**THIS OR THAT**

**PART 1: YOU DECIDE**

**PERSONAL NOTES**

OPEN

1. How many of you want to flat line in your walk with God?
2. How many of you hope that your life never improves from this day forward? This is as good as life will ever be.
3. How many of you are COMPLETELY satisfied with every aspect of your life?
4. How many would be honest and say, “There is room for me to improvement in my life?”
5. I have been praying about this series since the first of the year!!
6. I need to ask your permission . . . Do you want a pastor who ONLY tells you nice things, only talks about “feel good topics” and pats you on the back and says, “Bless your darling heart.”

OR

1. A pastor who loves you enough to speak truthfully and openly about the REAL issues of life with the wisdom and revelation of God’s Word to make you a better person tomorrow than you are today???
2. This journey is about transformation
3. Get ready!!! I am going to

* Stretch you
* Challenge you
* Question you
* Push you

1. I DARE YOU to not miss one weekend!
2. This teaching series is about

* MAKING GOOD DECISIONS IN LIFE.
* GETTING OUT OF DEBT AND CRISIS
* DEVELOPING CHARACTER
* LIVING WITH EXCELLENCE
* YOU FLOURISHING -- NOT FLOUNDERING
* BREAKING BAD AND BUILDING GOOD
* GROWING UP SPIRITUALLY
* ADVANCING IN LIFE
* NOT MEDIOCRITY

GOAL

1. January 1, 2016 is just 61 days away!
2. Instead of waiting to begin the process of becoming the person we want to be on New Year’s day and making all kinds of stupid “resolutions.”
3. You and I are going to LAUNCH into 2016 like a space shuttle launch.



1. All systems on go!
2. In 60 days you can be at your goal weight
3. In 60 days you can break bad habits and build new healthy ones
4. In 60 days God can do a makeover from the inside out.
5. In 60 days you can be on a path to financial freedom

CHOICES

1. Statistics tell us the average person will make 6-12 life altering decisions in their lifetime.

* 1. 1000’s of decisions daily. (Eat, wear, hair, go to bed, TV, work, school)
  2. Millions and into the billions in a life time! But only 6-12 Life changing ones.
  3. What? Obvious – Who you marry, College or career you choose,
  4. The trouble is we never know when one of those simple decisions could turn into a life changing decision.
* EX: Years ago at my church in Plano, TX: on the 4th of July a family rode home from the fireworks around 10 pm.
* The dad made one simple decision – he chose NOT to buckle his seat belt.
* They were involved in an accident – the entire family walked away unharmed. The dad flew out of the car 50 feet and ended up paralyzed from the waist down for the rest of his life.
* A simple decision – became a life altering one!!!
  1. EX: Football - In a football game there are approximately 120 plays per game – 5 or less plays determine the outcome.
* A famous coach said – “We have to play every play as though it could be a game changing play.”
* The same is true in LIFE!

Too many times I hear people say – “What makes the difference – it doesn’t matter?” WRONG!!!!

JACOB AND ESAU

Turn in your Bibles to Genesis 25:24-34

* Jacob and Esau were twin brothers born to Isaac & Rebecca
* Esau was the first born

(Reference only – paraphrase for sake of time)

24 When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. 25 The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau. 26 After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau’s heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them.

27 The boys grew up, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was content to stay at home among the tents. (Chef) 28 Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

PPT STARTS HERE

29 Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished. 30 He said to Jacob, “Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I’m famished!” (That is why he was also called Edom.) 31 Jacob replied, “First sell me your birthright.” 32 “Look, I am about to die,” Esau said. “What good is the birthright to me?”

33 But Jacob said, “Swear to me first.” So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob. 34 Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left. So Esau despised his birthright.

UNDERSTANDING THE “BIRTHRIGHT”

* Tradition – oldest male – received the birthright and inheritance. It represented:
* Position – Rule
* Possession – Inheritance
* Power – Blessed

SOOO – WHAT CAN WE LEARN???

1. Shortsighted decisions today will often lead to a road of regret tomorrow.
   1. How many times did Esau regret that decision???
   2. A momentary pleasure led to a life of regret!
   3. Sounds like a BAD country song,

“I knew it was wrong, but thought I’d make it right. Now I’m in the ditches – cause I listened to the brain in my britches.”

* 1. How do people **get in debt?** Bad decisions yesterday!
  2. How does a **good marriage go bad?** Poor choices yesterday and the day before that and the month before that.

HERE’S WHAT WE TEND TO DO . . .

1. We often exaggerate our present circumstances to justify a bad decision.
   1. ESAU: “I’m about to die?”
   2. “I have to do this – there is no other way out!”
   3. “I HAVE TO BUY IT!”
   4. It’s a way of not taking responsibility – “I was forced to – I had no options.”
   5. The strongest of believers with the highest of morals will be challenged when the right circumstances surround you.
   6. **The easy way is not the best way - Read story**

There once was an aging emperor who had no sons to be his successor over his kingdom. So the Emperor called all of the young men to his court and gave them the following instructions. “The man who is to take my place must know how to care and nurture the people of my kingdom. Today I will give each one of you a seed. You must take it, plant it, water it and care for it and 90 days from now bring it back to me.” All of the young boys scurried home and planted their seed. Young Ling was just as excited as the rest of the boys. He watered his seed, fertilized it and gave it plenty of sunshine. As the other boys’ seeds began to sprout, Ling stared at his pot of dirt with frustration.

Finally the day came to appear before the Emperor. As Ling arrived in the courtyard with his pot of dirt the other boys had plants of all sizes, shapes, and colors. “Why did I even bother to come?” Ling thought. When the emperor entered he began to survey the young boys and their plants and his eye was drawn to Ling with his empty pot. Ling looked at the ground to avoid the constant stare, when suddenly the Emperor called for the boy in the back with the pot and no plant. “How embarrassing, what will I say?” thought Ling as he slowly moved through the crowd. When he finally reached the Emperor, he was asked for his name. The emperor took the pot of dirt and addressed the crowd who waited with anticipation. “Today I present to you, Ling, the successor of my kingdom and your future emperor.”

You see what the boys didn’t know was the emperor had boiled the seeds so it would be impossible for them to grow or sprout.

THE REALITY IS THIS . . .

1. Our current condition of life (spirit, soul, body) is a direct reflection of the choices we have made from the day we were born.
   1. Whatever situation we are in . . .
      * financially,
      * physically,
      * emotionally,
      * security,
      * faith,
      * job, employment, career,
      * education,
      * relationships, friendships,
      * habits, addictions,
      * success, failure,
   2. is the combination of hundreds and thousands and tens of thousands and even millions of decisions we have made.

**1 Corinthians 6:12** NIV “I have the right to do anything,” you say—but not everything is beneficial. “I have the right to do anything”—but I will not be mastered by anything.

(AMP) Everything is permissible for me, but not all things are beneficial. Everything is permissible for me, but I will not be enslaved by anything [and brought under its power, allowing it to control me].

MSG: Just because something is technically legal doesn’t mean that it’s spiritually appropriate. If I went around doing whatever I thought I could get by with, I’d be a slave to my whims.

Here's the good news:

1. If your daily decisions got you into the situation, your daily decisions will get you out of your current problems and crisis.

**Deuteronomy 30:19** “Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your descendants might live!

1. THIS OR THAT???? YOU CHOOSE DAILY!
2. Stop looking for the miracle answer!

* Purchasing a lottery ticket to bail you out of your financial situation
* Saw a sign on a telephone pole: “Make $40,000 - stay at home, work part time!”
* Crashing on a miracle diet

1. The true miracle is in my DAILY choices and decisions!!!!
2. “But you don’t know what I’ve been through!”

WAKE UP . . .

1. Life isn’t defined by what happens to us but how we respond to life.

* THIS OR THAT

WE CHOOSE:

* Faith or Fear
* Resistance or Acceptance
* Light or Darkness
* Love or hate
* Forgiveness or resentment
* Grow BETTER or grow BITTER
* Learn from it and never do it again OR make it a habit.

LAST BIG IDEA TODAY . . . YOU DECIDE . . .

1. We have to own it and fix it rather than ignore it or tolerate it.
2. We have to stop playing the blame game!
3. We have to stop being the victim!
4. We have to stop blaming the devil!
5. Stop blaming God! For His unresponsiveness or for his so called “lesson” he is trying to teach you.
6. “I” am my greatest enemy or ally -- I am my greatest asset or liability.
7. There is no one else to blame

CLOSE:

AS WE WRAP THIS UP TODAY . . . I DARE EACH ONE OF YOU TO. . .

CONDUCT A LIFE AUDIT

(Will lightly touch on but encourage them to read and follow the instructions if I run out of time.)

1. Make a list of your assets: Good habits & positive characteristics.

* Honesty
* Humor
* Optimism

1. Make a list of your liabilities: Bad habits and negative characteristics.

* Impatience
* Indecisiveness
* Being Overemotional

Possible life areas to audit:

* Audit how you spend your time
* Audit your spiritual life
* Audit your productivity
* Audit your habits
* Audit your character
* Audit your effectiveness
* Audit your skills
* Audit your education
* Audit your health
* Audit your finances
* Audit your fitness level
* Audit your relationships (marriage, family, and friends).
* Audit your living conditions (how clean and organized your home is, and how comfortable you feel in your home)
* Audit your creativity
* Audit how happy you are
* Audit your energy level
* Audit your career
* Audit your leisure time
* Audit how well you’re doing in terms of [achieving your major life goals](http://marelisa-online.com/idea-book/ebook.php)
* Audit how much fun you’re having

1. Rate yourself on a scale of 1-10 where you currently are. Then decide where you want to be and the daily decisions that will get you there. Only start “action steps” with THREE areas initially.

* Example: Physical Health: 5 Goal: 7.5
* Time Frame: 60 Days
* Action steps:
* Drink more water
* Sleep 7+ hours every night
* Cut out all junk food / Eat healthier
* Take a half-an-hour walk every day.
* Consult a friend who’s in great shape and ask them for tips.
* Example: Time Management: 4 Goal: 8
* Time Frame: 40 Days
* Action Steps:
* Get up when the alarm goes off
* Leave 10 minutes earlier for work each day
* Set reminders on my phone
* Daily make and review my task list for the day
* Be at least 5 minutes early to every appointment

YOU DECIDE!

YOU DECIDE YOUR FUTURE

YOU DECIDE IF 2016 WILL BE A RERUN OF 2015??

YOU DECIDE WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE AND THE DAILY DECISIONS TO GET YOU THERE.

INVITATION

1. The greatest decision of a lifetime is to whom you will give control of your life to??
2. Some give control to their circumstances
3. Some here give control to your career – its what drives your life
4. I dare you to give God a chance!!!