

## 5 Rules of Great Decisions

I want to talk to you today about decisions. Joel 3:14 speaks of *multitudes in the valley of decision*. Decisions are very important because they determined the story of our lives. In fact, the Bible speaks so much about decisions and gives us such clear guidelines to making good decisions in life.

**Opening texts: Genesis 12:1-4, 13:1-18**

### Introduction

God had a plan for Abram's life. Part of that plan was to take him to a new place, a land of promise. Abram was to leave his country and his relatives. Abram left but...took Lot with him. Lot must have been delighted to travel with his rich uncle Abram. However, after travelling some 4000 km, certain problems started developing: there was strife between Lot's staff and Abram's.

Many times, our problems are a result of not obeying exactly God's instructions for our lives. However, failure is not fatal with God. We are always one decision away to get back into God's plan. Abram decided to part ways with his nephew.

**Lot was given the opportunity to choose.**

### Genesis 13:9-11

*Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left." And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. **Then Lot chose** for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other.*

**If you were Lot how would you choose? What criteria would you use?**

How do you make your decisions? Have you ever been to a place where your decision could mean life or death, blessing or trouble? Ultimately, our lives are determined by the decisions we make. God provides signposts but we choose where to go – and God respects our decisions (He made us free moral agents).

**Deut. 30:15** - *See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, **19** - I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; **therefore choose** life, that both you and your descendants may live;*

**Joshua 24:14-15:** *Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord! **15** And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, **choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve**, whether the gods which your fathers*

*served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”*

**Isaiah 1:19:** *If you are **willing** and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land;*

So, how to make right decisions and stay in the will of God for our lives?

### **5 rules of great decisions:**

#### **1. Always start with God**

**Genesis 12:4** – *“So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken with him, and Lot was with him”*

He departed, he was moved, as the Lord spoke with him. Determine not to be moved by anything else but what He says.

A good decision will always start at the feet of Jesus. We can get busy and anxious like Martha, but the best place is always at the feet of Jesus.

**Luke 10:41-42** - *And Jesus answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. **42** But one thing is needed, and **Mary has chosen that good part**, which will not be taken away from her.”*

#### **2. Always start with the big picture**

See how that fits into the overall purpose of God for your life – the big picture.

Esau traded his inheritance for a plate of lentils. He failed to consider the big picture.

Know the purpose of God for your life and see how that decision will impact that plan.

Before every decision in life, we should ask ourselves, is this part of the calling, plan and purpose of God for my life?

Even in deciding our associations in life, we should ask ourselves, is this an association I should pursue? There may be things and people who do not belong in the purpose of God for your life – a clear example of that is Lot. Lot wasn't part of the plan. He was an outsider in Abram's destiny. Do you have 'Lots' in your life? Further down the track, these 'Lots' may bring you lots of trouble. Making the right decision means that you will have to choose some things and reject others.

Look at the big picture of your life.

#### **3. Never rely on first impressions alone or how things may appear on the outside**

**Genesis 13:10-13** - *And Lot lifted his eyes and **saw** all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. **11 Then Lot chose** for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated*

from each other. **12** Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent even as far as Sodom. **13** But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the Lord.

‘Lot saw’... and ‘then Lot chose’. However, this was a land of exceedingly wicked and sinful people. This was a place God destroyed in chapter 19.

**Proverbs 14:12** - *There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.*

**1 John 2:16** speaks about the basic 3 temptations of the enemy:

- the lust of the flesh,
- the lust of the eyes
- the pride of life

‘The lust of the eyes’ means that the devil makes things look great and desirable. He used that technique with Eve (Gen.3:6 – the fruit was pleasant to the eyes) and with Jesus in Luke 4:1-13 (the devil showed him all the kingdoms of the earth)

**Get a vision from God!**

**Genesis 13:14-15** - *And the Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: “**Lift your eyes now** and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward; **15** for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever.*

Two different decisions: Lot decided based on how things looked from the outside, superficially, on his first impression. Abram saw what God showed him.

#### **4. Always follow your convictions, rather than your preferences**

Lot’s decision was purely based on his own evaluation of things and on his preferences. In this text and from other Scriptures, we see that Abram was a man of conviction and his decisions were not based on preference but rather conviction.

**Hebrews 11:8-9** - *By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. **9** By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise*

In verses **24-27** we read about a man like Moses and how he made his choices:

*By faith Moses, when he became of age, **refused** to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, **choosing** rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.*

What dictated his choices was conviction rather than preference.

Follow what you believe.

## **5. Always move in the timing of God**

Abram moved in synch with God. There was a time to move out, a time to enter the land and a time for the fulfilment of the promises.

**Ecclesiastes 3:11** - *He has made everything beautiful in its time*

Sometimes “*the vision is yet for an appointed time*”. At other times God will say, ‘the time is now’.

**Lets’ recap the 5 Rules for Great Decisions:**

1. Always start with God
2. Always start with the big picture
3. Never rely on first impressions alone
4. Always follow your convictions, not your preferences
5. Always move in the timing of God