Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Crisis of Decision
Scripture: Hebrews 11:24-29
Code: 1260

I'd like to have you take your Bible tonight with me for our study together, and I'd like you to turn the 11th chapter of Hebrews, Hebrews chapter 11...and I'd like to use as a text verses 24...through...29. Hebrews 11:24 through 29. Lemme read this to you, and then we'll...discuss what the Lord would have us from it. "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. Through faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch him. By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, which the Egyptians, attempting to do, were drowned."

Now, this is a very, very wonderful text, because it tells us of the faith of Moses; but I want us to draw out of this text not so much that emphasis as the emphasis of what I call the crisis of decision; and I find here that you'll notice in verse 25, Moses had to choose. You see the word choosing at the very beginning of the verse. As I thought about it, life is really made up of decisions, a series of daily decisions in everybody's life determines character...The difference between Christians and non-Christians is basically not only the act of God upon their life, but the decisions that they make. From the first decision they make when they choose Christ to every other decision that they make as they live in the world.

Now, God has created man with a capacity to choose. Man has volition. He has the ability to choose. The Bible teaches that man has the ability to choose God or not to choose God, to choose Christ or not to choose Christ, to choose good or to choose evil, to choose to obey or to choose not to obey; and man lives with the consequences of his choices. For the Christian, the choice is clear. He chooses God. He chooses Christ. He chooses good. He chooses obedience when he comes to Christ and then, I trust, he continues to choose those things daily following his initial choice.

A legend says that Irineas, who was one of the early church fathers, was placed between an idol and a cross and told to choose the idol or the cross. To prefer the idol was to have the official protection of the government. To choose the cross was to die. The story goes that Irineas needed no time. He chose the cross, and in AD 202, he died like the Lord that he chose. I think for every Christian, the same reality faces us. We must choose. Every man comes to the point every day in his life, whether

he will choose the idols of the world or the cross of Christ. Whether he will take up the cross and follow Christ or whether he will choose those things the world offers for him to worship...

You make that decision every day you live. J.J. Ingalls wrote these words...and this is basically a statement about opportunity. He said, "Master of human destinies am I. Fame, love, and fortune on my footstep wait. Cities and fields I walk. I penetrate deserts and seas remote, and passing by, hovel and mart and palace soon or late, I knock unbidden once on every gate. If sleeping wake, if fasting rise before I turn away, it is the hour of fate, and they who follow me read every state mortals desire and conquer every foe save death, but those who doubt or hesitate condemned to failure, penury, and woe, seek me in vain and needlessly implore. I answer not. I return no more."

So said J.A. Ingalls of opportunity, "It comes. It goes. You take it, or you miss it." That's the way it is with choice. There is a crisis point in the life of believers day after day after day, at which point they choose good, or they choose evil. Shakespeare said, "There is a tide in the affairs of men which taken at its flood leads on to fortune. Omitted, all the voyage of their life is bound in shallows and in miseries." Napoleon used to say, "That in every battle, there is a crisis point, a 10 or 15 minute period on which the issue of the battle depends." He said, "To gain it is victory. To lose it is defeat." And every turn of life faces us with a decision. We either grasp opportunity for the glory of God, or we lose opportunity. We either grasp a choice and go the way of the cross, or we forfeit and go the way of the world. Since the beginning of time, God has always given man the right to make a choice.

In Deuteronomy 30 verse 19, it says, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore, choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." In Joshua 24:15, it says, "And see if it seem evil to you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom you will serve. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." In 1 Kings 18:21, Elijah said, "'How long halt you between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; if Baal, follow him.' And the people answered him not a word." Those are three verses that tell us there's a choice.

Now, in the chapter that we're looking at, the 11th chapter of Hebrews, we see some choices. In fact, all through the chapter, we have illustrations of choices. Abel chose God's way, gave a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. Enoch chose God's way, to walk with God. The rest of the world didn't. It was drowned, and he walked right on into God's presence. Abraham chose God's way, to live a life of faith. The people in whose land he dwelt did not, and they were destroyed...Isaac, Jacob, Joseph chose God's way, to believe God for what they couldn't see. They were blessed. The heathen refused. They were destroyed. Decision, and that's the way it's always gonna be in life for all of us.

It was said of Josiah, the wonderful king in 2 Kings 22:2, "And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left." He chose what was right. He chose what was right. And now we come to Moses. Moses chose, rather, to suffer affliction with the people

of God than to enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season. Moses made a choice. It's not really a choice any different than the choice anybody else has to make.

Now, basically, there were four things that Moses rejected in choosing the right thing, and I wanna share them with you out of this text. Moses chose God's way. Moses chose the right things. Moses chose honorably and, consequently, he rejected four things. I think they're very important. No. 1, he rejected the world's prestige, the world's prestige. Notice again verse 24. "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." Now, he made his first choice, and it was against the prestige of the world. Moses had ridden to the heights in Egyptian society. He had been one of those Hebrew babies that was supposed to have been killed by Pharaoh, but you remember his parents had hidden him in a basket covered with pitch so it wouldn't sink, and they had put him into the Nile River, and he had floated along on the river down to where the daughter of Pharaoh was taking a bath; and you remember the story, how she discovered him and took him into the house, and he became the son of Pharaoh's daughter. That's what it says in verse 24. He was the son of Pharaoh's daughter. She adopted him as her son. He took a place of tremendous significance; and from that particular vantage point, he rose to be in the heights of Egyptian society.

Exodus 2:5 says, "And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river. Her maidens walked along by the riverside; when she saw the ark among the flags, reeds, she sent her maid to fetch it. And when she opened it, she saw the child; behold, the baby cried. She had compassion on him and said, 'This is one of the Hebrews' children.'" And that was the beginning of the great story. She took the child to be her own...

Now, in the same chapter, Exodus chapter 2 and verse 7, we read this. "Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter...this is the sister of Moses, who has been running along the shore with her eyes on the basket...behold, she...he says...'Shall I go and call to the a nurse? Would you like a Hebrew nurse for this Hebrew baby?' And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'That's a great idea. You go.' And the maid went and got the child's mother. Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Take this child away and nurse it for me, and I'll give thee thy wages.' And the woman took the child and nursed him, and the child grew, and she brought him back to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses because that means drawn out of water."

Now, get the picture. Moses' mother has to give up her child. The wonderful providence of God, Moses' sister's running along the bank, talks the Pharaoh's daughter into letting her take it to a Hebrew nurse. Takes Moses right back to his own mother, and she says, "You take care of him and bring him back to me when he is grown." And it says, "The child grew." Now, scholars say that could mean anything from three years at a minimum to 12 years at a maximum; and at that point, he was then brought back to Pharaoh's house to receive full training as one who is a member of the royal household. He had his...he had the power of the Pharaoh's house, the prestige, the wealth of the

world at his grasp. He would be considered the prince of Egypt.

Now, personally, I favor, in my own study, the fact that it was probably 12 years that he was kept by his own mother...for this allows for the proper training in the things of God, which later became the basis of his many, many good decisions. He would have learned from his mother of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Joseph. He would have learned about the hope of Messiah. He would have learned about the principles of righteousness and goodness. He would have been raised with all of those things that God would want a child to know, and then, when it was time, at the age of 12, he would be given back to Pharaoh's court. It's best to see to 12 years, because that would've been the normal time for training a Hebrew child...

And so, as he comes back, maybe he's 10, maybe he's 11, maybe he's 12, and he's given back to Pharaoh's court, and he's a prince. The next time you hear about him is he's 40 years old. Poses a tremendous gap, and during all those years from the time that he was 12 till he was 40, he is filled with the wisdom of Egypt. He's living the life of a prince. He's got it all, the power, the prestige, the fame, the whole shot...And now, of course, it's time for him to face a crisis, and the writer of Hebrews very simply says, "When he was come to years, when he got to be that age, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter."

You see, when he became 40 years of age, you remember what happened? God said, "Moses, you're My man. I want you to walk away from Egypt. I want you to lead My people Israel." God had some circumstance that drove him out of the land. He wound up in the desert of Midian herding sheep. God called him to be a leader of His people, but Moses had a will in it, and that's indicated by this verse. Moses made a choice. You see, Moses saw an Egyptian badly treating a Hebrew brother, and Moses struck that Egyptian and killed him; and when he did that, he made a choice. He really rebelled against all the prestige of Egypt and took his place with the slaves of the Hebrews. He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He identified himself with the poor and the oppressed and the needy who were the slaves in the land.

Prestige and honor and fame are a powerful, powerful thing. Listen, they have corrupted the best of people for centuries; and they corrupt people today. Very few people can handle that, could walk away from that...Moses did. You know, when you analyze worldly prestige or worldly fame, there are basically four things that contribute to it. Right family, money, education, and position. Any or all of those four. If you're born into the right family, you can be a real dud and be famous. You just have the right parents...Or if you have money, or if you have enough degrees after your name, or if you got the right position. Moses had it all, right family, Pharaoh family. Money, all the money in Egypt. Education, trained as...as best a prince could be trained in the schools of learning of Egypt. Position, I mean you can't get any higher than a prince, unless you're the Pharaoh himself. He had it all, but in no way did he consider that an equal to the call of God in his life, and so he turned his back on it...

That was his first choice. He chose against the prestige of the world, and I think any Christian who is gonna be worth anything to God, who is gonna make any difference in the world, is gonna have to make that very same choice. If you're looking for the accolades of the system, you're not gonna get God's work done. Because if you're gonna get God's work done, you're gonna alienate the system. It's not gonna be your friend.

Jesus said in John 15, "If the world hates you, don't be surprised. It hated Me. It'll hate you like it hated Me."...And I'll tell you something, if you have any kind of sense at all, and you look at the long run, what the world has to offer is pretty passive. I remember when I was in college, that I had opportunity to set school records in various sports, and used to have this big board up in the gymnasium, and it had all the guys who had their school records in basketball and track and football and all this. My name was up there, so a lotta times for different things, and...and I...I can, I went after I graduated, went to Talbot, I came back two years later to the gym, and I noticed that I had had a whole lotta records, and now, all of a sudden, I had about half as many, because they'd all been broken in two years. "Now," I thought, "well, that's kind of interesting." You know, it was kinda nostalgic, kinda sad to see yourself fading away, you know. I came back two years later, and somebody had misplaced the record board, and they had no idea who had any records. Three years later, the school went outta business. "John MacArthur, who's that?"

Passing. Now, Moses wasn't interested in the world's prestige. I guess Jesus put it this way for us. He said, "If any man will come after Me, let him...what?...deny himself. Take up his cross, follow Me." If you're looking for trophies, you go the wrong thing. If you're looking for a cross, this is it...

That's hard for those things to die, you know? I remember when the earthquake came in '69, and my football trophy, the biggest one I had, fell off the shelf and broke, and my wife said that the earthquake was definitely an act of God...It's true. It was the only thing in the whole house that broke. Isn't that amazing?...

Moses said, "I don't want the prestige of the world." Baron von Weltz renounced his title, renounced his estate, renounced his revenue, and he was an incredibly wealthy man. Left Germany to go to as a missionary to British Guiana. Today his body fills a lonely grave. This is what he said. Quote, "What is to me the title wellborn, when I am born again to Christ? What is to me the title Lord, when I desire to be the servant of Christ? What is it to be called Your Grace, when I have need of God's grace? All these vanities I will away with, and all else I will lay at the feet of my dear Lord Jesus." End quote. Turned his back on the world's prestige.

So did Moses. Second time. Moses turned his back on the world's pleasure. He turned his back on the world's pleasure. Look at verse 25. "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." Did you know sin is fun? You say, "Yeah, I know,

that's the problem." It is for a season. Sin is fun. The enjoyment of sin, the Greek means the enjoyment of sin. Sure, there's a certain enjoyment, a certain exhilaration. There's a certain thrill. But Moses, it says, "Chose rather to suffer affliction that to reach out for the momentary thrill of sin." You see, it's only fun for a season, and only that, in Job 20 in verse 5, it says, "The triumphing of the wicked is short, and the enjoyment of the hypocrite is but for a moment." That's right. It's so short. In Job chapter 21 and lemme just share with you some verses. Verse 7, "Wherefore do the wicked live? They become old. They are mighty in power. Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes. They live old. They see their kids and their grandkids. Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God on them. They seem to be doing so well. Their bull genders." In other words, they have little cows. "And doesn't fail. The calve calves and casts not her calf." In other words, it's not aborted. Boy, they just prosper. They have calves, and they...they pro...progress and...and "They send forth the little ones like a flock, and their children dance." That is, they're not lame or crippled. "They take a timbrel and a harp and rejoice at the sound of the flute. They have parties." Boy, it sounds great to be evil. "They spend their days in wealth...and then the next little line just comes like a thunderbolt...and in a moment they're in Sheol." Dooooo, just like that. When God moves, doom...and that's maybe something we don't always see, because maybe it's still in the future. You choose the pleasures of sin for a moment, and you pay the price long after the moment is gone.

In Psalm 73 verse 12, "Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain and washed my hands in innocence. I'm right. I'm trying to live right, and I have nothing, and this bad guy, he's got everything. For all the day long have I been plagued and chastened every morning. And if I say, 'I'll speak thus,' behold, I should offend against the generation of Thy children. I...I can't talk about it, or I'll be offensive. When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me. I don't like to think about this thing that the righteous suffer and the unrighteous seem to make it. Then one day I went to the sanctuary of God, and I understood their end. I understood their end. Surely Thou didst set them in slippery places. Thou castest them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation as in a moment! Then I saw...he said...that it didn't last."

In Isaiah 21:4, the Bible says, "The night of my pleasure hath turned into fear. The night of my pleasure hath turned into fear." Well, Moses chose to reject the pleasure of sin for a season...I'm sure David, when he looked out off his porch and saw Bathsheba lying down there, I'm sure, when he got Bathsheba into his clutches, I'm sure there was pleasure there. Pleasure of sin for a season, but it didn't last. And later David cried, "My sin, my sin is ever before me." And it was such an ugly, heinous, vile sin that God wouldn't even let the child live, lest there should come one blessing out of such an evil act...Didn't last very long. Sin is but for a moment.

God called Moses to holiness, just like He calls you to it. Moses chose holiness. What do you choose? Lemme speak to this issue. In 1 Corinthians 5:1, Paul said this. "It is reported commonly

among you that there is fornication." That's a bad choice for a Christian to make, isn't it? That's the pleasure of sin for a season. Fornication is a Greek word fornayah. It's any illicit sexual act, anything other than God's ordained, proper use of sex within marriage constitutes fornication, whether it's heterosexual, homosexual, or bestiality...

Paul said to the Corinthian church, "It's commonly named among you." You know, I hate to think this could be true of Grace Church; but recently I've heard this more times than I like to hear it. I've heard about couples...where, when the wife has gone away, the husband has had an affair with another woman; and I've not just heard this once. I have heard this several times, and I have heard this of people not only who have come here, but who have ministered here in some leadership. And I have heard about high school young people in our own high school group who have come together in a fornication act. I have heard about it from college young people. I have heard about it more times than I would like to hear, and one is more, among those who are engaged to be married. Engagement to be married gives you no right to do that, whatever. None, and I'm afraid, people, that at least in my own ears, fornication is too commonly named among you; and I would be remiss if I didn't speak to you from the heart of God about this issue.

Moses made a choice, and Moses chose to suffer affliction with the people of God before he ever chose the pleasures of sin for a season. It's not right. Moses knew it, and Moses chose the right, and God elevated Moses to a place of greatness, because he made right choices. He chose against the world's pleasure. Yeah, I know it isn't easy. Man, alive, we're drowning in this stuff. These are the sexy '70s. It's a flood. It's all over the place, and little by little, almost unsuspectingly, our moral fiber is being destroyed, even Christian people. We can hardly resist this stuff. We've become more tolerant and more tolerant and more tolerant.

But any act of sexual relationships apart from God's design in marriage is an act against the sanctity of sex, and it is a sin against God. When David sinned with Bathsheba by having a sex relationship with Bathsheba, he looked to God, and he said, "Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned." It's a sin against God.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 6, Paul says, "When you join yourself to a harlot...and anybody who's a, anybody is harlot who offers you sex outside marriage, incidentally...when you join yourself to harlot, you have joined Christ to that harlot. What? Don't you know that you are one flesh? Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Spirit of God?" You know what he says there. Way back in the Old Testament, I mean, you can go all the way back. I hadn't intended to do this, but you can go clear back to the 22nd chapter of Deuteronomy and find the rules that God has laid down for that kinda behavior. Just read verses 13 down through verse 25. It's all right there. It's not allowed for a man and a woman to have a relationship apart from God's perfect design of marriage. When you get done reading Deuteronomy, you can read Leviticus. I think it's chapter 19, and get done doing that, check out the 6th chapter of Proverbs, and see what it discusses there. Says, "Keep yourself from

the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a foreign woman. Lust not after her beauty in your heart. Neither let her take you with her eyelids. A little subtle flatteries, for by means of an unchaste woman, a man is brought to a piece of bread."

I mean you're just brought down to nothing. Common stuff. The Apostle Paul says, "To present your body a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God."...I mean that's just basic. In 1 Corinthians chapter 7, it says, "It is good for a man not to touch a woman; nevertheless, to avoid fornication." Whatever you have to do to avoid it, that's what you should do. Flee it, the Bible says. "Flee youthful lust."...Sexual activity apart from marriage is so condemned that our Lord Jesus Christ said, "If a man looks on a woman to lust after her, he has committed adultery in his heart," right? Matthew 5. Forbidden.

You say, "Well, what is God...what's God's problem? I mean it's just a natural, biological thing." Yeah, that's what the Corinthians said, "Meet for the body, and the body for meet." See. That's what we're here for. We're just supposed to use our body any old biological way we feel. He says, "No, no, no. You forget that you are one with Christ, and when you join yourself to a harlot, you join Christ to that harlot." And I'll tell you something, I don't need to go into all these Scriptures. You know these things. God forbids this, and I'll go it a step further. Grace Church is gonna do everything it can to prevent it, to deal with it. When somebody comes in to us and says, "Well, we wanna be married." And we say, "Well, tell us about your relationship," and they tell us, "Well, we're having all this sex relationship together."

You know what my answer to that is? "Lemme tell you something, you're in absolutely no position to know whether God even wants you married, because God's will, according to 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, God's will is that you be sanctified; and if you're not obedient to God in His known will, revealed in the Word of God, how could you ever know His unrevealed will about whether you oughta marry each other?...You've clouded the whole issue." I don't know about how some of the other staff pastors feel, but I am very hesitant in one sense to bring together in a marriage blessed by God two people who are living in a state of fornication.

At the same time, I realize the Old Testament teaches that, if a man lies with a woman, he's to marry that woman, because there's a bond there; but also I think before the marriage takes place, there's gotta be a cessation of the sin, a confession of the sin, a repentance of the sin before the marriage can ever be anything valid in the eyes of God. And I really feel that if it doesn't happen, we'll not only not marry those kind of people, but we'll discipline them, because Paul said to the Corinthians, "You've got that problem in your church...chapter 5...and you better get that leaven out, or it'll leaven the whole lump." Deal with it. Seriously.

Let's look at Hebrews chapter 13 for a moment, as long as we're looking at Hebrews. Verse 4. Well, verse 1 says, "Let brotherly love continue." It's obvious what kind he means there. Verse 4 says,

"Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge." Pretty straight...I believe real love doesn't court sexual sin. You people say, "Ohhhhh, you know, we just...it's so hard, because we love each other sooooo much." I always say, "Baloney. If you're doing that, you love each other too little, because if you really loved each other, you would never steal purity from the one you really love. When you do that, you don't love too much, you love too little. It's not the genuine stuff." And when a...when a guy comes to you, girls, and he says, "Oh, you know, I really love you. Man, you're the greatest. I really love you, and I wanna marry you. Now, let's, shooom, go to bed." Check it out. He doesn't love you. He loves himself way too much for you to tolerate. He's really saying, "I love me, and me would like to use you." That's what he's saying. Vice versa, same thing. You know, I mean, and you girls, you know, be pure about it. You know what Ann Landers said, "A lemon that's been squeezed too many times is garbage." She's right...Who wants it?...

Well, you know, that lady, Potiphar's wife, she tried to seduce Joseph. She got old Joseph in the bedroom there, you know. She laid all that Egyptian jazz on him, you know. I'm sure she was all ruffled up to beat the band. Joseph went flying outta that room. She was so anxious to get ahold of Joseph, shhhhooo, she grabbed and got ahold of his cape, and Joseph said in 39:9 of Genesis, "How can I do this wickedness and sin against God?" See, he knew it was wrong. Couldn't do it. Couldn't do it against God. Just took off.

Hebrews 13:4 says, look, "Marriage is honorable in all." Now the word is is not in the original. The original literally says, "Marriage honorable in all." And if the AV translation is correct, the authorized version, then it...it says, "Marriage is honorable," and you supply the verb to be; and what it means is that marriage is an honorable estate, and the bed is undefiled. In other words, if you're married, the bed is assumed. It's blessed of God. It's sanctified. It's a holy place. It's a wondrous thing, and you have every right to each other. In fact, in 1 Corinthians 7, it says, "The body of one doesn't even belong to that one. It belongs to the partner," right? So there's a great liberty and a glorious freedom and a wonderful blessing of God upon sexual relationship, and it might just be that that's the...the meaning of the text, that he's simply saying, "Marriage is honorable in all."

You know, there were some...some people who believed that marriage was a sin. You know, some really crazy things people have believed. But do you know there...there has been a whole church that we know of worldwide, the Catholic church, that thought there was some super sanctity to not being married. Well, God has blessed marriage above all things. Peter calls marriage the grace of life; and he says, "Some die...sometime there are gonna be some teachers coming along teaching you forbidding to marry. They're false teachers." That's foolishness. It's the grace of life...

"Marriage is honorable, and the bed is undefiled." But there's another way to translate this. The Greek says, "Marriage honorable in all," and it could well be that it would be translated this way, "Let marriage be honorable in all. Let the bed be undefiled." And the reason we kind of lean toward that translation is because that seems to connect it up with the rest of the text a little bit better, and that

what he's doing is not making a statement, but giving a command. And it may be well that he's saying, "Let marriage be honorable in all and the bed undefiled." Listen, you let marriage be God...what God wants it to be, and you...you make your bed what God wants it to be, and don't you desecrate and defile it; because fornicators and adulterers, believe me, God will judge. Let your marriage be honorable before God.

In fact, in 1 Thessalonians 4, where Paul talks about sex relationships, he says that you're use..."You're to use your body so that it honors God." Let it be honorable. Now, marriage can be honorable. The sexual part of marriage is an honorable thing. You know, there's four reasons God invented sex. Did you know that? No. 1, to propagate children. That's a good one. To propagate children. Genesis 1:27, "Be fruitful and multiply, replenish the earth." God invented it for the propagation of children.

There's a second one, a second reason that God designed sex within marriage is to prevent immorality. God wanted people doing that only in a marriage situation to...to prevent the destruction that occur when everybody ran around just doing it at random, and we've seen that destruction in our society. So, first of all to propagate children. Secondly, to prevent immorality. You are to have a sex relationship in your own marriage that is wholesome, healthy, fulfilling, and meaningful in order that people in the marriage don't get the wandering eye. First Corinthians 7:2, "Let each man have his own wife, and let the wife and the husband give themselves freely to each other, lest they be tempted because of their incontinence," he says there. When you're deprived, you might even be tempted to go outside your marriage.

So propagate children, prevent immorality. A third reason that God has given sexual relationship is basically the elimination of solitude. I don't know what...how other...how else to say it, but it's just because in no other way could they two become one flesh. There is an incredible union. The term "they two become one flesh" speaks of sex, because two people become one in the product, right? The child. And in the love bond, and so there is just the loss of solitude. You know, when you love someone and they die and you're married, there's that terrible loneliness that no one can ever fill simply because of the fact that there was a oneness there that's broken. The oneness of two people who really are together.

And there's a fourth reason. God not only gave it for propagation of children, prevention of immorality, elimination of solitude, but God gave the whole sex thing for fun. You say, "Oh _____." Is that in the Bible? You better believe it. It's in the Bible. It's in the Book. You say, "Where is it? I've gotta find it."...You don't need to worry, I'm gonna tell you right now. Genesis 26:6, now, listen. "And Isaac dwelt in Gerar. And the men of the place asked him of his wife. And he said, 'She's my sister'...you know, this old deal...because he feared to say, 'She's my wife,' lest, said he, 'the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah, because she was so beautiful." He was afraid that if he said, "This is my wife," they'd kill him to take her. But if he said, "This is my sister," they'd just go

along and...and use her for whatever they want and bring her back.

"It came to pass, when he had been there a long time, Abimelech king of Philistines looked out through a window and he...and, behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah." I like that. Sporting. Some translations say caressing. They were just enjoying each other. See? God invented sex relationship for that end. And, under those conditions, it's honorable. It's honorable as a procreative agency. It's honorable as a prevention of immorality. It's honorable in the elimination of solitude and the...the bringing together that one that God designs in marriage. It's honorable as a way to share joy and affection and love; and in any other way, it is dishonorable; and anybody who treats it in another way, such as fornication and adultery, will find himself or herself under the judgment of God...

Boy, I...I can only tell you, young people, when you go to pick a mate, make sure you pick somebody who's straight on this area or you'll bring yourself into unbelievable kinds of problems. When you choose a mate, you know, the Bible has so much to say about which mate you choose. I...just so much. First of all, it says, "Check their reputation out. A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches." Find out what everybody things about 'em. Don't just grab the first one down the road. What's their reputation? What's their appearance? Did you know that people's looks reveal their character? The Scripture says, "Watch out for wanton looks. Watch out for eyebrows, blinking and winking of the eye, Proverbs says. Watch out for proud looks, lustful looks. Isaiah 3 says, "The show of their appearance does witness against them." So you check out their reputation. You check out their appearance. Check out their speech, "Out of the abundance of the...of the heart, the mouth...what?...speaks." Check out their clothes. You say, "Oh, clothes?" Oh, yes, because a godly person is adorned with modesty. With modesty. "If clothes are vulgar or showy, the heart is vain," 1 Timothy 2:9 says. And check out their companions, because a person is known by his company.

You see, God gives us guidelines so that going into a marriage relationship, we can do the best we can to get the right situation. Don't expect, by all means, perfection. I mean even a...even a good, old Washington sweet apple may have a worm; and you might have to work around that a little bit. But you need to look for some good things; and so choosing a mate and living with a mate, we need to make a commitment to what God's priorities are in holiness in this area. And, of course, just looking at those two words in verse 4 there, fornication or fornicators and adulterers God will judge. Basically, fornicators are those who have sex before marriage; and adulterers are those who have sex outside marriage, and that just covers the whole thing. Those are the people God judges.

Serious business, and God moves to chasten. It's not easy to throw it off, as I said, because of the fact that it's drowning our society. I was interested to read in the paper today that five out of those ten girls that were strangled were streetwalkers in Hollywood. Connected to one degree or another with prostitution...See, sexual impurity just leads to worse and worse things...And, you know, you...some people would say, "Oh, man, I don't like this." Well, Paul says in 1 Thessalonians, you know, "He that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God." 'Cause God has called us unto holiness.

In other words, God has set the principles. I remember I was asked to speak in Rabbi Kramer's class out at Cal State Northridge one...one day...a day on the Christian sex ethic. And, of course, I went into it. Here was a secular philosophy class, headed up by a former rabbi who was, you know, Jewish and not at all related to Christians. In fact, they told me he used to like to have one fundamentalist a year come in there, so he could just, you know, get 'em. And...and so I was this year's blood sacrifice...And I went in to...to... and I realized, you know, if I go in here and start talking about God's ethics and you...you know, and we've got all these basic principles, you know. No sex before marriage. No sex outside of marriage. Only within the bond of marriage, and only a heterosexual relationship, only blessed of God, and, oh, so forth and so forth and so forth, and lay out all these standards. You know, and...and to avoid all these kinds of things that our society is selling so fast, that they'd just start laughing me out of the room.

So I started the class by saying, "I just want you to know that there's a basic premise upon which everything I say is predicated, and that is that you love the Lord Jesus Christ with all your heart; and if you don't, you're not even gonna be interested in these things. Because, you see, they're all tied up in what He is requiring of those who love Him, and if you don't love Him, then it all sounds obtuse." And that's right. You see, once you make the commitment to Christ, then Jesus says, "If you love Me, you will keep My...what?...My commandments." You've already chosen the right way. Now all you have to do is keep choosing.

Jesus said, "You call Me Master and Lord, and don't do the things I say. What kind of a deal is that?"..."Fornication, let it not be once named among you," says the Bible. I pray to God. I pray to God that any of you who are...who are living in any kind of sexual immorality will confess it to the Lord, repent of it, and stop it, and believe God that you'll be richer, more fulfilled, happier, blessed of God. I believe that. I hope you do, and I hope, like Moses, you'll choose against the world's prestige and against the world's pleasure.

Third thing, back to the 11th chapter, Moses also chose against the world's plenty, the world's plenty. Verse 26, it says in verse 26, "He esteemed the reproach of Christ." Literally in the Greek, the Anointed One. The reproach that He had to bear as a leader, the reproach that He had to bear as a specially anointed of God, the proach that...the reproach that He had to bear as if...if you will, a type of Christ. The...the reproach that every true obedient man of God and woman of God has ever had to bear by identifying with God's anointed. He would rather identify with God and God's anointed, and suffer reproach than to have the...the riches of the treasures of Egypt. Well, he coulda had 'em all.

Recently, you know, they've...they've got all of this stuff going around from King Tut, Tutankhamen, you know, all over the place. They're showing all this. I...I saw in the Cairo Museum in Egypt. It's incredible. Just a staggering amount of wealth that that Egyptian society had. It just literally blows your mind to know how wealthy, incredibly rich, beyond what we can imagine the treasures of Egypt

were. The discovery, as I say, of the tomb of Tutankhamen has produced the greatest treasures ever discovered in ancient Egypt. He had it all. I mean he had everything. He had the riches of the riches of the riches, and he turned his back on it for the reproach of being the anointed one of God. You know, every one of us in a sense is anointed of God, called of God, set apart, sanctified, holy, separate; and we've gotta be willing to turn our back on the world's plenty.

Psalm 37:16 says, "A little that a righteous man has is better than the riches of many wicked ones."...In 1 Timothy 6, you know all that passage, how riches corrupt and the love of money corrupts. Moses coulda chosen all that stuff. He didn't want it...He esteemed the reproach of being the anointed one of God, of identifying with the yet coming Messiah in his suffering before he ever hung onto the riches of Egypt. You know something? Moses never had anything ever the rest of his life. He walked away from Egypt, wandered out into Midian, was a shepherd out in the hillsides, and Midian is the most godforsaken place you ever saw. Roamed around in the shrubs, caring for the sheep of his father-in-law Jethro for 40 years; and then he had to stumble around the desert for 40 more with a bunch of bellyaching Hebrews. And he even did some dumb things himself like hitting a rock when he shoulda talked to it. Never again had anything except probably a pair of worn out sandals, sore feet, and a headache for 40 years from all the pain that people caused him. He may just've hit the rock, 'cause he was such a mess, he couldn't restrain himself from whacking something. But, you know, here was a man who gave it all up, because he saw the plan of God for his life demanded the kind of commitment that had to be made, and it meant turning his back on the world's play.

Now, I don't mean that God wants to make you poor, but I do mean that you've gotta choose righteousness and then let God decide whether you will be poor or rich, rather than to seek to be rich, 1 Timothy 6, "They that will seek to be rich fall into many snares and hurtful lusts, which drown men in perdition." You see. You say, "Well, I mean what made him do that?" Oh, the end of verse 26 tells you. "He had respect to the recompense of the reward." He, listen, he looked ahead to a better reward. Just why did he turn down the world's prestige? Because he saw a greater glory in heaven. Why did he turn down the world's pleasure? Because he saw a great glory, the...the blessing of God. Why did he turn down this whole aspect of the world's wealth? Because he saw a greater reward. He wasn't giving anything up. He woulda said, "Oh, don't cry for me, folks."

And, you know, you look at it today, and all that stuff that all those pharaohs had went into the ground, and they all died. All those pharaohs were stuck in those big pyramids, and all their stuff with 'em, and Moses is still enjoying the riches that God gives to His righteous when they leave this world, and will forever enjoy them. So he knew there was nothing really to give up. He was doing what Jesus said, laying up treasure where? In heaven.

Here's a last thing. Moses chose the right thing, and so he gave up the world's prestige, the world's pleasure, the world's plenty, and, lastly...the world's pressure. Verse 27, "By faith he forsook Egypt.

He walked out and didn't fear the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible." Boy, you know, Moses had some pressure. He knew when he struck down that Hebrew it was gonna cost him something. He was gonna be in a lotta hot water...He had plenty of pressure on him, pressure of comfort. Man, alive, he...he had comfort. The ple...the pressure of pleasure, of riches, of honor. He had the pressure of a debt. He owed a debt to Pharaoh's daughter for what she'd done for him. He had all these pressures, but the real pressure was the...the whole pressure that was on his heart to bear when God began to move, and so he chose to follow the...the pressure of God and turn his back on the pressure of the world. He abandoned Egypt.

Notice it says, "He forsook," and interestingly enough, this verb speaks either of literal physical departure, but more often is used to speak of a heart renunciating. For example, it's used in Luke 5, I think it's verse 28, where it says, "Matthew forsook all and followed Jesus." It's when you just turn your heart away from everything to follow Christ. Moses just chucked Egypt, renounced it, walked away. Not afraid. Now, you know, Satan wants to intimidate with fear. He uses fear to neutralize people. You know, for example, he wants you to do something lustful and something evil, and you wanna do it for fear that, if you don't, you won't be accepted, or you'll miss something, or somebody'll think you're prudish...Or you might even have the other person...person pressuring you into it, and you're...you're actually saying, "Well, I certainly don't wanna offend them."

And Proverbs 29:5 says, "The fear of man brings a snare," and it does. We do a lotta things because we're pressured by society. Abraham was pressured when he called his wife his sister. Isaac was pressured also when he called his wife his sister, which we read earlier. Jacob was pressured in fleeing from Laban. Aaron was pressured in yielding to the people when they demanded an idol. Israel was pressured in fearing to attempt the conquest of Canaan. Twenty-thousand people in Gideon's army were pressured right out of that army. David was pressured when he fled from Absalom. The disciples in the storm at the sea were so pressured, they panicked. Peter was so pressured one time, he denied the Lord on three different occasions, and Christians throughout history have always been pressured by the system.

You see, Satan wants to push you and make you fearful and make you afraid and doubt God's power and God's resources and God's blessing, and make you think, "Well, if you don't do that, you'll miss something," and so you're pressured to do it...Fear real...fear does so much to us. You know, fear closes our mouths when they oughta be open, and opens 'em when they oughta be closed...You know, we really, the world really lays it on us. It takes a lotta courage to fight back. Moses was pressured by the system. So are you, and I'll tell you one thing. If you fall in love with the system, you're in a lotta trouble. As soon as the system wins, you know, then you're into 1 John 2:15, where it says, "Love not...what?...the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father's not in him, and all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world, and the world passes away, and the lusts of it."

You see, the world is full of lust, and it just pressures us, on the television, through the records, the music, the movies, the signboards we see, just pressure, pressure, pressure to capitulate to evil. I'll tell you, there's only one way to counter it, people, and that's to take this Book, and the worse the world gets, the deeper into it you gotta go...I never cease to be amazed. Kids will come to me when I speak at a rally. Somebody'll say, "Oh, Mr. MacArthur, I have so much trouble with that area." And I'll say, "Well, it's..." I'll ask 'em a couple of questions, you know. Say, "Well, what do you do when you have spare time? What...what do you do on a date?" "We go to a movie." "Oh, what kinda movie you go to?" _____ "What kinda movie?" "Well, you know what kind of movies." "So then you...you go to a movie like that, and then you watch all that stuff, then you come over and say, 'Oh, I have so much problem with this area.'"

"Well, are you exposing yourself to that?" See? I mean it's a pretty simple thing. It's like the old computer deal. GIGO, garbage in, garbage out. Whatever you pump in your computer is exactly what's gonna come out in your behavior. You can't pump out what isn't in there, and you can't keep from coming out what is in there...As a man thinks in his heart...what?...so is he. Now, men of faith have always had the courage to stand against the pressure. Gideon did when he destroyed the altars of Baal. Joshua and Caleb did when they said, "We're going in the land. I don't care what the rest of you spies think." Deborah did when she led Israel's army to victory. David when he slew Goliath. Esther did when she went into the king against all odds, fearing for her life. Daniel did when he refused to do what the king said, even if it meant a lion's den.

There have been people. Pray God, there'll be more who will resist this garbage that the world is throwing at us. Movies are dirtier than ever. No question about it. Books, why Billy Graham said that the books that are coming from people like D.H. Lawrence, Norman Mailer, and a hundred other lesser lights are like the drippings from a broken sewer...You say, "Well, where did Moses get the courage?" Well, look at the end of verse 27. the reason he could endure the pressure was because he saw Him who is invisible. You see, a little dinky, runt king in Egypt was no hassle for him, because he saw God, who was the King of kings. Next time you get pressured by somebody, some human, some neighbor, some deal the world is throwing at you, remember who the real King is, and that you've said you're His follower. So he believed God, and total faith is very selective.

And so Moses chose. Praise God for Moses. He chose against the world's prestige, against the world's pleasure, against the world's plenty, and against the world's pressure. Boy, that isn't easy. And you know something? He was in a position to probably have more of that stuff, or at least as much of it as we have today. Boy, the pressure for prestige on him must've been not like anything we've ever known. The pressure for pleasure, why, it would've been available to him in an incredible amount. The...the pressure for plenty, money all over the place, just plain pressure from the king and everybody around him, who was telling him, "This is what we want you to do. This is the standard of behavior. Now get with it, Moses." Must've been greater than anything we've ever known, or at least

the equal of it; and yet he withstood, and he chose, and he choose right, and he chose God and God's way.

In verse 28 caps it up, "Through faith, this good man kept the Passover, kept the sprinkling of blood." And you know how the story came out when it was all said and done? Verse 29, "They passed through the Red Sea on dry land. The Egyptians were...what?...drowned." The Egyptians held onto prestige and pleasure and plenty. Fell to the pressure of the world, and they drowned. Moses just went up into a mountain and went into the presence of God where he'll be forever.

Now, that's the choice that everybody has, and I really think that everybody makes that choice when he comes to Christ. You...you say, "I choose Christ. I choose to obey Him. I choose to follow Him. I choose to abide by His principles. I choose to obey," and then it's simply a matter of making that choice a practical, everyday reality. Satan's gonna come and tempt you this way and tempt you that way and tempt you this way and that way in all the areas of the world, but the man of God and the woman of God chooses God's way and is blessed. That's the way God wants it, or He'll chasten, and that's the way Grace Church wants it, or we'll discipline, because are just the representation of Jesus Christ in the world, and our greatest and highest calling is to do His will. Amen? Let's pray together.

Father, we thank You for the time we've shared tonight, and it's been so rich, just as we think back on the beginning moments of song, and we know how happy we were to sing songs of testimony and songs of grace and songs of joy and songs that instruct our hearts. And, Father, even coming from the time of joy into this time of serious thinking, we know we have come the gamut, as it were. The two sides of the Christian life, the side of the joy and the blessing and the happiness, and then the side that makes it all possible. The side of obedience. We can't know the fullness of that joy. We can't really sing the songs. We can't really praise with the praise until we are obedient. Make us a righteous people. Cleanse us from all filthiness of the flesh perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Make us a righteous people, not in only what we do, but in what we think, in what we say. Keep us from being caught in the things of the world, so that we want the world's prestige, so that we seek the world's pleasure, so that we seek the world's plenty, so that we succumb to the pressure of the system. Help us to be lights in the world, different, peculiar people, holy, righteous, set apart, that You might work Your work through us to the glory of Your Kingdom. In Jesus' name, whom we love and whom we serve. Amen.

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