

I knew that I shouldn't have done it, but I did. This is not some grave confession here. I'm just referring to the fact that I knew that I shouldn't have swam under water in our chlorine filled pool the other day with my grandsons. Why shouldn't have I have done that? Because swimming under water that has chlorine in it almost always greatly aggravates my vocal cords, and causes me to have a type of laryngitis, which was all too evident to those who worshiped with us at our Metairie campus this past weekend (some people said I sounded like "Grover" on Sesame Street). Having made the mistake mentioned above, I have been to my doctor, received two painful steroid shots, started taking medication, and (most painful of all) been ordered not to talk for several days. Please pray for me!

Have you ever done something you shouldn't have done, knowing that what you did was going to lead to some adverse circumstance in your life? We've all done that from time to time. How would you complete the statement: "I knew that I shouldn't have _____ because I knew that it would cost me dearly?" Some people will be tempted to say:

- "I knew that I shouldn't have eaten that extra portion of dessert."
- "I knew that I shouldn't have gone out with my old worldly friends"
- "I knew that I shouldn't have told that lie"
- "I knew that I shouldn't have gone to that movie or watched that television program."
- "I knew that I shouldn't have dated (or married) that individual."
- "I knew that I shouldn't have spent that much money on that purchase."
- "I knew that I shouldn't have missed this past weekend at Celebration Church because the worship, fellowship and message were just what I needed."

Again, how would you complete the statement, "I knew I shouldn't have _____?"

Do you ever wonder, like I sometimes do, "why do we do things we know that we shouldn't do?" Sometimes we do things we know we shouldn't do because of:

- Carelessness in our lives – we just forget the consequences of our actions
- Laziness in our lives – we're just feeling too lazy to do the right thing
- Prayerlessness – we don't take the time to ask God for discernment and direction
- Selfishness in our lives – we want what we want regardless of the consequences
- Rebelliousness in our lives – we just want to do the opposite of what we know we should do because we want to be rebellious

Speaking of rebelliousness, a famous Church planting expert I'm Facebook friends with said that he heard a famous preacher say that it was ungodly to "text" or "twitter" while in a worship service. So the next time he was in a worship service he had this great compulsion to "text" and "twitter." I think that we're all like that from time to time.

Why do "YOU" do the things you know you shouldn't do?" Your answer could be any or all of the answers above, but the bottom line is "we will all reap what we sow" (Galatians 6:7), and we all make wrong choices when we aren't surrendered to the Lord or we don't consult with the Lord. I've seen good people over the years make wrong choices that cost them their family, friends, jobs, financial security, reputation, and most importantly their intimate relationship with the Lord. You've probably seen or experienced similar things as well.

On the other hand, multitudes of times throughout the years I've seen people who were "surrendered to the Lord" make good and godly decisions that have positively impacted their family, friendships, financial situation, reputation and their relationship with the Lord.

What are some "steps to making good decisions" that will result in having positive impacts on the circumstances and relationships of our lives? My suggestions would be:

- **Acknowledging the poor decisions we've made and seeking God's forgiveness regarding them.** David wrote, "*A broken and contrite heart God will listen to*" (Psalm 51:17).
- **Surrendering our "will," "ways" and "wants" to the Lord.** Jesus said in Luke 9:23-24: "*If people want to follow Me, they must give up the things they want. They must be willing to give up their lives daily to follow Me. Those who want to save their lives will give up true life. But those who give up their lives for Me will have true life.*"
- **Consulting with mature Christians regarding the crucial decisions of our lives.** Proverbs 27:17 reads, "*As iron sharpens iron, so people can improve each other.*" A great place to make and develop such friendships is in our *Life Groups*.
- **Committing to only making decisions that will be approved by and bring honor to the Lord.** Paul wrote, "*Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God*" (1 Corinthians 10:31).
- **Purposing to listen and listen and listen to the Lord until we have discovered His will and plans for our lives.** We can and will hear from the Lord when we are faithful in praying, reading His Word, attending worship services, and consulting with strong Christian friends. Jesus said, "*My sheep hear My voice . . . and they follow Me.*" (John 10:27)

One of my favorite passages of Scripture is Proverbs 3:5-6 which reads: "*Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.*" When we live by those verses and apply the principles mentioned above, we will less and less find ourselves saying, "I knew I shouldn't have done that."

Praying for all of you,

Pastor Dennis