**ROAD TRIP! Wk 10: Fight or Flight. The Fork in the Road**

**We have been taking a look at the adventure of the Road Trip - because we are moving. But it is taking longer than expected. This month!!!**

**It’s given us a chance to dig deeper into the issues of hearing God**

**There are times when you are faced with such a big challenge you can’t help but wonder - Should I Fight or Flight? *(Larry Osborne)***

**THE BIG QUESTION**

**When something about life stinks, should I hang in or move on?**

**Real question – sometimes we face things that draw a line. A fork in the road? How do we make that decision?**

**SIMPLE ANSWER - If were talking briefly and I gave you a short answer**

**(A simple answer is found in 1 Cor 7. Paul is dealing with the challenges of being single / married / workplace / social backgrounds) 1 Corinthians 7:17 Nevertheless, each person should live as a believer in whatever situation the Lord has assigned to them, just as God has called them. This is the rule I lay down in all the churches.**

* **If you can’t get out of pain or a problem ethically – Hang in there!**

**Bloom where you are planted. God has a plan in the midst of your trial. Whatever the situation the Lord has assigned you…**

**1 Corinthians 7:20 Each person should remain in the situation they were in when God called them. 21 Were you a slave when you were called? Don’t let it trouble you—although if you can gain your freedom, do so. (Bloom where you’re at – but if you can get out in a God honoring way – do it!)**

* **If you can get out of pain or a problem ethically – Get out ASAP!**

**God has not called us to suffer for suffering sake. We are called to suffer for righteousness sake or for the gospel. Realize, God does not take pleasure in your pain. Get out if you can.**

**If you can avoid pain ethically - do it. But, if you can’t – embrace it Boxing - lean in. The first thing you do is, Bloom where you’re planted.**

**The basic rule of life… but there are exceptions. Today, the exceptions.**

**But, before we can know when to fight or flight. We need to know the difference between a temptation and a trial.**

**SOMETHING LOTS OF CHRISTIANS SEEM TO MISS**

* **Temptation: When we have the desire to do something wrong**
* **Trials: When we face a hardship**

**Sometimes we look at our temptations as a hardship – If I have a strong desire to do something wrong – that is not a trial.**

**God does not send temptation. (We’ll take a look in a minute) Temptation can bring difficult situations (as a result of our poor choices) But, that is not a “hardship or trial”**

**God does not temp us – However, God does allow hardship…**

**Notice this verse… 1 Peter 4:19 So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.**

**(God allowing hardship to shape us – more on this in chap 4:12-19) (Job 2:10)**

**Knowing the difference is important – because we deal with each and respond to each differently. There is a difference…**

**The strategy:**

* **When facing temptation – we win by running from it**
* **When facing hardship – we win by standing up to it**

**Let’s take a look at the first - When we face temptation – we are to Flee!**

**We often think running is a sign of weakness – just stand up to it, pray, quote verses, toughen up… but the Bible says to do the opposite – RUN! We see “people of God” fall all the time – why? They thought they were strong enough to stand up to it.**

**Matthew 5:29 If your right eye causes you to stumble, (if that is where the temp is coming from – make your eyes stronger, no…) gouge it out and throw it away. (this is hyperbole - don’t come to church next week with patches on your eye) It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell. (don’t toy with it – get rid of it. This is not about getting stronger when dealing with it - the principle is - flee if it’s a temptation)**

**It’s important to realize – temptation for you may not be a temptation of me. We have different lures. But, we all have something. Once you recognize it… get out of the situation.**

**1 Cor 6:18 – flee Sexual immortality…**

**Probably one of the greatest temptations – If you’re single the answer is not pray together more, have more bible study, but – stop putting yourself in that situation. (King David himself said, where are the binoculars)**

**1 Timothy 6:9-11 – flee from money temptations… (love of, greed, envy, theft, cheating – the answer is not to get more spiritual…) 11 But you, man (woman) flee of God, from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.**

**2 Timothy 2:22 Flee the evil desires of youth (selfish, lustful desires that entice us our whole life) and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.**

**Romans 7 (Paul even dealt with this struggle. The reason? Our sin nature) 21 So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. 22 For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; 23 but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. 24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? (stronger will – more determination – more knowledge… no) 25a Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord! (his only hope run to Jesus)**

**When we toy with and keep temptation around… we will fall**

**Any other strategy other than run from temptation is doomed.**

* **Now the 2nd - When facing hardship, we win by standing up to it**

**Emotional attacks, depression, discouragement, loneliness, attacks from the enemy, persecution, and trials because of your faith in Jesus.**

**This hardship is not won by running from it - but standing up to it. The word the bible uses with this is – perseverance**

**James 1:2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. - 12 Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. (To make sure there is no confusion between trials and temptation) 13 When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; 14 but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed.**

**James 4:7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Come near to God and he will come near to you. (If you run from the enemy – he will chase you. Stand against him in Christ. HE will flee)**

**Temptation is often a result of selfish desires and our sin nature**

**Trails and hardship are often a direct attack from the enemy**

**Ephesians 6:13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, (attacks from the enemy) you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm…**

**1 Peter 5:8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. (run and hide… no) 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. (this is about trials not temptation) 10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.**

**What if instead of standing firm in that trial – we decided to run?**

**God will not restore you, make you strong, firm and steadfast.**

**We tend to do the opposite in each situation. We try to stand up to temptation and we run from hardship… and wonder why we struggle.**

**Now with that - how do we know when to fight and when to flight?**

**Money problems, marriage struggles, job challenges, potential opportunities – what do I do?**

**4 POWERFUL QUESTIONS WHEN MAKING A TOUGH DECISION**

1. **What does God say? - #1 foundational question to ask**

**Primary ways God speaks: The Bible and the Holy Spirit.**

**Understand - the HS in your heart will never contradict what he wrote**

**2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

**But I have this strong feeling, this sense, this reason… I guarantee you that is not the HS at work. I see it all the time…**

**A popular verse applies - Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways submit to him, (what does God say he’ll do?) and he will make your paths straight. 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun (flee) evil. (btw, fear of God next week)**

**What does God say? But, God does not talk about everything. Somethings there are Biblical principles and other times…**

**When God does not have something to say about it specifically…**

1. **What do the facts say?**

**Pro 13:16 All who are prudent act with knowledge, but fools expose their folly.**

**Asked another way - What is the wise thing to do? Gather facts and be informed. What do the facts say? What is wise?**

**Proverbs 19:2** **Desire without knowledge is not good (wanting something without thinking it thru) - how much more will hasty feet miss the way! 3 A person’s own folly leads to their ruin, yet their heart rages against the Lord. (their poor uninformed decisions – yet get angry at God)**

**Pro 22:3 The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and pay the penalty. (they don’t see the warning signs and keep going)**

**Most often we act out of assumption (guess) rather than what we know (facts). Then we end up paying the dumb tax. But sometimes we never learn and keep paying the dumb tax. When the storms are raging, before you decide – get the facts.**

**God is not clear – the facts are inconclusive… what now?**

1. **What does wise counsel say?**

**Proverbs 19:20 Listen to advice and accept discipline, (not just listen and do your own thing – but listen and follow the instruction) and at the end you will be counted among the wise.**

**Lots of people get advice – and still do what they want to do. Or seek advice until they find someone who agrees w/ them. Two words: STU-PID. That is stupidity defined.**

**Pro 15:22 Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.**

**Pro 12:15 The way of fools seems right to them, but the wise listen to advice.**

**But - You also need to make sure your seeking the right counsel:**

**Pro 14:7 Stay away from a fool, for you will not find knowledge on their lips.**

**Who are the fools? (not in notes)**

* **The foolish friends - Not everyone who loves us gives good advice**
* **The chaos lives - Just look around their life… how is it working?**

**Like the guy at a bar who says he is having girl problems and the guy next to him says – I know all about women, I’ve been married 7 times.**

* **The wicked lifestyle - Worldly successful, but wicked life…**

**Proverbs 12:5 The plans of the righteous are just, but the advice of the wicked is deceitful.**

* **The Bible Brainiac - Just because they have Bible knowledge does not mean they are speaking with wisdom or humility.**

**Scribes and Pharisees of Jesus time are a perfect example of this.**

**Who are the wise?**

* **Those who have a track record of making good godly decisions**

**Their track record is clear… true wisdom is not learning by your mistake, but rather learning from others mistakes.**

**Okay, but what if - God’s word is unclear, the facts are fuzzy, and wise counsel is inconclusive – what next?**

1. **How will this impact others?**

**(A dynamic verse that gives us good direction when making decisions.) Philippians 2:3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. (personal advancement or self-promotion and self pleasing arrogance) Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests (“not only to…” which we do naturally) but each of you to the interests of the others. 5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:**

**(v6-11) Christ put others above self so much – that though he was God, humbled himself to die on a cross for our sins.**

**That is powerful decision making – what does this do for others?**

**We are no longer living for ourselves – but unto Christ for others.**

**This is the question that separates the selfish baby from the mature. In a marriage – a home – at work. Looking out for self.**

**The more selfish we are the more destructive we are in our life.**

**Let’s try it out:**

**\* Tough marriage situation:**

**What does scripture say? Stay put, Love & respect – the out clauses…**

**What are the facts? Unfair assumptions or facts**

**What does wise counsel say? Not just friends and family…**

**How does this affect others? How will this affect the kids?**

**\* Tough money situation: Upside down $$**

**Scripture…? Pay your debts - but I can’t - bankruptcy is in the Bible.**

**The facts…? Can I get out of this legally and ethically?**

**Wise counsel…? Not just an attorney or parents.**

**\* Money is tight… I want to move in with my boyfriend:**

**Scripture…? Bible is clear on this one…**

**\* Going back to school – for me**

**Scripture…? Nothing clear - But what is my motivation?**

**The facts…? Price – affordable with loans. Does this help my ministry?**

**Wise counsel…? Inconclusive…**

**How does this affect others? This would negatively affect my family.**

**These 4 Questions can help you in the middle of a fork in the road. When you’re not sure which way to go.**

**Once you make a decision based on the 4 questions what do you do?**

**Philippians 1:27 Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, (whether or not if what we planned comes to pass) I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel**

**This is not about avoiding trials, this is about being where God wants me. Because that is the best road to be on.**