

# Weighing Both the Positives and the Negatives (Heb. 11:23-26)

By William C. Sexton



Heb. 11:24 “By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, 25 choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, 26 esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.” (NKJV)

The eleventh chapter of Hebrews, as most Bible students know, is a chapter on FAITH. It identifies a number of persons who achieved a great deal through faith. One outstanding point to be observed in each of these cases is that there was always ACTION on the part of people who achieved “by faith.” That principle is often overlooked today by people who aim at or claim to be achieving “by faith.” However, there is ANOTHER PRINCIPLE which I wish to establish by looking at our text. Moses made a great decision, “ by faith” having observed BOTH SIDES of the issue before him. Involved here is a principle, I’m afraid, that is often overlooked, when it comes to trying to prevent or resist “bad behavior,” or to avoid making the wrong choice. It amounts to looking at only part of the picture, allowing “blind spots” to interfere with our thinking process. We are tempted to look at the bad side only, refusing to recognize and take into account -- that it is pleasurable, for awhile. Recently I heard a doctor on the radio discussing the effect or trying to present the Negative side of certain “bad” behavior JUST by saying “NO.” I thought he made some points worth looking at. Those points are embodied in our text. Let’s Look at Moses and the decision he made:

## Moses' Behavior Pattern

1. Note that he refused the “pleasure of sins,” because such last only for a SEASON. He chose to suffer affliction (the unpleasant) for a period of time, because he looked to the recompense of reward, evaluating the LONG lasting values to be greater than the momentary period of pleasure. He did understand that there would be some short range pleasure in sinning. That

is always true. If it were not so, there would be no temptation to become involved. Is it wrong to recognize that? No! At times we may be inclined to deny that there is any pleasure in sin. Such is not the case: there is pleasure! To deny such is to deny reality. However, the NEED is to recognize that there is another side -- long lasting; there is much more in doing right.

2. That required FAITH in God and His promises. God has promised to provide for and protect the righteous (1 Pet. 3:12). God called His people out of Egypt, providing them with a leader -- he who refused to engage in that which produces immediate pleasure of the moment. With faith in God, to carry out His promises, and provide protection, he led the people. Yes, he had to be persuaded, that he, with God's provisions, could be successful. He made excuses, just as many of us do, when we face a difficult mission -- saying I'm not "eloquent." God provided for that. He reasoned: the people won't listen. God said: I'll provide you with credential. Finally he ran out of excuses, and accepted the assignment. (Consider Exodus chapters 3-5).

3. It requires making a CHOICE. He had before him alternatives, as most of us do, from time to time. There's the "easier" way, it seems -- pleasure of sin -- failing to do what we know is GOOD (Jas. 4:17). There are rationalizations: "I'm not the person for the job." "I'm too busy," not "eloquent." There are hundreds of excuses to be offered, if one doesn't want to do something! (Cf. Luke 14"18-24) 4. It requires an evaluation (esteeming). One needs to weigh the good results against the pleasurable moments. What if I get a cheap high on alcohol? What is the down side? What if I feel "wonderful" on drugs, momentarily? What about the habit forming, expense, addiction? Look at the trouble of the drug user. In addition, what does God say? The drunkard shall NOT inherit the blessing of the kingdom of God ( I Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-20). It isn't hard to look around and see the "bad" effect of the user of drugs -- the various kinds and the one most often used in our day, Alcohol.

### Modern Man in Taking Personal Responsibility

As Moses acted "by faith," taking the responsibility for his actions, the choices he made, we today are duty bound to make the right decision -- choose the RIGHT WAY (Jn. 14:6; Matt 11:28-30). Man is asked, invited, to come to God the Father through Christ. All spiritual blessing are "in Christ"

(Eph. 1:3). If any one will come to Christ, he/she'll NOT be cast out ( Jn. 6:37). One has to come, however, on his/her own volition; He does not force anyone, but He invites all! Anyone who "will" may come (Rev. 22:17). First, one has to accept the fact that he/she is a sinner, in that all have missed the mark, and have therefore, been separated from God (Rom. 3:23; 6:23; Isa. 59:1-2). Reconciliation takes place, is accomplished, in the "one body" (Eph. 2:16). That being true, one recognizes that when obedience to the gospel ("the faith" Acts 6:7) occurs, the Lord adds them to the church (Acts 2:47) the body (Eph. 1:22-23). One is responsible for looking at the terrible condition that one is in, as he/she satisfies the flesh, enjoys the "please of sin" for a season, has to weigh the momentarily pleasure against the eternal lose of one's soul. Esteeming the recompense of reward --he/she voluntary repents of the sin (Acts 17:30-31), confesses the name of Christ ( Rom. 10:9-10) and is buried in the watery grave to be resurrected to a new life ( Rom. 6:3-4). In that process he/she has saved him/herself (Acts 2:40) as Peter encouraged people to do on that memorable day so long ago ( in Acts 2:22-40).

#### Model in Helping Others.

That being accomplished, one understands that he/she now has a mission of leading -- as Moses did -- not out of Egypt, but out of the nation of sin, across the river of reconciliation. He/she doesn't deny the pleasurable moments involved in sinful behavior --of disobedience, drinking, doing drugs, partying, sexual activity out side marriage, etc.. Having admitted that such do have their moments of excitement, appeal to the fleshly man, he weighs the bad side against the good side of COMING out and being separate (2 Cor. 6:16ff?). With that mind set, one goes forth appealing to his/her neighbors, relatives, friends, yea and his own enemies, to come to Christ and be washed in the blood that stained the old rugged cross! We have to recognize that the person in sin has experienced some pleasurable moments from his/her behavior. We do not need to deny that. Rather we need to get them to weigh the bad against the good and the temporal against the long lasting, eternal effects. With that in mind, one can make an intelligent, meaningful choice, and keep his/her feet on the ground. Beloved, sin is pleasurable but ONLY for a short time. Pick out any behavior that is contrary to God-approved-behavior, and see that the pleasure is short-lived! Serving God faithfully has promise of pleasure here and now as well as in the world to come (1 Tim. 4:8). I urge all to look at the WHOLE PICTURE. Serving God is much more profitable than serving sin.

What do you think? What are you going to do? Act wisely, now (2 Cor. 6:2).

Contact the writer:

WMessenger@aol.com