

# **Decisions to Destiny:**

**Becoming World Changers**

**One Decision At A Time!**

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## **Dedication**

This book is dedicated to my wife Juli and my children Gabrielle and Blake. I love each of you with all my heart. Thank you for all you are to me and to others. Though we have faced challenges in life, we have overcome. We are truly blessed!

## **Special Thanks**

A special thank you to Gregory Hedrick, Dr. Robert Mattingly Jr., and Jada Smith for their assistance with editing, comments, and additional insights while writing and publishing this book.

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## **Acknowledgements**

First, my sincere thanks and appreciation goes to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Without His love, grace, and mercy, I would be lost in sin. I am ever grateful that He would place His calling and anointing for ministry on my life.

My thanks and love goes to my wife Juli, without whom my life would be empty. Your love has carried me, and our family, through so much. You are indeed a virtuous woman of God. I love and appreciate you!

To my children Gabrielle and Blake, I pray that you would each come to know the Lord to a greater level than I have. I pray that you become shining names in His Kingdom and that you become "world changers" as you walk out the destiny God has laid out for your life.

To my parents Gregory and Cheryl, thank you for your love and dedication instilling the Word of God in my life, for bringing me to church, even when I did not want to go, and for raising me in a Christian home. You provided a platform and foundation for my life and I am ever grateful.

Finally, to all of my pastors and Christian leaders who took the time to pour into my life, let me grow and learn under your spiritual covering, and for providing the opportunities to preach the Gospel to so many across this nation. I pray a special blessing upon your life and ministries wherever you are!

## About The Author

Dr. Travis J Hedrick grew up in a family in the Pacific Northwest. His family life was that of a typical family: a family of four, one dog, one cat, trying to make their way in life. Travis was blessed to have lived in a Christian home, with both parents involved and engaged in his life. His family was blessed to add a new member to the family when they adopted a baby girl from South Korea. This was a great new adventure that continues to this day as the family continues to grow with all of the new children being added to the family.

Travis began his Christian walk at the age of six years old. His father shared the Good News of what Jesus had done for him and he was moved to the “altar,” his toy box, for a special time of prayer and dedication of his life to Christ. This was the beginning decision that would guide his life to a calling of pasturing and ministering the Gospel of Jesus to many throughout the coming years.

Upon completing high school, Travis decided to enter the US Air Force. During this time, the call to ministry was confirmed through many series of events. Opportunities began to present themselves as he began serving as music minister at a local church’s college and military outreach. A unique opportunity presented itself as he was asked to lead the music ministry at the on-base church services as well.

Following his tour in the Air Force, Travis returned home, now in Texas, to begin an internship at his family’s local church. During this time, he was able to gain valuable experience in many areas of church leadership and ministry. In May 1998, Travis accepted his first pastorate, serving as youth pastor for a local church in North Dallas. It was at this church that Travis met his future bride. Three weeks before their wedding, a fire destroyed the church – but that is a story for another time!

Since this time, Travis and his family have had the opportunity to serve in many capacities in Christian ministry including youth pastor, associate pastor, worship arts pastor, and senior pastor. Most recently, Travis and his family began the ministry of church planting.

During a period of unemployment, Travis capitalized upon this time as an opportunity to finish his education. What started out as a desire to finish his Associates degree quickly became a Bachelors in Project Management and a MBA in Operations Management. Additionally, this same time Travis was awarded a Masters in Biblical Studies and a Doctorate in Theology. This education has served to facilitate the ability to serve as a bi-

vocational pastor as often has been the need. This mix of business degrees and pastoral degrees has been a great combination for Travis and his ministry.

God has truly blessed Travis and his family. It is Travis' deepest desire to continue to minister the love, and mercy of God, no matter what directions life takes him and his family.

# Introduction

The book and content you are about to read is derived from a sermon series entitled: Decisions to Destiny preached at Church On The Rock in Monett, MO.

Church On The Rock Monett was a church plant birthed out of many years of prayer and consideration by a pastor in a neighboring town of Aurora, MO. In a growing rural city, there were many good churches, denominations, and Christian people, but there was a need to reach those who were least likely to darken the doors of the traditional "cross and steeple" church. I was asked to pray about this church plant as well, and after approximately four years, COTRM was established. This church plant was established with the idea that God's Will is to save the lost, heal the saved, and that the church is His hands and feet to carry out His Will in the world. During the time allowed for this ministry, God did great things in many people's lives there!

To be a world changer, you must be able to do something that no one else is doing or do it better than anyone else. This is not a point of pride or arrogance; it is an observation that those who want to make a real difference in many lives must take a stand that differentiates themselves from others around them. The Prayer of Jabez is just such an example. In a sea of names, God elevated his name just above the crowd, to be an example for all, because he was willing to pray, rather selfishly I might add, for God's favor and blessing. Jabez, in his own way, became a world changer because he did something different than everyone else was doing. Are you praying for God's best for your life? Are you willing to pray for His best and stand apart from the world around you?

*"Ordinary people are easy to spot.*

*They are the ones doing the same things you are.*

*Time to try something different!"*

This brief history provides the backdrop for where this book will take you. COTRM started doing something different from the other churches in town, while maintaining the purity of the Gospel Message; God began to provide the increase. Many of the people who attended COTRM early on were either those who never had attended church or those who had

attended church at one point in their live but felt hurt, jaded, didn't fit in, or simple fell out of fellowship with a church body. To summarize - *the Lost needing salvation and the Saved needing healing* – This really is the simplified essence of why Jesus came to this earth and the call we all share as believers and churches.

In any case, God laid this series of messages on my heart in October of the first year the church was established. There was much momentum moving forward, but, as with any great work, October seemed to be the speed bump that set to derail what the church had gained and what God was doing in our city. Over the next 2 months, I spent much time in prayer and consideration of the process each human must go through as we walk through life. I felt as if God was impressing upon my heart that the people of the congregation had lost their direction and it was my responsibility, not to place them on the path myself, but rather to help them rediscover the path that God had established for each of them. This was overwhelming to say the least.

I began to examine my own life and what it meant. I realized that I too had allowed myself to lose sight of the destiny that God had for my life and asked God how to rediscover the path to my destiny. I felt God tell me “the path to destiny begins with my decisions.” I remembered a youth speaker, from my teenage years, which had talking points similar to this series God was developing in me and which you will soon experience. I then discovered a quote from an unknown author that seemed to solidify what I felt God was speaking to me and to the church congregation. This is what the quote read...

*"Watch your thoughts, for they become words.*

*Watch your words, for they become actions.*

*Watch your actions, for they become habits.*

*Watch your habits, for they become character.*

*Watch your character, for it becomes your destiny."*

*- Unknown*

In January of the next year, God brought forth the series of sermons you are about to discover, but now presented in a readable format for others to experience. It is my sincere

prayer that as you read, you will be convicted, challenged, and encouraged to look at each decision as an opportunity to serve God with your whole mind, soul, and spirit. As you walk out the path set before you, realizing that each decision changes the course of that path, may God guide you towards the destiny He alone has established for your life. No one else can walk your path for you; make each step count. Allow His Word to light your path and guide your steps.

Near the end of each chapter, you will be presented with "opportunities" related to the topic of that chapter. While these may seem repetitive, there is a point to this process. This is to help develop a habit, (you will read about this later) which will help you walk according to God's Will for your life. Read each of these, take each to heart, and ask yourself how you can effectively put into practice each opportunity you are presented with.

Be warned that you may encounter parts of this book that challenge you and even your doctrinal beliefs. While this book is in no way meant to support or cast down any particular denomination or church doctrine, you may discover Biblical things that may stretch you. It is all about faith! It is not about faith in this book but faith in God's Word.

*"When was the last time your knowledge & understanding was stretched by God's Word? Like weight training for your muscles, your faith needs to be stretched & even torn at times to increase its strength and size. Hit the Word hard & begin to see the results."*

I challenge you to allow God's Word to stretch you so as to increase the strength and size of your faith while you read this book. Now begins your journey from "Decisions to Destiny!"

# Chapter 1 – Decisions

*Mark 10:17-22 (NASB) As He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments, 'DO NOT MURDER, DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, DO NOT STEAL, DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS, Do not defraud, HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER.'" And he said to Him, "Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up." Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, "One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property.*

The rich young ruler had an important decision to make. Choose all the hope, promise, and blessings that Jesus could offer him, or remain in all that he had acquired, gained, and reserved for himself. This decision would alter the course of this man's life no matter what his decision would be. This decision would take him in a new direction or he would remain on the current path of his life.

Each person, like the rich young ruler, makes hundreds of decisions each day. While we may not realize the significance of each decision, they are taking us on a journey that will ultimately decide our destiny. Each decision in our lives is significant and carries much weight.

*"We should consider each decision in life an opportunity to serve God with our whole heart, mind, and strength – that is our entire being!"*

When Jesus was confronted by this man, He knew his heart and desires, He also knew that "things" of life can keep us from our true calling. Jesus desired that the young ruler would make the decision to follow Him, but knew that all the acquisitions he had achieved in life would hold him back from the potential God had planned for him. What should he do? What should we do?

We must begin to realize how important each decision we make is. Even decisions such as "do I wake up at 7:00 or at 7:30" carries course changing power in them. That extra 30 minutes could mean the difference in the time to pray before work or not, having a healthy breakfast, or even avoiding a wreck on the interstate. While we cannot see the impact each decision has on our future, we must begin to accept the fact that each decision is a path-altering decision. In other words, every decision we make, no matter how insignificant to us, God sees it as significant to our lives as we travel on the path towards the destiny He has established for you.

### ***Where Decisions Come From***

- *How Do Decisions Take Shape?*

Ask yourself this question... "What am I thinking about? Your Thoughts develop our Decisions.

- Each thought is a potential Decision.
- Each Decision leads to a potential Action.
- Each Actions lead to a potential Habit.
- Each Habit leads to potential Character.
- Each Character lead to our potential Destiny.

The Bible places a great deal of importance of God understanding our minds and thoughts. God realizes that left to our own devices, man inherently seeks the lesser nature of the flesh over the higher nature found in Him. Satan, our enemy, has very limited resources and has only a few basic schemes that he can use to ensnare people and tear believers down. We are in a battle; therefore, we must know our adversary better than he knows us! Realize that our thoughts are where the battles are fought for good and evil. One popular speaker and author titled a great book on this subject, "Battlefield of the Mind." This is worth the read if you struggle with your thoughts and with repeat failings with temptations.

However, while man's books are helpful, I believe that our source and answers come from God and His Word. Let us examine a few verses related to the subject of the mind.

*Psalms 92:10-12 (NASB) He who chastens the nations, will He not rebuke, Even He who teaches man knowledge? The LORD knows the thoughts*

*of man, That they are a mere breath. Blessed is the man whom You chasten, O LORD, And whom You teach out of Your law;*

*Psalms 139:22-24 (NASB) I hate them with the utmost hatred; They have become my enemies. Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way.*

*Romans 12:1-3 (NASB) Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.*

One of the aspects of these scriptures is that we need God to be involved in the process of decision in our lives. Search me oh God and know me... Try me and know my thoughts... Be transformed by the renewing of our mind... If we allow God's Will to dictate our decision rather than our own will, we discover that He knows how to rightly shape the thoughts that ultimately develop the decision we make.

Sometimes faith is needed to make decisions. The uncertainty in each decision can create the need to take the leap of faith. It is important to note, that in Romans 12:3, God tells us that He has allotted or given to each person a "measure" of faith. This is significant in that not everyone is given the same measure. If we were created in cookie-cutter fashion, where we had no freewill, the same measure of faith would do. God, however, is a much more creative and insightful Creator. He knew that I would need a certain amount of faith for the things I would face in life, just as He knew exactly how much faith you would need for your life's walk. You may never have the *Heroes of Faith* level of faith, the *Billy Graham* level of faith, or even *Bishop TD Jakes* level of faith, but you will have the level of faith that God has provided for you. It is more than enough for you, just as He is more than enough for us! Remember this when making decisions.

***The Destination Of A Decision***

- *Where Are Your Thoughts And Decisions Taking You?*

- A Diamond In The Rough

The concept of a diamond in the rough escapes many people, except in relation to childhood movies about Aladdin. Like Aladdin, however, each one of us is more than what our outer appearance seems. A real life diamond in the rough looks similar to ornamental carnival glass beads or oddly shaped marbles. Unless someone knew what they were looking at, and the true potential of what was inside, one may overlook or pass the diamond by. How true is this in your life? How often do you see someone that may have a different look on the outside, but you overlook the value and beauty potential within? I am so glad we have a Savior who did not pass me by, one who looked deeper into my life and saw something of value and beauty!

In the hand of a Master, a diamond in the rough produces beauty, value, and radiance. The inner beauty is brought out by the wisdom, experience, and insight of the master and creates the real value in each stone. Our God is the Master Jeweler of our life. He takes each person, a diamond in the rough, and sees the true potential of each of us. Since He made us, He realizes that each person is different. Each one of us is unique and will look different than the next when in their finished state. This does not mean that He will not place the same amount of love, compassion, and time into each of us as needed to complete the work He has started. It is our response or resistance to His hands which determines our final outcome or destiny.

When you think about diamonds, what comes to mind? For some it may be a wedding ring, for others it may be earrings, for others it may be an anniversary. Arguably, the Hope Diamond sets the standard for all other diamonds. As large and beautiful as this diamond is, what would it have become had a master jeweler not been the one creating it? What if the Hope Diamond had been placed in the care of an amateur jeweler? The risk of damage and flaws would increase substantially. This is why only true masters were allowed to fashion the Hope Diamond.

It is interesting to note however, that the Hope Diamond has been cut and shaped many times over the centuries until coming to its current fame as it now is displayed in the Smithsonian. In certain instances, God has to revisit His work in us as we walk through life. If imperfections develop due to our decisions in life, He must refine His work in us to bring

out the gem within us again. Praise God that He is never finished working His Will on and in us.

### ***In The Hands Of The Master***

- *Perfection or Brokenness?*
  - Responsiveness leads to perfection
  - Resistance leads to brokenness

How will you react the move of the Master's hand in your life? Will you willing respond and submit the removal of “things” from your life in order for your true potential to come out? Proper response to the hand of the Master will allow God to bring you in the fullness of your destiny He has designed for your life.

Will you resist the hand of the Master? Resistance can lead to brokenness, not just in the literal since, but also in other areas of your life including emotionally and spiritually. When you feel like you keep hitting a brick wall in your faith and then continue to repeat that same process, it is time to consider why that is. Are you allowing the hand of God to mold and shape you or, are you resisting what He is attempting to change in your life for your good?

Consider the Hope Diamond again. It is large, it is beautiful, and it is extremely valuable. Now consider what it would have been if that stone resisted the hands of the master jeweler and had been broken during the process of forming it. It would have to be remade. If it were broken, after being remade it would have still been beautiful, and had value, but the size and value would have been diminished due to the failure that came from resistance to the master's hands and tools.

I am reminded of the story found in Jeremiah 18:1-6 concerning the Potter's House. Here Jeremiah hears the Word of the Lord. Arise and go were the first command. If he would go, God would cause him to hear the message He had for Jeremiah. If he would not go, he would miss out on not only God's Word, but also an incredible visual that speaks to God's people today! It was Jeremiah's responsiveness, rather than his resistance, that revealed God's Word and call for his life. Moreover, in the same manner that Jeremiah was shown, are we not all the clay in God's hands waiting to be shaped and formed by the Master? Will

you be the marred clay that resisted the hands and the cutting away of that which did not belong in the vessel, or will you to respond and allow the Master to make you in to a vessel He has destined for you to be? It is your decision to make!

In order for our lives to become all we are capable of, the rough edges of our past must come off. When it comes to usability and effectiveness, some might find it strange that certain shapes are more effective than others are. Consider two different rocks. One rock is jagged and has many edges; the other rock is smooth, round, and without any jagged edges. Which rock is more deadly? The distance a jagged stone could effectively be thrown would be limited by the resistance of the air moving around all the edges of the rock. The smooth stone could be thrown from a greater distance, with more accuracy, and with more velocity because of the minimal air resistance on the smooth shape of the rock.

We have all heard the famous story of David and Goliath. Found in 1 Samuel 17, this story plays out similar to what you just read. The armies of Israel, had they not cowered in fear, would have attempted brute force to kill the giant (the jagged rock). It may have worked, but it would have cost many lives in the attempt. David, *decided* the path to take was one of precision and skill. In verse 40, we find him taking five smooth stones from the brook. With one of these stones, David was able to project the stone from a distance where no harm could reach him. With one smooth stone, he conquered the giant. To the shock and surprise of both armies, the smooth stone was more effective than an entire army of weapons. Have you become the effective smooth stone God is forming you to be?

*"If in life you feel like a stone tossed about in stormy sea, remember that the rough and jagged edges of a stone are smoothed away by the rough waters. It was a small, smooth stone that defeated a giant. When your edges are gone, what will you be able to conquer with your life?"*

### ***The Point Of No Return...***

It is time to wrap up the discussion related to decisions we make. If you *decide* to move beyond this chapter, you must be willing to walk the whole journey. You will be responsible for the information and knowledge God will bring to you and there will be no going back.

- Each decision alters the path we travel.
- Our decisions can affect the outcome of God's plans for our life.
- *"You can NEVER go back and start over; you can only make new decisions."*
- Are you making each decision count?

How can one decision alter God's plan for our life? One decision to drink and drive could end your life short of your full potential. God has a plan for each one of us, but we have the freewill and responsibility to seek after His plan for us. If we "decide" our will over His, we may not reach the destiny God had for us. Our destiny may now look different, or less than what it could have been (the resistant diamond), or we may arrive in eternity sooner than we should have... all because of a decision!

Once we have made a decision, we cannot take it back. It is done, set in stone, and that moment in history has now faded away. It is for this reason I say that each decision is so important. Each decision carries weight and should be examined and filtered through God's Will and Word. This is not an excuse to freeze up and stop making decisions, but rather a call to start making better decisions in your life. You can never go back and start over; you can only make new decisions. If you make a bad decision, do not let it stop you, hold you back, or defeat you, rather learn from the mistake, seek God's forgiveness, and make a new decision that will take you in a new direction on the path set before you.

New Years is best known for new starts. Each December 31st, New Year's resolutions will become the forefront of many people's minds. I for one have stopped making resolutions, since I break them, usually within the first week of January. I prefer to make decisions throughout my life that will take me on the journey to the destiny God has made for my life. The next time you are making your resolutions, or if you would just like to start making right decisions now, I encourage you to ask yourself these questions...

1. How will this decision affect my life?
2. What will the impact be to others?
3. Will it lead me closer to God's Will for my life?
4. Will it lead others to Jesus?

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