

Be Strong #22

“Lucy’s Question”

How do you make decisions about choices for you and your children?

As we move forward in our desire to take high school students to Israel this summer, there are obvious questions that parents of high school students have.

“How can we afford it?”

“Will it be safe?”

Even though the heart of this article pertains to the decision about Israel, if you do not have a high school student there will still be important information and help regarding how to make decisions so please read on!

As we think and pray through these questions about the trip, here’s another question for you to consider. **As a parent, if money and fear were not factors, would I want my child to go on the trip to Israel?** Some may say we have a conflict with the date, and it’s not possible for me or my child to go. Or, my child has not shown much interest in going. But, if you have no conflict and going was a possibility, how would you answer that question? Would you answer **“Yes, I would love for my child to go to Israel and step foot in the land of Adam, Eve, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Esther, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, and above all Jesus, I would love for them to have the opportunity to walk where Jesus walked and touch what Jesus touched. I would love for them to also share the love of Christ with those who live there today; to love Palestinian children, to help a Messianic Jewish Congregation, to provide aid for the needy and Holocaust survivors, to be on mission with Jesus.”** If your answer to that is “Yes,” but there is the reality of the cost and maybe more importantly the fear factor, then walk with me in trying to understand God’s heart.

It is not the will of Christ for every Tallowood high school student to go to Israel with us this summer, but it is his will for some to walk with us in that process. **Is your child one of those whom God is calling to join us in this journey? How do you know?** As I met with the parents of high school students who came to our information meeting, January 4th, I shared as much as we know about the trip and what God is calling us to do. Is there concern about the cost and conflict there? Yes, but I am confident that He has called us to focus our attention there and be faithful to pray for Israel and make plans to go in July. If the Lord shuts the door sometime in the process we will not go. But, the key is in Him and how He leads us.

If money is a concern, ask God for his thoughts about providing. He has said

“If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.” **James 1:5 (NIV)**

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” **Matthew 6:33 (NIV)**

“Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.” **Proverbs 19:21**

“And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.” **Philippians 4:19 (NIV)**

“You do not have, because you do not ask God.” **James 4:2 (NIV)**

“Where God guides, God provides.” Maybe you can’t figure out how you and your family could come up with the needed funds. This is an opportunity to reach beyond your grasp and trust God to supply the need. It may not be easy and most likely will take sacrifice and extra work, but I’m convinced that if God’s desire is for your child to do anything He will make a way. Make sure your child is taking advantage of all the fundraiser options we are providing.

If the concern is for the safety of your child then first of all know that we would never take your child or anyone directly into a dangerous place. Know that tourism in Israel is their number one source of income and our tour guides and hosts know the places that are safe and those that are a risk. Have you ever heard of a tourist being harmed in Israel? Just like there are places in Houston you would not visit anytime of day or night, there are places in Israel that are off-limits. The places we are going will be safe, and people are going to Israel everyday even in the heat of the current crisis. I could write pages and pages trying to convince you not to be concerned, but the reality is that Jesus is the only One who can settle your heart and give you peace about his desire. When you sit with Him, ask Him to search your heart and expose your thoughts and concerns and questions. Ask Him for his thoughts and listen to his response. He may say, “I have something else for your child to do during July 14-26,” but if He says, “Trust Me and walk with Me as I prepare your child for the mission” then you have a choice to make – the choice to obey your fear or obey his voice within you.

The reality is that the question may not be “Is it safe?” but “Is He safe?”

If I place my life in God’s hands, will He protect me?

Will He protect my family and children?

If I obey what I sense He is asking, will we be safe?

That was Lucy’s question. Remember *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* of *The Chronicles of Narnia* and the four children who were introduced to Aslan (who represented Christ) by Mr. and Mrs. Beaver. They were not quite sure they wanted to meet Aslan, and Lucy asked, “**Is he safe?**”

Mr. Beaver said, “No, he’s not safe, but he is good.” Our God is a good God who gives us life.

He has numbered our days and each one of them was written down in his book before one of them came to be. He knows the first day of our life and He knows the last. There is nothing we can do to change that. Therefore, we must obey what He is asking of us and leave the consequences to Him. At times in my life, when posed with a decision to make, I have not even asked God what his desire is because I did not want to deal with the results of what He might say. It would be much easier to not have to deal with it and just say “No,” but the reality is that every choice in life is a spiritual decision that has the opportunity of increasing our faith and perfecting our character. This may be one of those crossroads for you. I would love for everyone to walk with us toward Jerusalem, but all I can implore you to do is to seek the face of God for your child. His Word and his Spirit will guide you in the truth and what is the right decision for you, your child, and your family. Psalm 27 declares that, “**The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear. The Lord is the stronghold of my life, of whom shall I be afraid.**”

Registration for the high school mission ends February 1st. If by that date you are still uncertain about what to do, please register your child and walk with us in the light that He provides. There is no monetary risk. You have until April 1st to cancel and receive a full refund for what you have paid. If you cancel before May 1st you would only be out \$300. So, at this point there is no risk to sign up. If I can answer any questions please don’t hesitate to give me a call. I will look forward to walking with you in this journey of faith as we wait and watch with expectation of how God will lead us.

For the glory of his name,

Jerome Smith