

***Chocolate cake vs. Fruit Salad***  
**Isaiah 6:1-8    February 7, 2010**

Wouldn't we all like to be able to live the perfect life; listening to God's still speaking voice, making all the right decisions and, like Isaiah, appropriately responding to God's voice?

For instance,

We could be talking about trying to hear God's voice while trying to respond appropriately to some incredibly difficult moral decision.

Or, we could be trying to make the call on a tough decision at work.

Perhaps we're deciding how to respond to the guy who can't seem to find accelerator pedal; or how to respond to a relative who just made a bigoted remark.

Or, maybe we are just trying to eat responsibly and not give in to our more gluttonous appetite or that all powerful desire for comfort food – or, or, chocolate.

We try our best to do the right thing.

We may even give it our most firm resolve to do the right thing.

And maybe, just maybe, we will be one of the lucky 22% that succeed.

Yup only 22%.

According to British psychologist Richard Wiseman in his study of more than 3,000 people, 88 percent of all resolutions end in failure.

How come so many attempts at willpower lose both their will and their power?

Well, I know this sounds like something a preacher would say but -- have you tried praying?

Certainly, connecting with our spiritual side is always a good thing, but prayer may offer us an equally important psychological and physiological tool in helping us to hear God's voice and help us make better decisions.

Surprise!

To help us see my point, I want us to take a few minutes to listen to a Radiolab excerpt from NPR Morning Edition.

**So what might we garner from this bit of information.**

**For starters, we might see that multitasking is not all that it's built up to be.**

Clearly, the more things we have going on in brains, the less likely we are to deal with any of them appropriately.

So how many things do you try to do, while you're driving?

**More directly related to the study, we all know that for many of us, the more stressed we are, the more we want to eat, and most especially we want to eat foods that our emotional side is telling us we just have to consume.**

Of course for others the response may be to drink, or take some valium, or go shopping.

When we are just dealing with too much our emotional side just takes over and team reason scores goose eggs.

**Clearly, a stressed mind – one with too many things going on in it, is probably less able to make appropriate decisions.**

Just think of how many bad emotional choices you have made when you're stressed.

We won't even start with responding to kids and teenagers.

With so much going on in our heads, we panic, give up on reason and punt, we go for the easy emotional response.

Of course, once you have made one bad stress related decision then you start a cycle because the bad decision you just made increases your stress which decreases your decision making ability and further increases your stress.

So how do you then break the cycle?

Is the answer blowing in the wind?

Is the answer to be found in the breath of God  
– the Spirit of God?

Could the answer be --- prayer?

Yes, every time God calls us, lures us, to make a better decision and follow God's aim, it probably is not going to be as dramatic as Isaiah's call.

But in every decision we make, big or small, God is present pointing the way.

Regrettably, it is “a way” that is often buried beneath the multitude of other things swimming around in our heads.

Could the answer to our problem simply involve removing the rubble so that we can get to the treasure?

I’m sure this is just something that you expect a preacher to say.

After all we preachers are kind of partisan on this.

But, could the answer be as simple as prayer?

It seems that the study we listened to might give us preachers a little backing.

What would happen if before you made that big decision, you spent some time with God?

What if before you ate you spent 5 minutes or so just giving up the day’s pressures to God and emptying your mind and letting it be filled with a sense of God’s love?

What would happen if before you got into that argument with your child over curfew, you both sat silently with God for a couple minutes?

Wow. I wish I could tell you the answer to those questions, but to be honest, as my waistline forces me to be, I don't always do this myself. But I have no doubt that taking time to put all the other things out of my mind and just focus on listening to God would have a very real effect on the quality of my decision making.

Unfortunately, the first thing we have to do is decide to take the time to listen to God.

It's unfortunate because in our busy, multi-tasking, frenzied, world we're just in too much of a hurry and too stressed to make that decision.

So, instead of finding the answer blowing in the wind, in the Spirit of God, we go for the cheap emotional fix and find our answer in a another cup of caffeine.

So let's do it now.

Let's just take a minute, after all that's all we have time for, to sit in silence and get a fill up on God – or at least put in a couple dollars worth before we run out of gas.

Let us pray...

AMEN.