



# Small Choices, Big Consequences

How will we respond when the world asks,  
“Don’t you also want to go?”

**E**ver since I was a little boy, I have always loved the New Testament. I love to read about the Savior teaching His disciples eternal principles that changed their lives forever.

I also find it fascinating how those same principles have changed my personal life in so many ways. Again and again, I have seen that when we apply the Master’s teachings, our own decisions, even small ones, often lead to big consequences.



**By Elder  
Massimo De Feo**  
Of the Seventy

### **My “Small” Choice**

Many years ago, as a brand new manager, I traveled to South America to attend an important work seminar held by high-ranking officials of the government agency I worked for.

The very first night at the end of the conference, the “big boss” of the agency announced a special activity for that night. Sure that everyone would appreciate his proposal, he proclaimed proudly: “To show you how much we appreciate you, tonight we invite all of you to a special night out, visiting the bars in the city, famous for a special cocktail drink. We will all taste the different variations of that drink and vote which bar makes the best version. There will be a contest and a winner. And don’t worry, it’s all on me, my special treat for you.”

As everyone applauded his plan, he added a rhetorical question: “Anyone not coming? Say it now or never!”

As everyone applauded again, I thought how embarrassing it would be to say anything in front of all those people, to contradict the boss’s expectation that this was an incredible offer.

Nevertheless, in a matter of seconds I decided what to do. I raised my hand, the only one who did. Then, in an intimidating way, he asked what I had to say. I had never heard a silence so loud before in my life!

I said: “Sir, I thank you for your generous offer, but I will not join you all tonight.”

After another silence, even more silent than I thought possible, he asked, “Why?” In that moment, I could have come up with some good excuses—that I was sick or had an important

phone call to make to the other side of the world or any other reason that would have saved me from obvious embarrassment. But I said the simple truth, that as a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I don’t drink alcohol.

### **“We’ll Have Fun without You”**

After pondering for a moment, he finally said, “Then we will have fun without you.” And to the others, he said, “Follow me. Let’s go have fun! Let’s leave him alone.”

I still remember the echoes of their laughs as they were leaving the conference room and I was left by myself. I realized that many times, choosing the Lord is, as President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018) taught, all about choosing “the harder right instead of the easier wrong,”<sup>1</sup> even at the risk of being left alone.

As I walked to my room, I remember hearing a distinct voice in my mind: “Don’t you also want to go?” I was taken aback for a moment, but then suddenly, the words of Simon Peter to the Savior came to my mind. To that same question, he replied, “Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life” (John 6:68).

With feelings of new peace, I felt as if I was surrounded by angels bearing me up. Although I was alone, I didn’t feel alone. As I chose the Lord and stood for my principles, I saw that when we choose the Lord, we may be left alone in the world, but the Savior will never abandon us.

### **Small but Big**

The decisions we make every day may seem small, but they always have real implications and big consequences, for good or bad.

In fact, a few years after that eventful day, the same boss visited our office in Rome. He was still the same man, full of power and authority. Again, he looked intimidating to all of us.

This time, after all the meetings, he approached me in a different way. He was surprisingly kind. He told me that he still remembered the day when I stood for my beliefs. Then, to my surprise, he asked if I would accept to become the manager of the agency for all of Europe, which was a huge opportunity for my career. As he tried to convince me that the new job would be appealing in terms of salary, travel, and benefits, what really made the difference was when he said: “We look

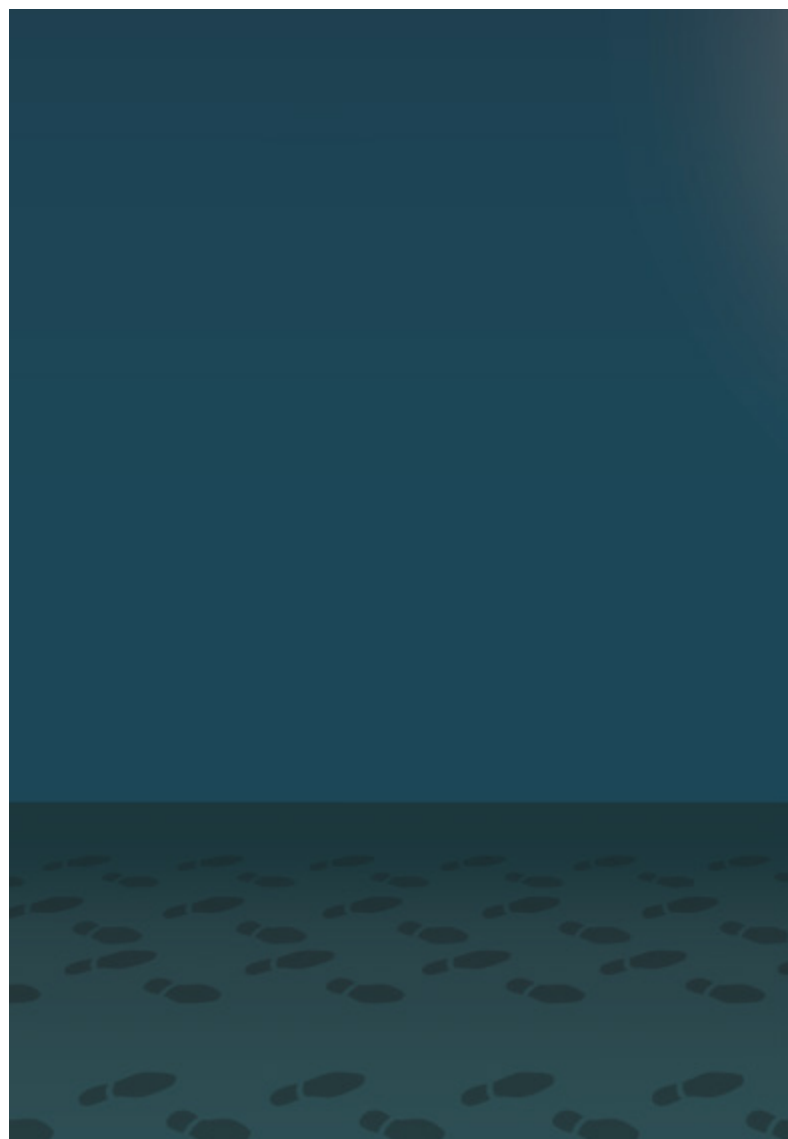
When we choose the Savior,  
He will never abandon us.

not only at good qualifications. We need people with integrity, who stand for their principles. We need people like you.”

I was surprised to hear those words, to see that my small decision to stand for my beliefs years before eventually had such a big impact on him. My small decision ultimately resulted in a great blessing for me, both temporally and spiritually. Ironically, as part of my new assignment, I also became the supervisor of most of the managers who had laughed at me years before.

### **The Correct Choice**

President Monson said, “As we contemplate the decisions we make in our lives each day—whether to make this choice or that choice—if we choose Christ, we will have made the correct choice.”<sup>2</sup>



The Apostle Paul also taught that choosing the Lord is always the best possible choice, despite how hard that choice can be: “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God” (Romans 8:28).

Every day, the choices we make will indeed determine what we will become. If we choose the Lord, as President Monson said, “we will have made the correct choice,” because, as Paul remarked, “all things work together for good to them that love God.”

Many times we hesitate to make the right choices because we try to please the Lord without offending Satan. But we cannot please God without upsetting Satan. We simply cannot serve two masters. Our ultimate decision will always be whether to live the first two commandments in the right priority: To serve God first and then our neighbor,



or to put the second commandment before the first by trying to please others before we please God (see Matthew 22:37–39).

### Stand as Witnesses

The most universal covenant we make at baptism is “*to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that [we] may be*” (Mosiah 18:9; emphasis added). That covenant is a decision we make once and forever, to stand for our beliefs as witnesses of God every moment of our life. The promised blessing is that we will have the Spirit more abundantly upon us (see Mosiah 18:10).

The world, our peers, and people who don’t share our same values will always exert some pressure on us, pressure that comes when we strive to live a celestial law in a teletial

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world. Indeed, living righteously in a wicked world is not an easy task. Sometimes it can seem like a huge challenge. Sometimes it can seem like a daily conflict. But we have the promise that we will receive the Spirit more abundantly when we stand as true witnesses of God. When we pray to Heavenly Father, He will bless us with the power of the Holy Ghost, providing that crucial extra help we need. Divine grace will fill the inevitable spiritual gap we all experience as imperfect beings trying to reach higher and holier ground.

### Eternal Consequences

Choices that may seem small at the time may in fact have eternal consequences. But because we made a covenant, we have a promise. When we choose the Lord—when we stand as witnesses at all times, in all things, and in all places—then all things will work together for the good of those who love God. As we choose the Lord, although we might remain alone at times, angels will be all around us, bearing us up, and we will not feel alone anymore (see Doctrine and Covenants 84:88).

I solemnly testify that in those sacred moments of small decisions but big consequences, it is only through Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, that we will find peace and rest. Many times, we will be asked to either go with the world or to stand for our principles. How will we respond when asked: “Don’t you also want to go?” Will we go with the world, or will we stay with the Lord? Will we remain silent and be acted upon, or will we stand for our beliefs and act instead?

May we always choose the Lord and readily respond: “To whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.” Then we will enjoy the blessings of our righteous decisions, temporally and spiritually, in this life and for eternity. ■

### NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Choices,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2016, 86.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “Choices,” 86.