

*Her*  
FAITH FIRST

LIVING IN FAITH EVERYDAY

# Life MAGAZINE

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resolute in  
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**Fearfully and  
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**SHE IS A**

**MASTERPIECE**

# DECISION BASED ON GUILT AND FEAR ARE BAD DECISIONS

WRITTEN BY THERESA BOEDEKER

For the last several days I had been wrestling with a decision. Ping ponging back and forth between yes and no. But the answer was as elusive as silence during a family dinner. "I need your help," I told hubby, a whine in my voice and frustration oozing from my pores. "About what?" he asked. "I have a decision." "Yes?" I laid out my dilemma. A lady who I admired, had called and told me that she had been praying and my name had jumped to her mind. Well, that made me sit up and listen a little closer. She spoke about how she knew I was organized and good at running things. She had noticed my people skills. I sat up even taller and felt like a cat getting petted. She explained how she was stepping down from an important role within an organization we both belonged to, and she was wondering if I would take her place. She assured me I would be the perfect fit. Wait, whoa! She had a big job. She was important. She ran a large part of the organization. I slouched a bit. This conversation had not gone the way I thought it would. I asked her some questions: Time commitment? Big. The duties? Lots. Pay? Volunteer status. She encouraged me to pray about it and get back to her. I hung up conflicted. I was trying to explain this to my husband. How it was a great opportunity. I would be doing lots of important stuff. And just imagine, she thought of and asked me to take over this job. Me. It was all so flattering and ego stroking.



## What motivates your decisions?

And yet, it would take a lot of time. Family time. Daily time. There would be a learning curve. Did I really want to tackle this job when I was focusing on other opportunities? Would it be too much or cut into our precious family time?

I had prayed about it. No real answer had emerged.

My hubby listened to me paint this picture and name my dilemma. "Do you want to do this job?" he asked.

I hesitated and sidestepped the question. "I know I would be good at it. I know they need me. I feel flattered that I was considered."

His face wrinkled into frustration. "Yes, but do you really want this job?"

I wanted to be honest. "Not at this time of my life. But I feel guilty about turning it down. I feel guilty about disappointing her."

"Say no," he said.

"What?"

"Theresa, you should never make a decision based upon guilt or shame. When you do, you will come to regret that decision."

I let his words sink in. Yes, I was feeling guilt over both accepting and declining the job. Guilt smeared and spread around for both yes and no. Guilt I was self-manufacturing. It wasn't easy calling the lady back, but I did. Telling her no. But then I felt much better.

Guilt and shame are unhealthy task masters. Often causing more guilt and shame, which we usually direct at ourself or others.

When guilt and shame motivate us to do something or decide something, they never promote peace and joy. They instead promote fear. Fear of disappointing and of doing the wrong thing. These fear based decisions than sprout resentment, anger, regret, and frustration.

Peace and joy come from God. Fear, shame, and guilt come from our enemy.

To help me visually remember to look at the motivation behind my decisions, I wrote on a sticky note: "Decisions based on guilt and shame are always bad decisions." I underlined 'bad decisions' and stuck it by my desk.

This world has enough guilt and shame, which promotes fear within us. And then we guilt and shame ourselves plenty, plenty. I instead want to be like God. He doesn't shame us into loving him. Guilt us into loving our neighbor. No, he uses plain old-fashioned encouragement and love.

Love casts out fear. Love erases guilt and shame. I John 4:18 "Perfect love casts out fear."

At the bottom of my sticky kitchen note, I wrote, "God uses Love," and drew a heart.

Leave shame and guilt out of your decision making. And instead, chose to be motivated by love.