

Choosing Wisely

“My child, don’t lose sight of common sense and discernment. Hang on to them, for they will refresh your soul. They are like jewels on a necklace.” –Proverbs 3:21–22 NLT

Indiana Jones is one of my all-time favorite cinematic heroes. In the climactic scene from *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, Indy and the Nazi collaborators, Elsa and Walter, find themselves in a cave after an arduous journey searching for the Holy Grail. Legend has it that the cup was used by Jesus during the Last Supper. The Grail is purported to have mystical powers granting eternal youth, happiness, and abundance. Whoever finds the highly sought-after relic will possess great power, and the Nazis wanted it for evil purposes.

The old and weary Knight guarding the Grail stands in front of a broad shelf displaying several vessels, all different shapes, and sizes, many of which are ornate. Any one of them could be the Holy Grail. The Knight proclaims, “Choose wisely. The true Grail will bring you life. The false one will take it from you.”

The villains go first. With glory in her eyes, Elsa chooses a lavish chalice and hands it to Walter. He admires the chalice and says, “It certainly is the cup of the King of Kings.” Walter fills it with water, toasts to eternal life, and takes a drink. Walter looks satisfied when suddenly he starts to shake and cough. Expecting to find eternal youth, he experiences quite the opposite. In horror, his age accelerates, and he disintegrates right before their eyes. Life was taken from him.

The Knight states, “He chose poorly.”

Next, Indy surveys the vessels, discerning which one to choose. He knows history and looks for a humble cup. “The cup

of a carpenter,” he says. Indy reaches to the back of the shelf, past all of the lavish chalices, and chooses a simple goblet. To test the cup, he fills it with water and takes a drink. Nothing happens.

Indy turns to the Knight and hears, “You have chosen wisely.”

Indy exercised discernment. He had good sense, a particularly keen way of seeing things that seemed hidden or obscure. But what exactly is discernment? Scottish Theologian Dr. Sinclair Ferguson sums up the attribute beautifully: “True discernment means not only distinguishing the right from the wrong; it means distinguishing the primary from the secondary, the essential from the indifferent, and the permanent from the transient. And, yes, it means distinguishing between the good and the better, and even between the better and the best. . . . It is the ability to make discriminating judgments, to distinguish between, and recognize the moral implications of, different situations and courses of action. It includes the ability to ‘weigh up’ and assess the moral and spiritual status of individuals, groups, and even movements.”^[1]

God-given discernment will help you go deep below the surface of an issue or problem to see the motives, causes, and agendas. Additionally, it will enable you to distinguish good from evil (2 Samuel 14:17) and to see through outward appearances (Proverbs 28:11). Discernment will also help you to be sensitive to potential trouble, be keenly aware of danger, and prevent unintended consequences.

Do you choose wisely? Consider

these self-reflecting questions.

- How can you exercise discernment in your daily life?
- What's blocking you from being more discerning?
- Would people say you have "good sense"?
- Why or why not?

When faced with a decision or problem, don't be like the Nazi collaborators who lacked discernment and made the wrong choice. Be like Indiana Jones, exercise good sense, and "choose wisely."

Do you want to learn more? Visit www.prestonpoore.com

Cheers,

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^[1] Sinclair Ferguson, "What Is Discernment?" Ligonier Ministries, last modified May 8, 2020, <https://www.ligonier.org/blog/discernment-thinking-gods-thoughts/>.