

## **Liberty Commentary February 18, 2008**

Last month Olympic track star Marion Jones was sentenced to six months in jail and stripped of her five Olympic medals as well as having all of her track results erased dating back to the year 2000.

Marion, as well as many other athletes, celebrities and just plain ordinary people, have fallen victim to making “bad choices” that have forever marred their reputations.

Life is about making choices. Everyday we make choices that affect our lives and the lives of others. Sometimes those choices seem mundane and insignificant and at other times those choices can carry devastating and lasting consequences.

On nearly any given day we can read news accounts of people from every walk of life and every age group who will admit that their lives have been turned upside down because they made, “bad choices”.

The Bible is full of accounts of nations and people who have made bad choices because they failed to put God first in their lives. The Israelites had been slaves in Egypt but God sent them a leader, Moses; to lead them out. After God had led them to the promised land they made a series of bad choices that prevented them from going in and occupying the promised land. In fact, because of their bad choices they wandered in the wilderness for forty years until God gave the next generation a renewed opportunity to make right choices under the leadership of a new leader, Joshua.

God told Joshua and his followers to be, “strong and of good courage, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law...turn not from it to the right hand or to the left,

that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt find good success”.

God was telling Joshua to put Me first and then you will be prosperous and successful. Often times we either miss this Biblical imperative or we get it totally backwards. Often people make bad choices because they put their own prosperity and success (as the world defines it) first and make it their passion to pursue the pleasures of this materialistic society rather than putting God first and pursuing a relationship with Him. The thought is-just as soon as I get that promotion, or get that raise, or marry that person, or move to that place, then I will settle down and put God first in my life. The problem is that day never comes because one bad choice leads to another bad choice until like Marion Jones; it leaves us humiliated and broken. The Israelites under Joshua’s leadership made a “right choice”. They made a commitment that they were going to follow God and never return to the bad choices that their parent’s generation had been guilty of.

God tells the Children of Israel to cross the flooded Jordan River and go to the fortified city of Jericho and conquer the city. The Israelites did not have a trained army. They did not even have a battle plan, but what they knew was that God was with them and it was time to make some right choices and go in and take the land that God had promised to them generations before.

Soon after Joshua and the Israelites crossed the Jordan, they are challenged yet again about what course of action to choose. God seems to give them the most ridiculous battle strategy. God tells Joshua to go to Jericho, march around the city one time per day for six days and on the seventh day march around seven times blowing trumpets and shouting and the walls of Jericho will come down and you will go in and conquer the city.

Joshua and his people did not argue with God. They did what each of us needs to do when confronted with challenges-make right choices and obey the Word of God. On the seventh lap the walls came down and they walked in and conquered the city.

As you read the book of Joshua you find that the Israelites continue to make one right choice after another as they obey God and within a few short years God gave them the entire land of Canaan.

You will never realize life's greatest victories, success, or prosperity until you are willing to make right choices based on Gods Word.

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