



AUTUMN
DAILY ENCOURAGEMENTS
Carstairs-Bancroft United Church
October 10, 2023



Photo: Our Daily Bread

A CHOICE

I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life.

Deuteronomy 30:19

READ Deuteronomy 30:15-20

A few weeks after the death of a dear friend, I spoke with her mom. I was hesitant to ask how she was doing because I thought it was an inappropriate question; she was grieving. But I pushed aside my reluctance and simply asked how she was holding up. Her reply: "Listen, I choose joy."

Her words ministered to me that day as I struggled to push beyond some unpleasant circumstances in my own life. And her words also reminded me of Moses' edict to the Israelites at the end of Deuteronomy. Just before Moses' death and the Israelites' entrance into the promised land, God wanted them to know that they had a choice. Moses said, "I have set before you life and death . . . Now choose life" (Deuteronomy 30:19). They could follow God's laws and live well, or they could turn away from Him and live with the consequences of "death and destruction" (v. 15).

We must choose how to live too. We can choose joy by believing and trusting in God's promises for our lives. Or we can choose to focus on the negative and difficult parts of our journeys, allowing them to rob us of joy. It will take practice and relying on the Holy Spirit for help, but we can choose joy knowing that "in all things God works for the good of those who love him" (Romans 8:28).

By Katara Patton

PRAY & REFLECT

Dear God, Giver of Joy, please help me to choose to follow You and believe and trust You this day. Amen

How can you choose joy in spite of your circumstances today? How is choosing joy similar to choosing life as God described to the Israelites?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

In Deuteronomy 30:15, Moses used a figure of speech called metonymy where the effect stands for the cause. When he claimed to be setting before the people "life and prosperity, death and destruction," he was presenting the effects of the Israelites' decisions to help them see the significance of their choices. Obviously, no one would choose death and destruction. But their actions would lead either to life and prosperity or to death and destruction. In chapter 28, he lists the blessings for obedience (vv. 1-14) and the curses for disobedience (vv. 15-68). – By **J.R. Hudberg**

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