

April 16, 2023

RESOLVED: Better Choices, Better Life 1 - I am resolved

Have you ever noticed or known people who have a great life...

great relationships / kind and generous / fulfilled in life / live with purpose and meaning / love life?

What is it about their life that accounts for such a marked difference from the majority?

Struggling in relationships / struggling to hold on to their marriage, or even holding their lives together / SEEMS TO BE COMING APART AT THE SEAMS

They want to make it better but can't seem to...

What accounts for such a difference?

HINT: It isn't what most people think:

- NOT intelligence / income / talent / appearance
 - Many smart people are miserable.
 - Many wealthy people are miserable.
 - Many talented people are miserable.
 - Many attractive people on the outside are ... UGLY inside.

So what is it?

I. **Why do we struggle to make good decisions?**

- **Information overload:** We live in a world where we are bombarded with information. It can be overwhelming to sift through all this information and make an informed decision. This can lead to going too slow: **decision paralysis** or deciding too fast: **making impulsive decisions**.
- **Consumerism:** We live in a world that is now heavily focused on consumerism, and instant gratification. **People may prioritize short-term pleasure over long-term benefits.**
- Then there is **decision fatigue**.

Decision fatigue is a cognitive science label for a common phenomenon. Here's what happens: the quality of decisions goes down as the quantity of prolonged and continuous decision making goes up!

Examples of decision fatigue:

- **Shopping:** While shopping too long, you may make impulsive and irrational buying decisions.

- **General health:** After experiencing decision fatigue (say at work), you are more likely to binge on TV, skip your workout, or give up on your diet.
- **Productivity:** Decision fatigue will lead to wasting time, and depleted decision-making ability.
- **Relationships:** Decision fatigue may cause you to argue and fight more often, because you have no reserves to work on conflict resolution.
- **Work performance:** Decision fatigue may cause you to make mistakes, miss important details, or underperform.
- **Compromised Critical Thinking Skills:** So much information with so many decisions to make (around 35,000 decisions a day according to some studies) compromises our critical thinking skills.

WHY IS ALL THIS IMPORTANT FOR US: If we want to make decisions that align with our values and goals, we will need critical thinking skills.

COMMON PROBLEM

We let our feelings **overrule** our logic, then we choose short-term pleasure over long-term benefits.

- Our logic says, “be patient with your child”.
 - Our feelings say, “YELL LOUD NOW.”
- Our logic says, “Eating more is not good for me”
 - Our feelings say, “I WANT MORE NOW!”

Choosing **short-term pleasure over long-term benefits** feels good for a short while, but we pay a high price for this pattern.

If your life is moving in the direction of your decisions, do you like the direction your decisions are taking you?

II. How can we make better choices?

We need to connect the dots!

- Our decisions today are making a path for tomorrow!
- Today’s decisions affect tomorrow’s decisions.
- MANY people have never learned how to connect the dots... today’s decisions matter tomorrow

But how do we do that? We can’t see into the future how these dots connect, can we?

Step 1: CHOOSE YOUR VALUES CAREFULLY

SEE HOW today’s values connect with tomorrow’s character!!

Having strong personal values and principles can give a sense of direction and determination to stick to your path despite difficulties.

Daniel 1:8 (NIV) But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine ...

When your values are clear, your decisions are easier.

What did Daniel value? He valued honoring God first, come what may.

The phrase “defile himself” is a strong phrase. What’s going on here? The “royal” diet was a Babylonian royal diet. The Babylonian diet crossed many of the lines clearly drawn up by God for the Jewish people in the Old Covenant law. To cross those lines meant disobeying God’s law.

What do you value?

How strongly do you value a forward-looking, people-loving, God-honoring life?

Step 2: LEARN to TRUST GOD’S VALUES

Daniel was RESOLVED.

Where does he get such resolve?

Psalms 119:9 (NIV) How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word.

Daniel was a young person, and I would almost bet that Daniel had this line memorized (and many many more).

What he stored up in his value system was particularly important because Daniel and his friends were taken hostage to a foreign land. The Babylonians had a strategy for these young promising intelligent captives.

Rather than execute them, the Babylonians wanted to reprogram them. We would call it brainwashing. The Babylonians were going to do everything in their power to make them less Jewish and more Babylonian in their thinking. So they began their re-education program. It started with all of their choice Babylonian foods. **Their plan was to wine em and dine em and change them and reshape them!**

BUT because Daniel recognized that their nation’s failure to keep God’s law had brought judgment and defeat to his people, he was determined that he would live to please God and trust Him to keep him safe in the foreign land.

The book of Daniel demonstrates the truth of...

Proverbs 16:3 (NIV) Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.

But Daniel knew that what they were going to be asked to do was going to defile them, and cause them to dishonor their God. Daniel saw it coming, and he did something about it.

III. **Resolve brings better choices CONSISTENTLY**

"Daniel resolved." What does this mean? It means Daniel decided in advance that he was not going to "defile himself with the royal food and wine."

What is R E S O L V E ?

Let's start with the opposite of resolve. Too many people live the opposite of a resolute lifestyle. They live from one one desire to the next or one whim to the next. This is precisely the opposite of resolve.

Resolve refers to a person's determination and willingness to take actions to achieve their goals, despite obstacles or challenges. Becoming more resolved involves developing a strong sense of purpose and commitment to a particular goal or objective, and then taking consistent and intentional steps towards its attainment.

The key to having RESOLVE is in the word "SOLVE".

RESOLVED is a weird ENGLISH WORD,

Re - Solved. Sounds like we have to re-solve repeatedly. That sounds very hard. BUT THAT ISN'T how it works!!

Daniel was RESOLVED because he had PRE-SOLVED the problem at hand. He decided ahead of time what he would and would not do.

Resolve is solving in advance, and staying with the solution that moves you toward what you truly value.

Daniel had learned by observation that his nation did not connect the dots, and that's why they were in exile. Daniel trusted GOD enough to stay with GOD'S values so that God would come through for him.

When faced with _____ (this situation),

I have pre-decided to _____ (take this action).

What do you value?

AGAIN: When your values are clear, your decisions are easier.

You're Not RE SOLVING repeatedly, it is already PRE-SOLVED, and that is why you are resolved.

Connecting the dots increases your RESOLVE (because you learn from experience that it works, and you don't want to give up that JOY and blessing)

Here are the 6 sessions of this series: Let's say them together:

I am resolved.

I am ready.

I am consistent.

I am devoted.

I am kind.

I am faithful.

If you are anything like me, you have work to do in all of these areas. Yes. You heard me correctly. I have work to do in each of these areas. And it is a particular kind of work.

This might sound like a SELF-HELP series. Although it can help self, the source of that help is not Self. I've learned that apart from Jesus, I can't pull these off the way I'd like to.

I want to tell you about Jesus. The good news is that we are not saved by our resolve. We are saved by the grace of God. The really good news is that God loves you so much that he sent Jesus, his only Son, who was perfect in every way, who died to take away your sins, and offer you forgiveness. God raised him from the dead, and our response is simply to decide. Decide what?

Do you want to stand before God based on your own righteousness? Or do you want to trust Jesus? With Jesus as our savior helping us, we can experience a forward-looking, people-loving, God-honoring life! Would you like that?

PRACTICAL FIRST STEP. Will you decide today to be RESOLVED to hear all 6 of these messages (whether in person or online, or in some combination)? Let's decide in advance to become more RESOLVED.

The Prayer Team is here to pray for you on any matter...Need Jesus? Need more resolve on something in particular? Or any other prayer need you might have?

Talk It Over

RESOLVED

Part 1- I am Resolved

SMALL TALK

1. When it comes to decision making, what's your typical approach?

VIEWPOINT

2. **Read Daniel 1:8; Proverbs 16:3; and Psalm 119:9.** We can ask God to help us with our "resolve". What helps do you see in these texts? Talk about the meaning of "resolve" and how this relates to the word "solve". How does resolve work? Talk about an upcoming decision or plan that you need God's help with.
3. **Read Daniel 1:1-21 and Matthew 6:33.** What similarities do you see in Daniel 1:8 and Matthew 6:33?

GETTING PERSONAL

4. Does the quality of your decisions affect the quality of your life?
5. Under what circumstances are you more likely to let your feelings overrule your logic?
6. What could you pre-decide / pre-solve now, to help you make good decisions in the future?
7. What are some of the values God has placed on your heart? Are your decisions and actions reflecting these values? Why or why not?

MAKING PROGRESS (THIS WEEK)

1. When faced with _____ (this situation), I have pre-decided to _____ (take this action).