

The Three Most Important Decisions to Make in Life

I could never forget when I was a teenager hearing adults say over and over that the three most important decisions to make in life are: God, spouse, and career. I believed it (and still do in some way) and charted the course of my life to make those decisions.

It was not until I was a mature adult that I realized that something was missing in the actual terms used—God, spouse, and career. It is as though once you choose God, select a spouse, and have a job, you will have set yourself on a good path to productive living. I found this to be misleading. Many motivational speakers and entrepreneurs have their own version of the three most important decisions that lead to success in life financially and emotionally. However, it is clear to me that these three decisions that are to be all-encompassing should include: 1) Your spiritual direction, 2) Your social direction 3) Your occupational direction.

Your spiritual direction. The first decision one has to make in life is your spiritual direction. What or who will be your God? It is not just choosing God. It is how you will live your life for God and how much of your life you will give to God. Some people choose a "god" (drugs, pornography, car, job, etc.) and have been fooled that they are worshipping God. This decision can also include your emotional health and well-being because it intertwines with one's spirituality. It provides the foundation and thought processes that impact how and why you make any decision in life. People who are wounded emotionally or psychologically due to dysfunctional parents or significant others in their lives may find themselves using religion as a crutch or cover-up. They develop a toxic faith and often become fanatical on the one hand, or discouraged on the other hand, because of a misunderstanding of faith or poor experiences in their lives.

I think you are beginning to understand that many things impact one's spiritual direction. I chose the word direction because it is also about deciding to move forward or backward, up, or down, etc. Also, it is about your outlook on life. Hence, choosing God is not just about the selection of a deity, but a living a life of balance, integrity, and authenticity. With this understanding, it can also mean those who do not believe in a God can still make this first choice.

Your occupational direction. The second important decision in life is your occupational direction and how will you engage in service. It is not the specific choice of career. It is how much of your life you will commit to service to others, and whether will you lead a life of integrity and honesty. Will your choice of career be a pathway that enhances your family, neighborhood, and society? Will your choice be about being honest with yourself and others? Would you be able to be trusted and reliable? Many people choose a job because they are desperate to make money and they would do anything if they can get away with it—Take home from the office printer paper, paper clips, staples, food supplies, etc. I hope you understand that it is not just about selecting a specific job but also about being dependable, trustworthy, accountable, and authentic.

Your social direction. The third decision to make in life may or may not include marriage. It is certainly not the choice of a mate as many have been taught. This most important decision is

about how faithful you will be to yourself if you remain single or to your spouse if you get married. If we say that choosing a life partner is the most important decision, we all must make then we can make a single adult feel bad if they cannot find the right person to marry or choose not to get married. Marriage is not a requirement for Bahamian citizenship, or becoming a church member, nor is it required for entrance into heaven. Living a morally clean life is.

I am aware that the selection of a lifetime partner is a very serious one and it can impact your life as long as you live. It can make or break you. To make the right decision of a life-long make there must first be healthy self-actualization. Healthline article states: “Self-actualization requires opening oneself up to oneself, endeavoring to find out who one is, what one likes, what's good and bad for oneself, and what one's” This understanding will help one decide whether or not there will be a mate selection or how one will live when one chooses to remain single or one becomes suddenly single due to the death of a mate.

We all must make these three decisions in life. Parents, share them with your children. Teacher, read this article in your classrooms and have a healthy discussion about them. Spiritual leaders, change your perspective on life's decisions and present teaching that can transform lives.

Barrington H. Brennen is a marriage and family therapist. Send your questions or comments to quesiton@soencouragement.org or call or text 242 477 4002 or visit www.soencouagement.org