

WD December 4, 2023

## “Making a Good Decision With the Stuff of Life”

In the past week I have encountered a few times when decision had to be made without really knowing which direction would be best. Ever experienced that? For example, my water softener decided that it was tired of sodium in its diet. In other words, it's not working any more. Now before anyone sends me suggestions for how to fix it; believe me I've probably tried it. So, after sixteen years of softening our water, we said goodbye to “Salty”. What to do now?

So, the research began on water softeners. I've been asking, “What's the best brand?” “Which one has the lifetime guarantee?” None of course. Then I started asking, “Do I really want to haul salt bags to the basement anymore?” They get heavier every trip and the distance to the basement utility room gets longer each year. Finally, we decided on a filtration system that hangs on the wall with filters that are changed once a year. It also softens the water. We will see. I spent a lot of time on the internet reading all kinds of reviews about the difference between actual softeners and filtration systems. I picked one and ordered on Black Friday for the bigger discount. I still spent a lot of money that clobbered our emergency fund and viola now I'm a filtration guy. But time will tell if this is a good way to go or, not.

Wouldn't it be nice if the Lord would just say, “Use this particular system.” It would be really nice if there was a baseline, a standard by which all other things could be measured—a proverb on filters in the book of softeners. Of course, it gets more serious and challenging with medicine.

A friend of mine made a recent trip to the hospital having trouble walking, headaches, hard to think, and balance trouble. He wondered if it was his Parkinsons, or an old problem resurfacing or something new. While in the ER, he gets back the MRI showing the potential for Normal Pressure Hydrocephalus (NPH). “Great! Something else!” It was explained very well why the Neurologist thought this to be the case. So, now a procedure is offered to release the spinal fluid building up in the brain through a procedure at the spine. Long term doctors propose putting in a shunt in the head to keep it drained. One thing leads to another. The results could potentially bring about better balance, better walking, clearer thinking and a relief from the headaches. My friend doesn't want to go through another procedure because others have not worked on other things as promised or hoped for. And it doesn't help that doctors can never ever say anything is a 100%. On the other hand, he has decided to try it because the potential to feel better is hard to pass up. He will know pretty quickly after the procedure if it worked. But wouldn't it be nice if the Lord would just say, “This is it.”

Wouldn't it be nice if there was a chapter on NPH and Water Filters. As we all know not all of our decision making is a question of right or wrong, or a question of theology. Sometimes is just the stuff of life. Sometimes decision making for Christians is just taking the information we have at the time we have it and applying it in the best way we can. A good decision or a bad one isn't really about making the call one way or the other but about being as well-informed as possible and the applying that information in a way that works for the best outcome, seeks the highest good. It isn't our fault if the outcome is outside of what we are capable of doing or beyond our options.

So, we do what we can. First, such things require a lot of prayer and consideration. Jesus invites us to ask, seek, and knock. He invites us to be like the persistent widow who knocks and knocks and knocks for a good outcome. Philippians 4:6 also declares, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving present your requests to God.” Ask the Lord for good information and good advice.

Secondly, get out of the bubble. Whoever lives in their own bubble will always take the oxygen out of the room. Can't think with no oxygen. Get out and get some advice. Every time I buy a car I test drive the thing right to my mechanic who puts it on a computer to see if anything pops up. He looks it over for me and tells me the repair history of that kind of car. When it comes to doctors, its really helpful when all the doctors come together to talk to each other and get the whole plan on the same page—what a concept. Proverbs 3:5-6 tells us also, to “Trust in the Lord with all of your heart and lean not on your own understanding in all of your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.” To lean on our own understanding on anything may not be enough. It's especially not advisable if we are feeling overwhelmed or not in a good mindset to process all the information regarding the information available. Others may be your ears and eyes to see and hear what

you may miss because the weight of your decision makes it hard to capture all the information. They may also help you weigh the pros and cons. There is risk in everything so getting godly help is very important.

Hope for what is good and be ready for anything. The stuff of this world will sometimes disappoint us. After all, why do we need warranties if this were not true. 1 Peter 5 says, "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." The Lord cares about you. He cares about how you feel and what is on your mind. He cares that things break and cause you trouble. He cares about what you buy and how your body is feeling. If he didn't care about us Jesus would not have come. But He did come. He died on a cross. He was treated unfairly, tried and beaten because His enemies hated Him. He was misunderstood and still is. The guards and the mockers were cruel and hateful too. Decisions were made all along the way. Decisions that in the long run led to Christ's crucifixion. Jesus went through all of it and endured the cross because we needed Him to. How you are doing matters to Him. Working through hard decisions matter to Him even if they are as regular as trying to buy a filtration system or the right car or choosing which college to go to.

Jesus says in John 16:33, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." In Jesus we have reason to hope for what is good—we know. He also knows that this world is full of trouble. And then He invites us to take heart, have courage in His overcoming the world.

This brings me to the last thing which is courage in the Lord. The same Lord that saves us also promises to be with us even in the smallest of measures. Psalm 139 speaks of the Lord knowing every thought and every cell of our body. Luke 12:7 speaks of God counting the hairs on our head. The smallest measures matter to Jesus too. Everything about you is important to Him. Therefore, don't be afraid to make the best decision you can knowing that He wants good things for you too.

So, make your decisions with care. Honor the Lord with what you can. Save money. Do the best for your body, which is a Temple. Consider all your options with the best information you have at the time you have it. But note that your decision-making process has a home in the Lord even with the stuff of life. The Lord be with You.

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John 3:30