



# e - Votion

Dear Friends,

Today I am reading Deuteronomy 30:15-20:

*See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the Lord your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the Lord swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.*

Devotion:

Every time I read this passage I am reminded of the song from "Fiddler on the Roof" To life, to life l'chaim. L'chaim, l'chaim to life! And the dance that goes along with it!

Its not always quite that easy. We think it should be easy to care for ourselves, to choose lettuce and carrots over potato chips and chocolate, to choose

the treadmill over the couch. We all experience temptation in some form or another, and there is something in all of us that just doesn't want that celery stick and would much rather have an Oreo, or two.... Are we lazy? Do we procrastinate? Do we not have faith that the long term good will always win out over that instant gratification that is OH SO EASY.... Moses wants the people of Israel to choose life, but Moses also knows them. He knows that they too need all the help they can get. I so admire businesses choosing to stay closed on Sundays so that they can worship and their employees can worship, knowing that it will mean a reduction in business. And the restaurants that have chosen to no longer sell tobacco, hopefully to help people choose life.

We need all the help we can get. Or at least I do. Making decisions about EVERYTHING leaves us with "decision fatigue" --an inability to make good choices because our minds are just worn out. It affects the best of us. When our minds and our bodies are worn out, and our souls are starved, we lose the ability to take good care of ourselves--our health, our finances, our work. Current research is even indicating that decision fatigue explains why normally sensible people are getting angry at colleagues and families, going on irresponsible spending sprees, buying and eating junk food galore,



and unable to resist advertising that makes no sense. There is a price for all these decisions we have to make every day we live about everything. And the more choices, the more difficult each one becomes, until finally we try to take shortcuts that can end in disaster. We either act impulsively or we just go into energy saver mode and do nothing. And the more choices we have to make, the worse it gets.

It may go without saying that the people with the greatest self-control are those who structure their lives to eliminate unnecessary decisions. If we eat Cheerios for breakfast every day, if we go to church every week, if we can eliminate a few choices, then the choices we do make will be better choices--choosing Life as God intends. In Moses day, the children of Israel had to decide whether to choose God or choose the foreign gods. Maybe our lives are less about foreign gods than about making our own gods who look a lot like us. "Spiritual but not religious" can lead us down a path of making a god in our image rather than the opposite. Choosing life means we choose to live in this community of faith that serves to keep us all on the path to the God who gives life to all. May that be our choice!



Please pray:

- Prayers for the family of Helen Billings, who passed away yesterday. Funeral service Friday.
- Prayers for Barbara Marrs, who was scheduled for heart valve replacement today and they had to postpone her surgery. Hopefully, she will be able to undergo this procedure very soon.
- Prayers for Garland and Jean Thayer, who are both recovering from recent illness.
- Prayers for all who are cold, hungry, and isolated in this weather and these dark winter days.
- Prayers for our church as we seek a youth minister to lead us into vibrant, life-giving youth ministry!

Calendar:

- Sunday Feb 16, District Day of Discipleship, Wesley Memorial UMC

"Preach the gospel at all times and when necessary use words."

-- St Francis of Assisi

Blessings,

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