

Life or Death 1

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Why does God let bad things happen?

Deuteronomy 30:15-20 – ¹⁵ See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, ¹⁶ in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. ¹⁷ But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, ¹⁸ I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess. ¹⁹ I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; ²⁰ that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days.
NKJV

He sets before us LIFE and DEATH, BLESSING and CURSING and then tells us to CHOOSE!

3 Steps to CHOOSING Death and Destruction

1. Do not hear or receive God's Word

Hosea 4:6 - my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. *NIV*

2. Drawn away to the voice of culture

Romans 12:1-2 – ¹ So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life — your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life — and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. ² Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you. *The Message*

Pastor Paul Admonition on Small Groups:

- We are striving to have people **know God** (weekend services), **find freedom** (through small groups), **discover their purpose** (by completing the Growth Track), and **make a difference** (by stepping out in faith to use their God-given gifts to bless others by serving on the Dream Team).
- Getting in a group is not just a next step, it helps you navigate the process of making a **lifestyle of taking next steps**.
- **Small groups are safe places** where you can encourage and be encouraged, know others and be known, and do life together with others who have similar goals, similar challenges, and similar interests.
- **Small Group Leaders pray for their group members everyday by name.**
- Small groups are to help **people connect to others and make the church smaller.**
- Our goal is to have small groups for every spiritual level. We see group offerings like we imagine a subway. There is more than just one starting point. People can jump aboard wherever they are spiritually and the last stop on the subway is when we arrive in heaven.
- Most of the people in our church can lead a group and should be encouraged to do so. The most blessed people at Victory Family Church are our small group leaders as they “water others, they too will be watered.”

3. Worship, bow down, serve, and obey the voice of culture

- “Has God said” is the original deception and tactic of Satan.

Genesis 3:1 - Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "**Has God indeed said**, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" **NKJV**

Proverbs 14:12 - There's a way of life that looks harmless enough; look again — it leads straight to hell. **The Message**

We're not running from the culture and the darkness, we're running to it with the message of hope and freedom that only Jesus brings.

3 Steps to CHOOSING Life Abundant

1. Love the Lord your God

Matthew 22:37-40 - ³⁷ Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." **NIV**

I John 4:19 - We love because he first loved us. *NIV*

2. Obey His Voice

John 14:15 - "If you love Me, keep My commandments. *NKJV*

John 21:15-16 – ¹⁵ So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "**Feed My lambs.**" ¹⁶ He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "**Tend My sheep.**" *NKJV*

Jesus said we love Him by not only feeding His sheep, but His LAMBS.

3. Cling to Him

This world is not a **playground**, but a **battleground**.