



COULDA, WOULD, SHOULD!

Introduction:

- A. There Are Many Situations In Life Where We Have To Make Choices.

- B. Often There Are Things That We Did Not Do; Guilt And Disappointment Ensues!

- C. How Should We Approach Life So We Are Not Flooded With Guilt And Disappointment?

- D. Can You Think Of Situations Where You Have Used These Words -- "Coulda!" "Woulda!" And "Shoulda!"?

- E. Everyday Life Examples:
 1. Coulda:
 - a. This often expressed an idea that we wish we had done more!
 - b. "I could have done more to try to help a loved one before he/she died!"
 - c. "I could have done more to try to encourage a sinner to repent."

 2. Woulda:
 - a. This often is expressed by the thought "if only I had known!"
 - b. We may be saying, "If circumstances were different we would have acted differently!"
 - c. Or, we may express the idea that "We would have done something differently or better than someone else did!"
 - d. And we may be saying, "I would have done more if I had known that was the last opportunity!"

 3. Shoulda:
 - a. This may express the idea that what I did was not be best or the right way to act or react!
 - b. "I should have done something completely different!"

 4. "Coulda," "Woulda" and "Shoulda" often suggest feelings of:

- a. Neglect
 - b. Failure
 - c. Doubt
 - d. Procrastination -- we put off something because it was too risky, or we did not like the expectation, or we did not want to decide!
- F. What About “Coulda” “Woulda” And “Shoulda” When It Comes To Our Lives Spiritually?

I. (Slide #2) Coulda!

- A. Have You Ever Struggled With The Following Thoughts?
1. What “COULD HAVE BEEN!”
 2. What I COULD HAVE DONE!
- B. (▶) Heb. 3:19 “So we see that **they could not enter** in because of unbelief.”
1. God planned for Israel to go into Canaan.
 2. However, because of unbelief God would not allow them to enter Canaan!
- C. (▶) Ju. 2:14 “They forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. ¹⁴And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so **that they could no longer stand before their enemies.**”
1. After residing in Canaan, Israel turned away from God and began to serve idols.
 2. Because of turning away from God, they could not stand up to or defeat their enemies. The enemies had greater power than Israel did!
 3. Throughout the book of Judges you see the cycle -- they served God, they began to take him for granted, they disobeyed Him, they turned to serving idols, they felt guilty and sorry, they repented, then they pled for Him to forgive them; they came back to serve Him.
- D. (▶) I Cor. 3:1-7 “And I, brethren, **could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal**, as to babes in Christ. ²I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able *to receive it*, and even now you are still not able; ³for you are still carnal. For where *there are* envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like *mere* men? ⁴For when one says, ‘I am of Paul,’ and another, ‘I *am* of Apollos,’ are you not carnal? ⁵Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but ministers through whom you

believed, as the Lord gave to each one? ⁶I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. ⁷So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.”

1. The Corinthians began to exalt preachers and to become their disciples -- Paul, Apollos, and Peter.
2. However, that is purely carnal or worldly thinking.
3. Paul could not speak to them as spiritual people because of their carnal thinking.
4. They could have been more open to God’s Word if they had not been carnal!

II. (Slide #3) Woulda!

A. (►) Ex. 7:16-18 “And you shall say to him, ‘The LORD God of the Hebrews has sent me to you, saying, ‘Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness’; but indeed, until now **you would not hear!** ¹⁷Thus says the LORD: ‘By this you shall know that I *am* the LORD. Behold, I will strike the waters which *are* in the river with the rod that *is* in my hand, and they shall be turned to blood. ¹⁸And the fish that *are* in the river shall die, the river shall stink, and the Egyptians will loathe to drink the water of the river.’”

1. Almighty God was determined to free His people from Egyptian bondage.
2. God sent Moses to call Pharaoh to let His people go.
3. However, Pharaoh would not listen or submit.
4. Thus God threatened the first plague -- water to blood!

B. (►) Israel Saw The Amazing Supernatural Events At Sinai; However, When Moses Went Into The Mountain To Receive The 10 Commandments On Tables Of Stone, They Refused To Obey Him; They Made And Worshiped A Golden Calf!

1. Ac. 7:39 “whom our fathers **would not obey**, but rejected. And in their hearts they turned back to Egypt,”
2. They would not obey His first two commands: “You shall have no other gods before Me. ⁴You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of *anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth; ⁵you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God,” Ex. 20:3-5

- C. (▶) Reminiscing About Israel Coming To Kadesh Barnea, Moses Talks About Israel's Response To The Ten Faithless Spies.
1. Dt. 1:26-27 "Nevertheless **you would not go up**, but rebelled against the command of the LORD your God; ²⁷and you complained in your tents, and said, 'Because the LORD hates us, He has brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us.'"
 2. They **WOULD NOT** trust God and launch out to enter the land and face the strong forces there!
- D. (▶) Israel Would Not Listen!
1. They would not listen to Him when they left Egypt and came to Sinai!
 - a. Ps. 81:11,12 "But **My people would not heed My voice**, And Israel would *have* none of Me. ¹²So I gave them over to their own stubborn heart, To walk in their own counsels."
 - b. They determined that they were going to do their own will!
 2. They did not listen at Kadesh Barnea:
 - a. Dt. 1:43 "So I spoke to you; yet **you would not listen**, but rebelled against the command of the LORD, and presumptuously went up into the mountain."
 - b. They rebelled against His command; then when condemned, they foolishly decided that they **WOULD** obey; they failed miserably!
- E. (▶) The Jews Who Saw And Heard Jesus Would Not Love Him!
1. Imagine hearing His teachings; imagine seeing His miracles!
 2. Jn. 8:42 "Jesus said to them, '**If God were your Father, you would love Me**, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me.'"
 - a. They sincerely affirmed that they loved God.
 - b. However, if they had loved God, they would have realized that Jesus was the promised Messiah; they would have loved Jesus and obeyed Him!
- F. (▶) Jesus **LONGED** For Jerusalem To Follow God; They Refused To Do So!
1. Mt. 23:37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under *her* wings, but **you were not willing!**" [KJV "how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and **ye would not!**"]
 2. Their hypocrisy was nauseating to the Lord; He wanted them to trust Him and turn to Him for security and deliverance!

3. Sadly, they refused to rely upon Him!

G. (▶) The Elder Brother In The Parable Of The Prodigal Son Would Not Be Merciful And Forgiving For His Penitent Brother.

1. When his brother returned home, the elder brother was irate! Lk. 15:28,29
“But he was angry and **would not go in**. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. ²⁹So he answered and said to *his* father, ‘Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends.’”
2. He was angry, selfish, and unmerciful!
3. Remember Jesus’ teaching about prayer and forgiveness: “And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.” Mt. 6:12

H. (▶) Mary And Martha Were Frustrated That Jesus Was Not At Bethany As Lazarus Neared Death!

1. Martha: Jn. 11:21 “Then Martha said to Jesus, ‘Lord, if You had been here, my brother **would not have died**.’”
 - a. Jn. 11:23,24 “Jesus said to her, ‘Your brother will rise again.’ ²⁴Martha said to Him, ‘I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.’”
 - b. She did believe that He was the Christ. 11:27
2. Mary: Jn. 11:32 “Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, ‘Lord, if You had been here, my brother **would not have died**.’”
 - a. Seeing Mary tears, Jesus also wept.
 - b. He then came to the tomb where Lazarus was buried.
3. They were convinced that Lazarus would not have died if Jesus has been there -- they believed that He was the Messiah; they believed that He had the power to heal the sick!
4. Jesus raised Lazarus: “Lazarus, come forth!” Jn. 11:43

III. (Slide #4) Shoulda!

A. (▶) God Commanded Cain And Abel To Worship Him.

1. Abel obeyed; Cain made an offering that he thought was acceptable.
2. God accepted Abel’s sacrifice; He rejected Cain’s sacrifice.

3. Cain was irate!
 4. God told him, you should have controlled you heart and desire! Gen. 4:7 “If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire *is* for you, but you **should** rule over it.”
- B. (▶) Pharaoh Should Have Obeyed God!
1. Ex. 5:2 “And Pharaoh said, ‘**Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice** to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go.’”
 2. He had NO respect for God or reverence for His holy nature!
 3. What Pharaoh should have done:
 - a. He SHOULD have come to faith in God.
 - b. He SHOULD have humbled his heart!
 - c. He SHOULD have obeyed God.
 - d. Yet, in his rebellion and disrespect, he destroyed his land, his son, his army, his nation, and himself!
- C. (▶) Saul Should Have Destroyed The Amalekites And Their Animals!
1. God sent Saul to destroy the Amalekites:
 2. Go and utterly destroy the Amalekites! I Sa. 15:3 “Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.”
 3. They saved the king and spared the best of the animals to offer to God in a victory celebration!
 4. I Sa. 15:9 “But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all *that was* good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.”
 5. I Sa. 15:13,14 “Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, ‘Blessed *are* you of the LORD! I have performed the commandment of the LORD.’¹⁴But Samuel said, ‘What then *is* this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?’”
 6. I Sa. 15:22,23 “So Samuel said: ‘Has the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, *And* to heed than the fat of rams.²³For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry.

Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from *being king*.”

7. And when we face negative consequences we are prone to say, “I SHOULD have done differently!!!” I Sa. 15:24-26 “Then Saul said to Samuel, ‘I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. ²⁵Now therefore, please pardon my sin, and return with me, that I may worship the LORD.’ ²⁶But Samuel said to Saul, ‘I will not return with you, for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel.’”

D. (▶) Heart-Hearted And Disobedient People Should See And Hear; However, Their Hearts Hinder Holy Responses!

1. Mt. 13:14,15 “And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: *‘Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive; ¹⁵For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, **Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.**’”*
2. This is a quote of Is. 6:9,10.
3. It O.T. Scripture is an oft quoted passage in the N.T.
4. It is also cited in Mk. 4:12, Lk. 8:10, Jn. 12:40, and Ac. 28:26,27.

E. (▶) God’s Plan Was That Sinners Should Not Have To Perish For Their Sins!

1. Jn. 3:14-16 “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in Him **should not perish** but have eternal life. ¹⁶For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him **should not perish** but have everlasting life.”
2. Unfortunately, unbelief in Jesus will cause one TO perish for his sins -- to be alienated from God and to miss Heaven eternally!

F. (▶) Submitting To False Teachers Causes God’s People To Reject Truth!

1. Gal. 3:1 “O foolish Galatians! **Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth**, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?”

2. Paul had earlier stated: “I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, ⁷which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. ⁸But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. ⁹As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.” Gal. 1:6-9
 3. Truth is precious and freeing; if we follow false teachers, we will be accursed!
- G. (▶) Sinners Should Find A Convenient Season To Repent And Turn To Christ!
1. Paul spoke pointedly to Felix about his sin, need to repent, and to turn to God!
 2. Ac. 24:25 “Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, ‘Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you.’”
 3. He should have obeyed when he was pricked; however, delay put off that decision; as far as we know, he never found that “convenient season.”

IV. (Slide #5) Do What You CAN Do!

- A. Don’t Live In Neglect, Doubt, Shame, Or Procrastination -- Do What You Can Do NOW!
- B. (▶) Ex. 2:1-3 “And a man of the house of Levi went and took *as wife* a daughter of Levi. ²So the woman conceived and bore a son. And when she saw that he *was* a beautiful *child*, she hid him three months. ³But **when she could no longer hide him, she took an ark of bulrushes for him**, daubed it with asphalt and pitch, put the child in it, **and laid it in the reeds by the river’s bank.**”
- C. (▶) The woman who anointed Jesus’ head: Mk. 14:8 “**She has done what she could.** She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial.”
- D. (▶) The Four Friends Of The Paralytic! Lk. 5:18-20 “¹⁸Then behold, men brought on a bed a man who was paralyzed, whom they sought to bring in and lay before Him. ¹⁹And **when they could not find how they might bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the housetop and let him down with his bed through the tiling into the midst before Jesus.** ²⁰When He saw their faith, He said to him, ‘Man, your sins are forgiven you.’”

- E. (▶) Jer. 20:8,9 “⁸For when I spoke, I cried out; I shouted, ‘Violence and plunder!’ Because the word of the LORD was made to me A reproach and a derision daily. ⁹Then I said, ‘I will not make mention of Him, Nor speak anymore in His name.’ But *His word* was in my heart like a burning fire Shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding *it* back, **And I could not.**”

V. (Slide #6) Do What You WANT To Do!

- A. Don’t Live In Neglect, Doubt, Shame, Or Procrastination -- Do What You Want To Do NOW!
- B. (▶) Ps. 81:13 “Oh, that My people would listen to Me, That Israel **would** walk in My ways!”
- C. (▶) Ps. 119:57 “*You are* my portion, O LORD; I have said that I **would** keep Your words.”
- D. (▶) Jn. 8:42 “Jesus said to them, ‘If God were your Father, you **would** love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me.’”
- E. (▶) I Thess. 2:12 “that you **would** walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.”

VI. (Slide #7) Do What You SHOULD Do!

- A. Don’t Live In Neglect, Doubt, Shame, Or Procrastination -- Do What You Should Do NOW!
- B. (▶) Eph. 1:4 “just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we **should** be holy and without blame before Him in love,”
- C. (▶) Eph. 2:10 “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we **should** walk in them.”

- D. (▶) Phil. 2:9-11 “Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹and *that* every tongue **should** confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”
- E. (▶) Tit. 2:12 “teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we **should** live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,”
- F. (▶) Tit. 3:7 “that having been justified by His grace we **should** become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”
- G. (Slide #8) Ac. 24:25 “Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, ‘Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you.’”
1. Paul spoke pointedly to Felix about his sin, need to repent, and to turn to God!
 2. Felix decided to wait for a convenient season!
 3. He should have obeyed when he was pricked; however, delay put off that decision; as far as we know, he never found that “convenient season.”
 4. Christian, do you need to repent?
 - a. Every Christian can remember times when we “Coulda”, “Woulda”, and “Shoulda”! What a reminder of how much we need God’s mercy and grace!
 1. “Lord, please be patient with me!”
 2. “Forgive me!”
 - b. Many Christians who have become unfaithful will say, “I am planning to be restored soon!” How terrible to die without repenting and to be haunted eternally in torment of Hades an’ “Shoulda”! WHY didn’t I do it?”
 5. Sinner, you need to be a Christian!!!
 - a. Many of you KNOW what to do, but like Felix, have delayed!
 - b. Imagine dying in sin and constantly thinking in Torment of Hades, “I was going to become a Christian! Oh, I “Coulda”, “Woulda”, and “Shoulda”!
 - c. Imagine being in Hell forever thinking, “What was wrong with me? Why didn’t I become a Christian? Oh, I “Coulda”, “Woulda”, and “Shoulda”!
 - d. Come to Christ today!

6. II Cor 6:2 “For He says: *‘In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you.’* Behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.”
7. Think about the words of the Invitation Song: “Tomorrow May Be Too Late!”