



**“He supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not” (Acts 7:25).**

## **Making Wrong Decisions**

**Central Truth:** Every decision should have God’s approval.

**L212. Date:** March 1994. **Text:** Exodus 2:11-15; Acts 7:22-25.

**Topic:** God: Will Of; Moses.

A right thing can be done in a wrong way. Moses found that out by personal experience. In an effort to stop an act of physical abuse (an Egyptian beating a Hebrew), he killed the abuser. The consequence changed Moses for the rest of his life.

A misguided zeal can get ahead of God's will. Moses found that out by personal experience. He thought deliverance could come to the Hebrews by social/civic action. So he took it in hand to correct an abuse by human force. God had a different plan by which He would deliver Israel. Moses' misguided zeal got ahead of God's perfect plan.

Failure always follows wrong decisions. Moses found that out by personal experience. The Hebrews did not recognize Moses as God's agent for their deliverance. The Egyptian authorities were ready to execute him for killing one of their citizens. His expectations of being able to work from Pharaoh's palace to deliver his people were dashed to the ground and destroyed. Let Moses teach you how to keep from making wrong decisions.

## **The Basis for a Right Decision**

*“Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds” (Acts 7:22).* Such a man should be able to make right decisions, don't you think? He had two qualifications to guide his decisions. **First, Moses had the highest academic credentials.** Egypt was the greatest nation in the world at that time. Political power, economic

resources, military might, and academic attainments were centered in Egypt. It is no small thing to say that Moses was “*learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.*” Was he trained to take over the reigns of government? The fact that he was learned in “all” Egyptian wisdom indicates his scholarship. His knowledge of history, psychology, sociology, economics, and all the other disciplines should have qualified him to make right decisions.

Moses' secular training did not qualify him in spiritual matters, however. When he was faced with a decision relating to the will of God for the people of God, he acted on the basis of his wisdom, not from divine leading.

**Second, Moses had much practical experience.** He was “*mighty in words and in deeds.*” He was a powerful speaker who possessed great influence through his eloquence. (He lost that power when he fled from Pharaoh and stuttered so much when God called him that he thought he was ineffective as a speaker [Exodus 4:10]). But Moses was more than an able speaker. He was marked by deeds which identified him as a man of action. The vigor of his work had given him great influence because of his achievements. The Bible does not report what those deeds were, but they were beyond what others had done. He should have been wise in his decisions.

Take warning at this point. Get all the training you can to improve your life. But remember that human wisdom is no substitute for spiritual insight. Base your decisions upon your academic training and practical experience, but always submit those to the wisdom which comes from God.

### **The Motive Behind a Wrong Decision (Acts 7:23-25; Exodus 2:11)**

A good motive does not correct a bad decision. Moses had all honorable intentions as he went to visit the Hebrews that day. He felt he was God's man for the need of the hour. He wanted to deliver his people from the oppression they suffered.

**Moses was right in identifying with those who are in need.** He did not go to see the Hebrews slaves that day. “*It came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel*” (Acts 7:23). He was moved by a heartfelt concern for their welfare. He looked on the Hebrews as his “*brethren.*” That is the basis on which many have reached to help people who were suffering. Are you moved to charitable and benevolent ministries by such a concern?

**Moses was right in seeking to protect those who are abused.** “*Seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian*” (Acts 7:24). There are homes for

abused wives today. Courts take abused children from guardians who mistreat them. We clamor for the rights of the oppressed minorities of the world. Such concern and protection are appropriate. Moses' motive was right, but his action was wrong.

**Moses was right in seeking the deliverance of his oppressed nation.**

That was his calling from God. He saw his position in Pharaoh's palace as being ordained of God for that very purpose. He interpreted his power of speech and action as the enabling from God to accomplish the deliverance of the Hebrews. *"He supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them"* (Acts 7:25). It all seemed so perfectly arranged that Moses began immediately to right the wrongs in Hebrew-Egyptian relationships.

**Moses was wrong in his expectation of his peers.** They failed to understand his role in their deliverance. His presumption and their misunderstanding were sufficient to destroy the effectiveness of his attempts at their deliverance.

## **The Consequences of a Wrong Decision**

The purest motive expressed in a wrong action can become destructive to the man and his mission. Five serious consequences followed Moses' mistake. Let them warn you against rash decisions.

**The deliverer became a murderer** (Acts 7:24). Moses wanted to make peace between the Hebrew and the Egyptian as they were fighting. He came to the rescue of the Hebrew who was being attacked and mistreated. Do you suppose the Egyptian turned on Moses? Perhaps so. In the ensuing struggle the Egyptian was killed. Moses never started out that day to murder an Egyptian. But in an unguarded moment, he who would be the deliverer of his people became the killer of one of their oppressors. Be warned that your life's work can be affected if you go beyond the will of God in any part of your attempt to serve Him.

**Thanks became accusations** (Acts 7:26-28; Exodus 2:13, 14). Moses buried the slain Egyptian to keep his death from becoming known. You would think the Hebrews would be so grateful for the help of a prince of Egypt that they would have guarded well that secret. But not so. By the next day the deed was public knowledge. When Moses sought to stop a fight between two Hebrews, the man in the wrong rejected his interference and asked, *"Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday?"* (Acts 7:28). So he who should have been thanked became accused.

**A prince became a fugitive** (Acts 7:29; Exodus 2:15). Moses knew

that his killing of the Egyptian was known. If he stayed in Egypt, he would suffer imprisonment or death. So he became an exile in the land of Midian, fleeing from the wrath of Pharaoh. There he became a shepherd over another man's sheep, living the life of a nomad in the desert rather than that of a prince in Egypt. Behold the tragedy of a wrong decision and clear your decisions with God.

**A man of good intentions became a miserable failure.** Someone observed, "Moses set himself afire for God and burned to ashes within twenty-four hours. Later God set Moses afire and he burned for forty years!" Be careful how you respond to your good intentions. Even the purest desires can work havoc if they are not disciplined under the expressed will of God.

There is no substitute for God's man in God's place doing God's work at God's time. But woe to the person whose wrong decisions put him out of God's place while he attempts to do God's work out of God's time.

**A man with great potential was lost to service for years.** It was forty years (one third of Moses' life) between the time he killed the Egyptian and fled the country until he returned to Egypt as God's deliverer of the chosen nation. God often overrules our mistakes and makes them work out to the good. Those forty years that Moses spent in the desert were a period of training for the time when he would lead Israel through the desert to Mount Sinai and on to their Promised Land. Do not despair if you fall as a result of a bad decision. God can raise you up and use you.

## **The Elements in Your Making Right Decisions**

It is not enough for us to review Moses' decisions to compliment or condemn him. "*All these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition*" (I Corinthians 10:11). What principles can we draw from this study which will help us to make right decisions?

**Consider the future as well as the present results of each decision.** Never move on the basis of your emotion without serious forethought. Moses moved on the emotion of the moment and killed a man. If he had given serious thought, he would have seen the danger and never would have killed that Egyptian. Be objective in evaluating all elements of a decision before you act upon it. That is the meaning of Jesus' call for us to count the cost.

**Consider your reputation as well as your pleasures.** What is most exciting for you may not be best for you. Ask, "What will this course of action do to my future service for God? How will this affect my influence for good?" If you are made stronger for God, follow that course. If you are

made weaker in His service, run from it with all your might. “It pleases me” is never a valid basis for making a decision. Consider the will of God in every decision. As you face each issue, ask, “What would Jesus do?” Then honestly decide the course Jesus would follow and pursue it. That may not make you popular, but it will keep you from serious error in your choices. Do nothing without God's permission and you will do right.

**Consider the example of faithful men and women of God in their decisions of life.** They can guide you by their pattern. That is why we have studied Moses' decisions as a warning against our making wrong decisions and as guidelines for our making right ones.

God has a plan for each person's life; that includes yours. But it is possible for you to get outside His plan by going too fast, too slow, or turning aside. Learn to say over and over, “*If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that*” (James 4:15). Develop a practice of seeking God's will before making any decision. Turn to Him in common decisions, and it will be natural to turn to Him in the momentous ones.

### **Questions for Discussion**

1. How might you do a right thing in a wrong way?
2. How might misguided zeal take you out of the will of God?
3. Why does God let you fail when you make a wrong decision?
4. How might God overrule your wrong to bring good out of it?
5. What might help you in making right decisions?
6. Why should you consider the future as well as the present in making your decisions?
7. How might your pleasures hurt your reputation as you make your decisions?
8. How can you know the will of God in each decision?
9. How does this study of Moses give you guidance in future decisions?
10. How has this study helped you personally?