

Living Up to Past Agreements

We have all made some bad agreements in our lives, and have suffered the consequences. Even Joshua and the Israelites, after great victories, make a bad agreement

Agreements are Essential to Life — (Matthew 5:33-35)

“Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.’ ³⁴ But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God’s throne; ³⁵ or by the earth, for it is His footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King.” - Matt. 5:33-35

We All Make Some Regrettable Agreements — (Joshua 9:3-15)

“When the people of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, ⁴ they resorted to a ruse: They went as a delegation whose donkeys were loaded with worn-out sacks and old wineskins, cracked and mended. ⁵ They put worn and patched sandals on their feet and wore old clothes. All the bread of their food supply was dry and moldy. ⁶ Then they went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal and said to him and the Israelites, ‘We have come from a distant country; make a treaty with us.’”

⁷ The Israelites said to the Hivites, “But perhaps you live near us, so how can we make a treaty with you?” ⁸ “We are your servants,” they said to Joshua. But Joshua asked, “Who are you and where do you come from?”

⁹ They answered: “Your servants have come from a very distant country because of the fame of the LORD your God. For we have heard reports of Him: all that He did in Egypt, ¹⁰ and all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan—Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth.

¹¹ And our elders and all those living in our country said to us, ‘Take provisions for your journey; go and meet them and say to them, ‘We are your servants; make a treaty with us.’” ¹² This bread of ours was warm when we packed it at home on the day we left to come to you. But now see how dry and moldy it is. ¹³ And these wineskins that we filled were new, but see how cracked they are. And our clothes and sandals are worn out by the very long journey.”

¹⁴ The Israelites sampled their provisions but did not inquire of the LORD. ¹⁵ Then Joshua made a treaty of peace with them to let them live, and the leaders of the assembly ratified it by oath.” - Joshua 9:3-15

Some Warning Signs of Bad Agreements.

1. We have reservations.
2. We don’t have enough information. (v. 8)
3. We don’t allow enough time to pass. (vs. 15,16)
4. We don’t inquire of the Lord. (v. 14)

We Will Experience Consequences of Bad Agreements —

“Three days after they made the treaty with the Gibeonites, the Israelites heard that they were neighbours, living near them. ¹⁷ So the Israelites set out and on the third day came to their cities: Gibeon, Kephirah, Beeroth and Kiriath Jearim. ¹⁸ But the Israelites did not attack them, because the leaders of the assembly had sworn an oath to them by the LORD, the God of Israel.

The whole assembly grumbled against the leaders, ¹⁹ but all the leaders answered, “We have given them our oath by the LORD, the God of Israel, and we cannot touch them now. ²⁰ This is what we will do to them: We will let them live, so that God’s wrath will not fall on us for breaking the oath we swore to them.” ²¹ They continued, “Let them live, but let them be woodcutters and water carriers in the service of the whole assembly.” So the leaders’ promise to them was kept.

²² Then Joshua summoned the Gibeonites and said, “Why did you deceive us by saying, ‘We live a long way from you,’ while actually you live near us? ²³ You are now under a curse: You will never be released from service as woodcutters and water carriers for the house of my God.”

²⁴ They answered Joshua, “Your servants were clearly told how the LORD your God had commanded His servant Moses to give you the whole land and to wipe out all its inhabitants from before you. So we feared for our lives because of you, and that is why we did this. ²⁵ We are now in your hands. Do to us whatever seems good and right to you.” - Joshua 9:15-25

Some Consequences of Bad Agreements.

1. The other person is not who you thought they were. (v. 16)
2. The closest people fight with each other. (v. 18)
3. You’re stuck with unpleasant limitations. (vs. 19,20)
4. You’re left with a lot of questioning. (v. 21)

We Can Live Beyond the Curse of Bad Agreements — (Josh. 9:26, 10)

“So Joshua saved them from the Israelites, and they did not kill them.” - Joshua 9:26

“Then the five kings of the Amorites—the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon—joined forces. They moved up with all their troops and took up positions against Gibeon and attacked it. - Joshua 10:5

“Solomon son of David established himself firmly over his kingdom, for the LORD his God was with him and made him exceedingly great. ³ Solomon and the whole assembly went to the high place at Gibeon, for God’s tent of meeting was there, which Moses the LORD’s servant had made in the wilderness.” - 2 Chronicles 1:1,3

⁷ That night God appeared to Solomon and said to him, “Ask for whatever you want me to give you.” - 2 Chronicles 1:7

¹⁰ “Give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may lead this people, for who is able to govern this great people of yours?” - 2 Chronicles 1:10

Application Project:

1. When should I keep my past agreements? When not?
2. How can I get on with life in spite of some regrettable decisions?

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