



²³ By faith ^aMoses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of ^tthe king's edict. ²⁴ By faith Moses, when he was grown up, ^srefused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵ ^tchoosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy ^uthe fleeting pleasures of sin. ²⁶ ^vHe considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to ^wthe reward. ²⁷ By faith he ^xleft Egypt, ^ynot being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured ^zas seeing him who is invisible. ²⁸ By faith ^ahe kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them. ²⁹ By faith ^bthe people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned. ³⁰ By faith ^cthe walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days. ³¹ By faith ^dRahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she ^ehad given a friendly welcome to the spies.

In the wide world of parenting there is something I call the Deadly Double. If one of your children directly and defiantly disobeys you, you have a problem on your hands. I am not talking about childishness or forgetfulness, but direct disobedience. But if they directly and defiantly disobey you and they lie about it, now you have a Deadly Double on your hands. But a Deadly

One Sin + One Sin = **Two Sins²** = **FOUR Sins**
 DIRECT LYING
 DISOBEDIENCE

Double is not just a matter of adding one sin to one sin which equals two sins. When you lie after disobeying, it is like squaring the sins. Now

you have two sins to the power of two which equals four sins! You didn't know parenting had so much math involved, did you. Children and teens—now you know why we parents get so upset when we encounter a Deadly Double. ☺

Based upon the Deadly Double, we have a dilemma in the passage we have just read. The Hebrew midwives, who along with Moses' parents protected Moses from infanticide, not only directly and defiantly disobeyed Pharaoh's order, but they also lied to Pharaoh about it. The midwives disobeyed the governing authorities, they lied about their disobedience and then to top it all off, God commended and rewarded the midwives for their actions. Obviously their actions had a good result—Moses and hundreds of other Jewish babies were saved from certain death. To make matters more difficult, later in this passage, Rahab does the exact same thing. The king of Jericho demanded that Rahab hand the Israelite spies over to him but instead she disobeyed the king's direct command and then lied about it. And like the Hebrew midwives, Rahab was commended for her actions. Then, as a sort of icing on the cake of this moral dilemma, the actions of both Moses' parents and Rahab are termed "faith." Finally, to add a cherry to the top of the icing, the inhabitants of Jericho were called "disobedient" and everyone of them were killed in the battle. Is there some kind of principle that we can derive from these two stories? Is this teaching us that it is morally acceptable to disobey and lie in order to do good? Can I cheat on my taxes so I can give more money to the church? How can disobedience and lying be called faith?

The question about disobedience is easily answered by looking at how the early disciples responded to the Sanhedrin.

¹⁸ *Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.* ¹⁹ *But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God."* ²⁰ *For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."* (Acts 4:18-20).

Here is the principle we can apply to ourselves: When the governing authorities command you do to something that is directly opposed to God's command, you are morally obligated to disobey the governing authorities, just as the disciples did, just as the Hebrew midwives did and just as Rahab did.

The issue of lying is not quite as clear. There is no general principle that we can take with us. If I was a German during World War 2 with Jews living secretly in my attic and the Nazis broke down my door and asked me if I had any Jews in the house, I would say "No sir, I don't." I would lie in a situation like that and it may be possible that someone in this room at some point in their lives will be put in a place like that and will have to tell a lie. I doubt that it will happen, but it is possible. But the Bible tells us why Moses' parents lied and why Rahab lied. Two things were true in both cases—each person had a holy fear of God and each person counted their own lives as nothing.

First, they had a holy fear of the Lord. We see this in verse 23. *By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict.* Why were they not afraid of the king's edict? At the time, Pharaoh was the most powerful man on the earth. How can you not be afraid of a man who, with a nod of his head, could chop yours off? Moses' parents were not afraid of Pharaoh because they were more afraid of disobeying God. Somehow during their 400 years of slavery, the faith of Joseph was passed down through the generations to Moses' parents. They knew the stories about how God had called Abraham out of a distant land of pagans and into the Promised Land.

They knew every detail about how God took Joseph through the ups and downs of slavery and prison to become second in command of the nation to whom they were now enslaved. They knew God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 15.

Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know for certain ⁹that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. ¹⁴ But ¹I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possession (Genesis 15: 13-14). Do you think Moses' parents could count to 400? Do you think they knew that time was nearing? Although when Moses was born, that day was still eighty years in the future they know that day was coming. They knew that God would bring judgment on Egypt and that their nation would be freed from slavery. They knew that day was coming but even if they did not live to see that day, they could not disobey their God by allowing their son to be killed. They feared God not man.

Not only did they have a holy fear of God but they also counted their lives as nothing. How likely was it that they would escape punishment if they disobeyed Pharaoh? In protecting their son and disobeying the king, they gave up their right to their own lives.

Rahab's story is very similar to Moses' parents. Let's read it from the book of Joshua.
⁸ *Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof and said to them, "I know that the LORD has given this land to you and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. ¹⁰ We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed ¹¹ When we heard of it, our hearts melted and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.*

Do you understand the nature of Rahab's confession? She had witnessed the power of God pass through the land like a knife through hot butter. No other God had ever dried up the Red Sea. The armies of Sihon and Og were the best in the land and the God of this people easily defeated them. Her confession moved Rahab out of the realm of pagan polytheism into all-powerful monotheism. All of the Canaanites worshipped many gods. But Rahab was essentially saying to the spies, "Your God is not a local deity like the god of Canaan. Your God is not the god of an object like the sun god." Instead she professed that he was "God in heaven above and on the earth below. He was not *a* god, he was the only, one true God. She actually referred to him specifically as Yahweh. This was not merely an act of faith but this was Rahab's profession of faith. She believed in the one true God. She asked to come under the wing of his almighty protection. In this passage we are witnessing Rahab's moment of conversion. She was a pagan turned follower of Yahweh.

But what about the rest of the people of Jericho? What about the King of Jericho? Did they also not all witness the very same thing that Rahab witnessed? Did they not see a supernatural power poured out in the people? Did they not witness the same miracles? The people of Jericho are a good reminder that demonstrations of power alone are not enough to convert a person. Rahab saw the power of God and repented. The people of Jericho witnessed the power of God and hardened their hearts. They could have surrendered but they did not. If power alone was

sufficient to save people, then Jesus would have spent all of his time performing miracles. He did dozens and dozens of miracles but all of these merely served to demonstrate the truthfulness of his teaching, to show that he really was who he said he was—the Son of God and Savior of the world. Power alone does not convert hard hearts. You also need the truth of God mediated through the power of the Holy Spirit.

But like Moses' parents, Rahab was afraid of God and not man and she counted her life as nothing. Had the king discovered that she was hiding the spies and had lied about it, her life would have been snuffed out in a moment. She considered her life as nothing. But even as a new convert, Rahab's faith was really quite staggering, because even though she risked her life to save the spies—this is undeniable—she did not even consider that the Israelites might not be successful. Remember that she made a deal with the spies and asked that her family would be spared. Why did she make such a deal? Because she was convinced that not only would the Israelites be victorious over the high walled city of Jericho, but that they would exterminate her city in the same way they had done to the prior two cities. She was certain of their victory.

Besides being mentioned in this great chapter of faith, how else was Rahab rewarded for her faith? The genealogy in Matthew tells us the following. *...and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse,⁶ and Jesse the father of David the king.* (Matt. 1:5-6) In other words, Rahab became the great, great grandmother of King David and a blood relative of Jesus Christ. She is only one of four women mentioned in Jesus' genealogy and one of only two women in this famous chapter of faith. She had no idea what her act of faith could have led to.

In the same way, we have no idea what our small acts of faith could lead to in the near future or distant future. Don't ever view your life as boring and irrelevant. You have no idea how your small decisions of faith that you make today will impact the lives of others ten years or a hundred years from now. There is no such thing as ordinary faith. There is no such thing as boring, run of the mill faith. Every act of faith, no matter how "small" it may seem, is a supernatural act of the Holy Spirit and should never be dismissed as insignificant.

In this section, Moses gets the most mentions of faith starting in verse 24. *By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,²⁵ choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.*

Acts 7 fills in some details and tells us a little about his life in Egypt. *And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds* (Acts 7:22). Moses had it all—the best education, the best food, the best military training.. The result was that he was mighty in word and deed. The whole story has the providence of God written all over it. Pharaoh tried to kill the Hebrew babies. Moses' parents hid him but they couldn't hide him forever. Eventually he would be found so they sail him down the Nile River. He just "happens" to get caught in the reeds nest to Pharaoh's daughter and despite the fact that her father was trying to kill the very baby in her arms, she decides to adopt Moses as her own and raise him in all of the wisdom of Egypt.

Every last piece of this story was perfectly orchestrated by God. None of it was in the least bit accidental. God wanted Moses to be raised as a son of Pharaoh's daughter. But even with all of

this superintending of the circumstances of Moses' life, Moses had a choice before him. He could remain a prince in Egypt or he could join his fellow Hebrews in chains. The writer of Hebrews put Moses' choice in the most clear of terms—*choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin*. Like Joseph, God placed Moses in a position of power in Egypt but unlike Joseph, Moses had to choose between Egypt and his people.

This verse is very realistic in using the phrase, “the fleeting pleasures of sin.” First it recognizes that sin is pleasurable. Don't you wish this was not true? Don't you wish that every time you sinned you would get violently ill and start throwing up? Don't you wish that sin was about as pleasurable as hitting your thumb with a hammer? Oh how I wish this were true! But sin is pleasurable. This is why it holds such power over us at times. But the pleasures of sin are also fleeting. There are two ways that this in which they are fleeting.

First, sin always demands more from us. Do you remember the first time you drank a full cup of coffee? Man I had the jitters after that but now it probably would take at least five cups of coffee to have the same effect. In the same way, the pleasure of sin is fleeting in that each time we repeat the same sin, the pleasure decreases just a little bit. The same amount of sin no longer satisfies. If we want the same amount of pleasure from the same sin, we either have to do more of it or else get more deeply involved in it. This is precisely how every addiction forms in a person. This is why sin entangles you. This is why the pleasures of sin is like digging yourself into a deeper and deeper hole.

But sin is also fleeting in the sense that it does not last forever. Not only does it fail to satisfy at its current level but the pleasure is extremely temporary. Moses knew this and it is why he chose to be mistreated with his people rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. But why would Moses choose to be mistreated rather than experience pleasure? In other words, why would he choose pain over pleasure? Is it just more Godly to choose pain and suffering? You see, everything in our natural self tells us that pain and suffering should never be chosen over pleasure. Every cell in our body feels that pleasure is better than pain—every single time.

Therefore, how was Moses able to make this incredibly difficult decision? The answer comes in verse 26. *He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward*. Moses chose reproach with Christ which is an anachronism because obviously Moses did not know about Christ per se, but in choosing to be with his people, he was on God's side and from the perspective of our author writing after Moses and after Christ, he was able to say that Moses chose the reproach of Christ.

But the most important part of this verse is the fact that the reproach of Christ is itself a source of wealth. This wealth is so massive that it dwarfs all of the treasures of Egypt. In Moses' day, Egypt was the world's superpower. Egypt had amassed the greatest treasures of gold, architecture, science and military might the world had ever known. But despite that great wealth, the reproach of Christ was of far greater value. Do you see—Moses was not choosing pain instead of pleasure. Moses was choosing a greater kind of pleasure over a lesser kind of fleeting pleasure. Of course in the short term he would experience pain. That was unavoidable, but the fact remains that the reproach of Christ has value. There is real pleasure in choosing Christ.

This is one of the great errors of Christian teaching. We have been taught to think that living in the world is a life of pleasure but following Christ is a life of suffering. If we are to turn our back on the pleasures of the world we must accept the pain of living as a Christian. The choice before us is always pleasure versus pain. But this is a false dichotomy and a horrible lie. Choosing Christ is the same as choosing pleasure. To live in the center of God's will is to live in the center of unbelievable pleasure. Verse 26 tells us that Moses made this decision because he was "looking to the reward." But what is the reward? Most of you will probably say that Heaven is the reward. We are supposed to long for heaven and wait for this life to pass, right? Well that is true, but what is Heaven? Is heaven just a place where all tears are wiped away? Is Heaven a place where we don't have any more aches and pains and we live forever? What is Heaven? It is all of these things but ultimately, Heaven is Jesus. Is Jesus only for later or can you have Jesus now? There is great pleasure in serving the Lord and knowing Christ now. Being a Christian does not mean exchanging pleasure for pain for but rather exchanging pleasures which are fleeting and temporary for pleasures which are abiding and eternal.

And this pursuit of pleasure in the Lord is not only about the so-called big decisions in life, If we were in Moses' shoes, would we have made that all important decision to join his people in their suffering? If we had such a huge decision to make, would we make the right decision? This is another wrong way to view following the Lord and making the right decisions. Life is not about making two or three good but enormous decisions but rather making hundreds of smaller decisions. We think that we will not have the faith of Moses or Rahab when all God is asking from us is to have simple faith in the every day, ordinary decisions of life. Will I obey the Lord this afternoon? When I wake up tomorrow morning, will I do what he asks? There is no such thing as ordinary faith.

I want to finish with a story of a man of simple faith. Titus Coan was a man who made small faith decisions in his life. He went to Hawaii in 1834 as a missionary school teacher. This took an act of faith to be sure but it was not like he was to be stationed at one of the pacific islands where cannibalism was still practiced where he could end up as someone's dinner. In his day there were about 70,000 people in all of Hawaii and very few believers. On his breaks from teaching school he began to visit other villages and preach to the people and the Spirit began to move their hearts to repentance. By the time he died in 1870, Coan had received 13,000 members to his church, the largest number by any pastor in his generation¹ and 56,000 people on the island were professing believers. Moreover, the church that he started is still operating to this day. This great work of faith began with his decision to become a school teacher. That decision was certainly made up of hundreds of smaller decisions still. Titus Coan did not set out to convert the entire island of Hawaii, any more than Moses decided to set two million Jews from slavery in Egypt. In the same way, every one of your small decisions of faith and obedience matter. They are significant.

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^q Ex. 2:2, 3; Acts 7:20

^r Ex. 1:16, 22

^s Ex. 2:10, 11

^t [Job 36:21; Ps. 84:10]

^u 1 John 2:17

^v ch. 13:13; [Ps. 89:50, 51; Phil. 3:7, 8; 1 Pet. 4:14]

^w ch. 2:2; 10:35

^x Ex. 12:37; 13:17, 18

^y Ex. 10:28, 29

^z ver. 13; See 1 Tim. 1:17

^a Ex. 12:21–30

^b Ex. 14:21–30

^c Josh. 6:15, 16, 20

^d Josh. 6:25; James 2:25

^e Josh. 2:1, 8–13

^g Acts 7:6, 7

^t Ex. 6:6

¹ http://www.gospeltruth.net/hawaii_revival.htm