

How can you make God-honoring choices?

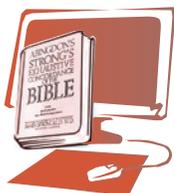
The thirteen lessons in this quarter's study, *Outfitted for Life's Choices*, will guide you through a study of various Old and New Testament characters. As you study these characters and the choices they made (both good and bad), you will learn how to avoid foolish choices and instead make choices that bring glory to the Lord.



The *Real Faith in Life Devotional Bible Study* is designed to help you dig into God's Word. Each lesson offers devotions for Monday through Saturday, along with an

In-Class worksheet to be completed during your group study.

In order for you to gain the most out of your devotional time, use the following tools along with your student book.



Bible study tools: In order for you to dig into God's Word, consider using a Bible dictionary and a concordance.

If you are not familiar with these helpful guides, ask your pastor or youth leader for a recommendation.



Journal: Purchase a journal or notebook to record your personal thoughts and prayers. Bring your journal and student book to class each week so that you can take notes during the

lesson or write any special insights you gain from a particular activity. You may also use the journal for sermon notes or for prayer requests.

Or visit an online Bible tools Web site, such as www.blueletterbible.org.

This site offers commentaries, maps, and many other tools to help you in your Bible study. (This recommendation does not constitute a blanket endorsement by RBP.)

SELFLESS CHOICES

Turn on the TV, flip through a magazine, or surf the Web, and you'll see and hear the world's favorite message: "Serve yourself first." Our society seems focused on a "what's-in-it-for-me?" mentality.

This week you will study the life of an Old Testament woman and the choices she made to selflessly follow and care for her mother-in-law. Ruth chose to put another person's needs before her own and, as a result, experienced God's richest blessings.

As you complete this week's devotions, ask God to show you areas in your life in which you can choose to put others before yourself.

Memory Verse



*"The LORD recompense thy work,
and a full reward be given thee of
the LORD God of Israel, under whose
wings thou art come to trust"
(Ruth 2:12).*

Monday

Read Ruth 1:1–7 to gain some background information about Ruth and Naomi.

1. Why were Elimelech and his family in Moab?
2. What tragedies occurred while the family was in Moab?
3. What did Naomi decide to do? Why?
4. Read verses 8–10 and describe Naomi's interaction with her daughters-in-law.
5. Study verses 11–17 and record Orpah's and Ruth's responses.



Ruth's selfless choice would take her away from her family and her country—everything that was familiar to her.

How about you? Are you willing to selflessly put others' needs above your own? While such a choice might not cause you to leave your family or country, your choice to be selfless will require sacrifice. Ask God to give you the strength and the insight to put others before yourself.



Memory Verse Activity: As you memorize this week's memory verse, Ruth 2:12, notice how others recognized Ruth's selflessness. Ask yourself, *Do others see a selfless attitude in my life?*

Tuesday

Read Ruth 1:18–22 and answer the following questions.

1. Describe Naomi and Ruth's arrival in Bethlehem.



Ruth was a foreigner from a despised land and a companion to a bitter woman. It would not have been easy for her to make the selfless sacrifices she chose to make!

2. What time of year was it?

Ruth 2:1–7 introduces a new character. Read the account and answer the following questions.

3. Who is he and how is he described?
4. What did Ruth want to do?
5. Where did Ruth "happen" to end up working?
6. What report did Boaz's servants give him about Ruth?
7. Summarize Ruth's selfless actions found in 1:19—2:7.

Ask God to show you ways you can selflessly serve others today.

Wednesday

Read about Boaz and Ruth's first encounter in Ruth 2:8–23

1. Summarize their conversation (vv. 8–13).

Boaz:

Ruth:

Boaz:

Ruth:



Ruth had earned an honored reputation because of her care for her mother-in-law. Because of her God-honoring actions, those in Bethlehem—including Boaz—recognized her commitment to God. Do others recognize your commitment to God by your selfless attitude that puts others first?

2. What did Boaz offer Ruth at mealtime?
3. What did he tell his workers to do?
4. How much did Ruth gather?
5. What was her mother-in-law's response when Ruth told her what happened?
6. What did Naomi tell Ruth to do?

While Ruth was not serving Naomi for a reward, it's clear that God's blessing was on Ruth's selfless choices.

Thursday

Study Ruth 3 and answer the following questions.

1. What did Naomi tell Ruth to do?

2. What was Ruth's response?



Naomi's instructions and Ruth's actions may seem really strange to us, but this was a traditional Jewish act. Boaz obviously clearly understood its meaning.

3. How did Boaz respond?

4. How was Ruth's "kindness in the latter end" (her willingness to marry Boaz) better even than her kindness to Naomi?

5. According to verse 11, what did the rest of the town know about Ruth?

6. What did Boaz tell Ruth (vv. 12, 13)?

7. What did he give to Ruth?

8. After receiving this generous gift, Ruth went back to Naomi. What was Naomi's response?

How will you follow Ruth's example of selflessness today?

Friday

Naomi was right. Boaz immediately went to settle the situation concerning Ruth.

Read Ruth 4:1–12 and answer the following questions.

1. Whom was Boaz looking for at the gate of the city?
2. How did Boaz present the situation to the nearer relative?
3. What was the initial response of the kinsman-redeemer?
4. What detail did Boaz then add?
5. What reason did the nearer relative give for not being able to serve as the kinsman-redeemer?
6. What did Boaz say would be the result of his marriage to Ruth?

Read Ruth's "happily ever after" in Ruth 4:13–22.

7. What did the women say to Naomi after the birth of Obed?
8. Look at verse 22 and record Obed's two descendents.
9. Now read Matthew 1:1 and 5. Who else was a part of Boaz and Ruth's family line?



God greatly blessed Ruth's selfless character, and because of her faithfulness she became part of the family tree of God's own Son, Jesus Christ.

Saturday

Review this week's devotions and think about the many ways Ruth demonstrated a selfless spirit.

Selflessness is a hard choice to make, whether you lived thousands of years ago or you function in today's fast-paced society. Hard as it is, selflessness is not optional. God's Word gives us a pattern that believers are to follow.

Read Philippians 2:2–5 and answer the following questions.

In verse 2, Paul urged the believers to

1. Be . . .
2. Have the . . .
3. Be of one . . .
4. According to verse 3, how are believers to view other people?
5. What are the believers not to focus on?
6. Instead, what are they to focus on?
7. Who set the ultimate example of selflessness?
8. List two or three relationships in which you could be more selfless.
9. How will your selflessness bring honor to God?



I am making godly life choices when I choose selflessly.



Journal Notes

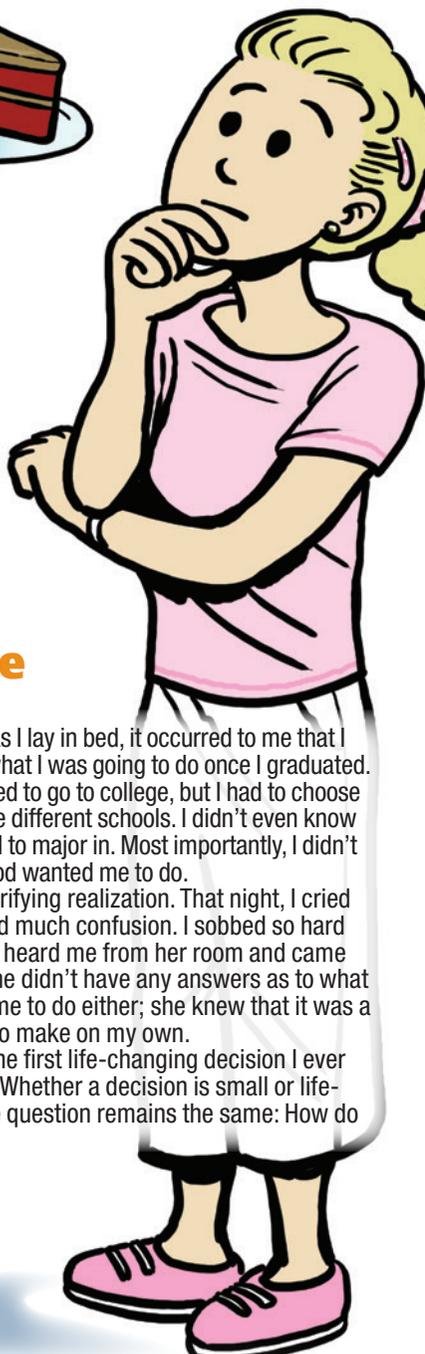
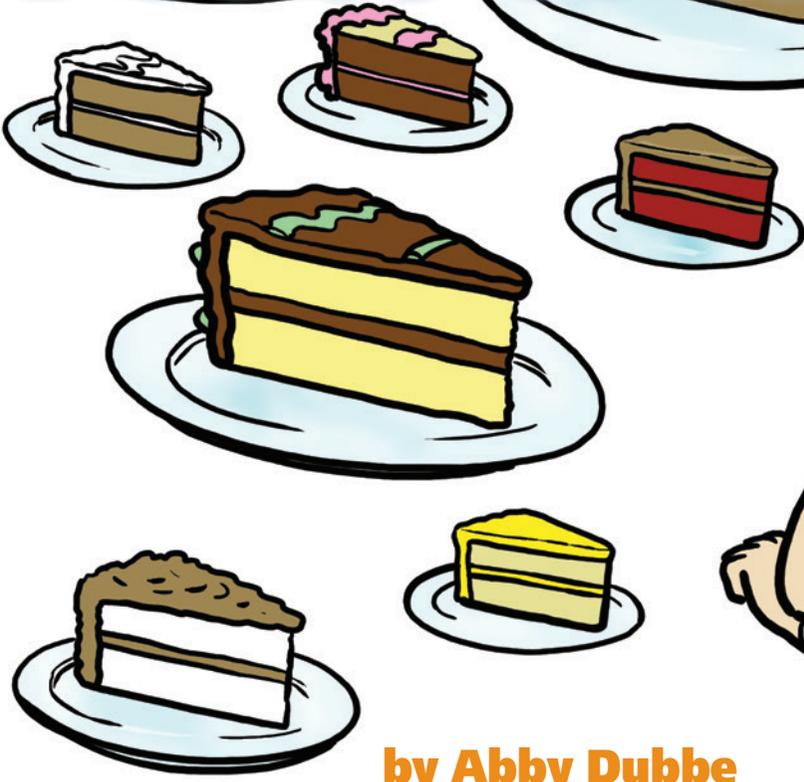
Selfless Choices

Time

Talents

Treasures

Peace of Cake?



by Abby Dubbe

My senior year of high school was a breeze . . . for the most part. I only had an English class and a gym class left in order to graduate, so I filled my schedule with fun electives and study halls and worked in the community with children. Sounds like a piece of cake, right? It was for most of the year; then toward the end of my semester, I had a major decision to make. Life wasn't such a cakewalk any more.

"[T]oward the end of my semester, I had a major decision to make. Life wasn't such a cakewalk any more."

One night as I lay in bed, it occurred to me that I had no idea what I was going to do once I graduated. I knew I wanted to go to college, but I had to choose between three different schools. I didn't even know what I wanted to major in. Most importantly, I didn't know what God wanted me to do.

It was a terrifying realization. That night, I cried out in fear and much confusion. I sobbed so hard that my mom heard me from her room and came running in. She didn't have any answers as to what God wanted me to do either; she knew that it was a choice I had to make on my own.

That was the first life-changing decision I ever had to make. Whether a decision is small or life-changing, the question remains the same: How do



we make wise choices? How do we know what God wants us to choose?

In Matthew 26:36–46 we see that, humanly speaking, Jesus had a major choice to make. Jesus was fully human, which means He felt sorrow and anguish as He waited in the Garden, knowing what was about to happen to Him on the cross. Jesus was also fully God, so He would not have chosen otherwise, but He still felt the emotions and pain that a human would feel. His choice affected every single person that ever lived or is yet to be born! His choice affects how we are going to spend eternity.

Jesus chose to be tortured, ridiculed, and crucified for our salvation. His soul was overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. In fact, twice Jesus

asked His Father to take “this cup” from Him (vv. 39, 42). In the other accounts from the Gospels, Jesus is described as being deeply distressed, troubled, and anguished—so much so that His sweat was like drops of blood. Even when the choice was agonizing, Jesus’ sole desire was to do God’s will.

Sometimes it’s easy to look at Jesus’ life and think that it was no problem for Him to follow God. It may seem discouraging because we struggle with making right choices. Don’t give up. Although it is impossible for us to live a perfect life as Jesus did, it is possible for us to make right choices as He did.

The first thing to do when faced with a choice is **pray**. While He was in the Garden, facing crucifixion, Jesus fell with His face to the ground and prayed

GRASP God's Best

How do I know for sure what God's will is for my life?

by Erin Kealen

"God's will isn't a magic potion," my youth pastor reminded me. "Sometimes you've just got to choose from the good choices in front of you." The way he explained it was, "GRASP God's best."

God's Word must be a consistent part of your life.

Scripture should be a continual element in your daily walk with God, not just a dutiful five-minute-a-day routine. David wrote of the blessed man whose "delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night" (Psalm 1:2). Consider keeping a journal of your private times with God. Record your thoughts concerning the Scripture passages you are studying. Review your journal often to see what God is showing you from His Word. When your heart is focused on the thoughts of God, the choices you make will reflect your heart.

Review all your options.

Make a list of pros and cons for each option you face. Then continually take those options before the Lord in prayer.

Ask godly adult mentors for counsel.

Proverbs 12:15 says that a person who "hearkeneth unto counsel is wise."

Seek the counsel of godly men and women who know you well. Show them your list of options. Tell them how God is working in your life through your personal devotions. Ask them to pray with you and for you during your decision-making process.

Submit to God's given will.

Make sure you are following the principles for living that God has given to all believers in the Bible. Romans 12:1 tells believers to "present your bodies a living sacrifice" to God. You must be completely yielded, ready to obey Him in every area of your life. Understanding God's specific will for your life is impossible if you are not first submitting to His given will.

Pray as you step forward in faith.

Philippians 4:6 and 7 command the believer to be "careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the *peace of God*, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (emphasis added).

As you seek to make wise choices, GRASP God's best, and He will confirm your decisions by granting you His blessed peace.



earnestly. He prayed intently, seriously, and sincerely. All believers are beckoned to find help at the throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16). James 1:5 says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

The second thing to do when faced with a choice is **seek God's Word**. Making wise choices comes from spending time in God's Word. The more we read His Word, the more we understand God, and the more we know what He wants for our lives. We can see how God wants us to choose when we look at the many examples of other believers in the Bible. No, God doesn't tell us in the Bible exactly what college to go to, but He does provide wisdom and counsel through His Holy Scriptures.



Third, when faced with making a choice, **be still before the Lord** (Psalm 46:10) and wait for His direction. God commands us not to be anxious about anything, "but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6, 7).

As I look back on that huge decision of choosing a college to attend and choosing a major to pursue, I remember praying often. As I sought God in prayer, read His Word, and spent time being still before Him, He led me exactly where He wanted me. And He will do the same for you. When faced with an important decision, there's no feeling quite like the peace of God that transcends all understanding!

