

# Blessed or Broken – Actions Have Consequence (Deuteronomy 30:15-20)

Blessed or Broken...it's up to You! Actions Have Consequence...

Throughout the Old Testament, there is a clear pattern surrounding the people of Israel and how God responds to them...the tendency involves a cycle of blessing and curse. People obey and good things abound...then they drift away, and consequence comes. While it sometimes seems the Lord's people ignored Him and disobeyed when things should have been obvious, we often reject God's good blessings by choosing to go against His laws.

**Lesson focus:** We are given a real option from God, to follow Him or follow our own ideas. When we choose God, life and blessing will result.

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 30:15-20

**Lesson Opening:** Isn't it obvious? Open up with a few simple ideas to discuss choices and consequences. Offer a treat or treasure, but place it under or near a stack of other items (books, boxes, dominoes, etc.). Students will have to choose if they want the treasure, knowing it will require knocking down (and consequently picking up) the surrounding items. The choice is theirs...explain that all of our actions have consequences. Whatever we decide to do in life will lead to positive or negative results. There is no getting around this principle. Remind students of the old song "I know an Old Lady who Swallowed a Fly..." This song follows a chain reaction of results that started with the bug consumption...The passage we are exploring today has to do with choosing obedience and gaining life as a reward.

## **Bible Lesson:**

Take a moment to talk about situations in our lives that might lead to positive or negative results. What are some poor choices we might make that could or should have gone differently? Show students some pictures illustrating rather unwise choices that perhaps bear negative (or amusing) outcomes. Why is it important to make wise choices, and how can we make them?

Introduce the context of the Bible passage...explain that throughout the Old Testament, we see the people of God making poor choices. God set before them options to follow His direction and be blessed, or to disobey and be punished. The people of Israel fall into a cycle of obedience, leading to blessing...and then straying away, which leads to punishment. Invite students to look at Deuteronomy 30...set the stage for this story by reminding them of the Exodus from Egypt. The people should have been able to enter the Promised Land pretty directly, but wound up stuck in the desert for years. Because of the Israelite attitude, a simple journey of 11 days turned into a forty-year wandering. Talk about consequences! In the passage here, the Israelites again prepare to enter the Promised Land, and Moses reminds them of what God has set out:

See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction.<sup>16</sup> For I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess.

<sup>17</sup> But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, <sup>18</sup> I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess.

<sup>19</sup> This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live <sup>20</sup> and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the Lord is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. –Deuteronomy 30:15-20

The people of God are given a choice of prosperity and blessing, or death and destruction. Talk to kids about how they might face choices like this all the time. Their parents often remind them that obedience will allow for reward (treats, affirmations) while disobedience brings consequence (time-out, spanking...). In this passage, the Israelites have to make a choice. It really should not be a tough decision. If the people of God follow His words and do as He asks, following the commandments and listening to Him, they will be taken care of. If they neglect instruction, punishment will follow.

Talk to kids about how to think this through. Sometimes we want the instant gratification, or the cookie at the bottom of the leaning tower, or the

satisfaction of punching big/little brother/sister...but we want to have life abundantly. We should do the right thing, not only because it will allow for rewards, but because God has commanded and wants it, which is a far greater reward ultimately.

**Close** with prayer and thank God for taking care of us and blessing our lives. Ask for wisdom in discerning the obedient thing to do, and help in staying steadfast to do it.

\_\_\_\_\_ 's Blessing Jar...

When I obey God, positive blessings follow! Here are some in my life...

For I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess. Deuteronomy 30:16

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