

The Cost/Reward Principle *Selected Scripture*

I. Every decision has a cost and a reward.

a. The decision and the reward.

But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and kept back *some* of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet.

Acts 5:1-2

b. The unforeseen cost.

But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back *some* of the price of the land? "While it remained *unsold*, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came over all who heard of it. The young men got up and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him.

Acts 5:3-6

c. An opportunity to make a different decision.

Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. And Peter responded to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for such and such a price?" And she said, "Yes, that was the price." Acts 5:7-8

1. She was innocent until proven guilty.
2. She was given an opportunity to repent and be truthful.
3. She was held accountable for her own sin and not that of her husband.

d. Paying the price.

Then Peter *said* to her, "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out *as well*." And immediately she fell at his feet and breathed her last, and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. And great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things.

Acts 5:9-11

II. Evaluate the cost.

"For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'"

Luke 14:28

More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ.

Philippians 3:8

“But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.

Acts 20:24

Potential Costs

Money, Time, Effort (work), Your life, Your health—injury or illness, Your integrity, Having to defer gratification, Restriction of freedom, Give up being uninvolved (you may have to take action), Whatever was on the other route, Having to say “no” and having someone be mad at you, Losing your job, Giving your life to another, Not being sexually active, Loving someone, Stress, Addiction (being a slave to something), Debt, STD's, Not having as much fun, Giving up something you really love, Your future, etc.

III. Evaluate the reward.

a. Figure out the best reward.

“But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil *men*.

Luke 6:35

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. Romans 8:18

b. It applied to Jesus, too.

Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:2

Potential rewards

Getting high, Sexual satisfaction, Thrills, Temporary relief from pain, Going the path of least resistance, Recognition, Promotion, Hunger satisfied, Wealth, Eternal life, Physical life, Security, Freedom, Having something you want, A great job, Self-fulfillment, Love, Treasure in heaven, Save a life, Change a life, Make a difference, Happiness, Health, etc.

IV. Consider the Cost-Reward order.

Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; and he said to Him, “All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me.” Then Jesus said to him, “Go, Satan! For it is written, ‘YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.’”

Matthew 4:8-10

The serpent said to the woman, “You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” Genesis 3:4-5

By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return.”

Genesis 3:19

Often, but not always:

Reward first, usually a high cost later — a bad decision.

Cost first, usually a high reward later — a good decision.

V. Make wise decisions.

“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? Matthew 16:26