

How to Avoid Defeat and Win Victories

Choosing wisely the voices you listen to

September 12, 2021 Pastor Jonathan Schaeffer

The tongue has the power of life and death...

PROVERBS 18:21

THE POWER OF WORDS

History is full of examples of how people respond differently to similar scenarios, leading to crushing defeat or significant growth. The x factor? The voices we listen to, and the words we believe.

CASE STUDY #1

God leads his people to their new homeland. NUMBERS 13-14

The challenge

An overwhelming crisis that feels impossible to overcome.

The voices in play

Majority voice:

'We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are.' And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored... 'We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.' NUMBERS 13:31-33

Minority voice:

*Do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will devour them. Their protection is gone, but **the Lord is with us.** Do not be afraid of them.* NUMBERS 14:9

The defining decision

Almost everyone chooses to listen to the majority voice.

The outcome

The Lord disciplines those who listen to the wrong voices, and blesses those who trust him and see the bigger picture.

It all comes back to what voice is trusted and listened to.

CASE STUDY #2

A world leader threatens God's followers. 2 CHRONICLES 32

The challenge

An overwhelming crisis that feels impossible to overcome.

The voices in play

A world leader with no respect for the Lord:

He wrote letters ridiculing the Lord...to terrify the people and make them afraid. 2 CHRONICLES 32:17-18

The leader of God's people:

*Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged... for there is a **greater power with us** than with him. With him is only the arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles.* HEZEKIAH, 2 CHRONICLES 32:7-8

The defining decision

The people choose the voice that highlights what's invisible but real: God is with them and He is always more than enough. *The people gained confidence from what Hezekiah the king of Judah said.* 2 CHRONICLES 32:8

The outcome

So the Lord saved Hezekiah and the people...He took care of them on every side. 2 CHRONICLES 32:22

DISCERNING GOD'S VOICE IN A BROKEN WORLD

1. Look at the **character and heart** of the speaker.
"Show me your friends, and I'll show you your future."
2. Evaluate every voice through the **lens of God's Word**.
"Does this align with what I see in the Scripture?" ACTS 17:11

MAKE IT PERSONAL WITH JESUS

- **What voices do you choose to listen to?** How are you growing in your God-confidence, more impressed with his presence and promises than the challenges around you?
- What group, class, or other opportunity could put you where **more voices point you toward spiritual realities?**