loves us. We can rejoice that God is for us. We can rejoice that God will work everything out for our good. We can rejoice that we are forgiven, and we have eternal life if we know Jesus. We can rejoice that we have another day where we can thank God, praise God, love God, serve God, and worship God.

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Some Other Time

Otherwise | Psalm 118:24; Ephesians 5:16-17

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Are you happy with how you're spending your time right now? Why or why not?
2. Do you consistently approach each day with gratitude, or is it easy for you to default to complaining about what the day holds?
3. What is something you can find joy in today?

The Other Side Of Life

Otherwise | 1 Corinthians 10:12-13

Temptation is not removed when you become a Christ-follower. In fact, the moment you become a follower of Jesus, you become an enemy of Satan, and you get put on his most wanted list as public enemy #1.

3. God Can Be Trusted

At this point, I know two things about temptation. On the one hand, I am going to be tempted. On the other hand, God can be trusted to make sure that I will never face a temptation that is greater than my ability to handle it.

Jesus taught us to pray, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” When you pray that, God is faithful, and He will answer it. I saw a bumper sticker one time that said, “Lead me not into temptation – I can find it myself.” You don’t have to worry about finding temptation. Temptation will find you! But, when it does it will not be a temptation so strong that it gives you a beatdown you can’t resist. God can be trusted to lead you out when temptation tries to pull you in.

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The Other Side Of Life

Otherwise | 1 Corinthians 10:12-13

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What is a temptation you struggle with?
2. How have you seen God deliver you from this temptation in the past?
3. Have you ever had the thought that you were above or exempt from temptation? Why is that?

One Foot In Front Of The Other

Otherwise | 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

INTRODUCTION

People tend to go to two extremes with their body. Some people don't think their body is as important as God does. Other people think their body is more important than God does. Whichever group we happen to be in, I want us to see our body in a completely different way than maybe we ever have before. How you see your body will determine how you treat your body. Whether you ignore your body, adore your body, or abhor your body is not a physical issue, but a spiritual issue. So as we conclude our series called "Otherwise" we're going to learn that living healthy is part of living holy, and we're going to look at the words of Paul to see how we can live a healthy and holy life.

KEY POINTS

1. I Should Do What Is Holy With My Body

There is a reason why our body is called "a temple." In the Bible, the temple was a place of worship. That means your body, if you are a follower of Jesus, is a place of worship. Since the Holy Spirit lives in our temple 24 hours a day, every waking moment of our body is to be a place where God is worshipped and honored.

Since my body is a temple where the Holy Spirit lives then it stands to reason that I am to do whatever is holy with my body. When you live otherwise, you make up your mind that you never subject your body to anything that might be unholy.

2. I Should Do What Is Healthy For My Body

Your body was created for one purpose - to glorify God. Wherever you take it, however you treat it, whatever you do with it, should always be to glorify God. That means your eating habits, your activity level, your rest – all of those things should be used to glorify God and to take care of the temple He has given you.

Health is important. Taking care of your body is important to God, but it is not just so that we will live longer, but so we will live better, so we can give God our very best thinking, our highest energy and our longest service.

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One Foot In Front Of The Other

Otherwise | 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

3. I Should Do What Is Helpful For My Body

You know one of the most helpful things you can do for your body is both to be thankful for the body that you have and to keep your body always thankful. I read something that absolutely amazed me, but it didn't surprise me. Medical researchers are discovering that gratitude is the one emotional trait most likely to benefit physical health and to quicken recovery from a serious illness. Grateful people tend to be happier, most satisfied with their lives, and actually live longer.

As a follower of Jesus, we should be grateful every day not only that God has given us a body, but that Jesus gave His body for our body, our soul, and our spirit. He died on a cross and was raised from the dead so that He could send His Holy Spirit to live in my body and to make it a holy, healthy, and happy temple. Jesus cares about us in every way—spiritually, emotionally, and physically. And that is something to be grateful for!

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One Foot In Front Of The Other

Otherwise | 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Would you say that you view your body as less important than God does or more important than God does?
2. What healthy habits have you installed into your lifestyle?
3. What are some unhealthy habits you need to work on eliminating?
