

## “THE THREE CHAIRS”

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**INTRODUCTION - THE THREE CHAIRS:** Describes spiritual drift or test of passion for God.

This principle is seen best in what happened in the generation that follows Joshua in the Old Testament. Joshua 24:14-15 contains Joshua’s farewell message to Israel.

*“Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and **serve the Lord**. And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, **choose this day whom you will serve**, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. **But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.**”* (Illustrated by the First Chair)

Joshua 24:31 and Judges 2:7 explain what happened in the next generation. (The Second Chair)

*“Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua and **had known all the work that the Lord did for Israel.**”*

*“And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who **had seen all the great work that the Lord had done for Israel.**”*

Judges 2:10-12 reveals what happened in the third generation. (Illustrated by the Third Chair)

*“And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died at the age of 110 years. And they buried him within the boundaries of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of the mountain of Gaash. And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord or the work that he had done for Israel.”*

### **The First Chair:**

**Person** \_\_\_\_\_ **Relationship with the Lord** – Knows God first-hand; Saw miracles.

**Key Characteristics:** \_\_\_\_\_ - Personal Relationship with God - \_\_\_\_\_

**Result:** \_\_\_\_\_ - Whole-hearted for God – Confesses sin - \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary motivating question:** What does God think?

**Bible:** The Word of God; It is a Life-Giving book; Meditate on it. Build my life on it.

**God:** A Personal Friend; A deep relationship with Jesus; Worships and depends on God.

**Prayer:** An unending, daily, deeply personal conversation with God.

“One thing Christianity can never be is moderately important.” CS Lewis

There’s a huge difference between interest and commitment. When you’re interested in something you will do it only when it is convenient. When you’re committed to something, there are no excuses, only action!

## **The Second Chair:**

**Person** \_\_\_\_\_ **Relationship with the Lord** – Knows God second-hand; About miracles.

**Key Characteristics:** \_\_\_\_\_ - Responsibility / Religion - \_\_\_\_\_

**Result:** \_\_\_\_\_ - Half-hearted for God – Compromise beliefs - \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary motivating question:** What do people think?

**Bible:** A good book; relative to my situation; helpful; brings comfort but not conviction; Read it

**God:** Know God as Savior; a religious relationship through Church/doctrine not as a person.

**Prayer:** A ritual for Church or meal, or difficult situations; Rarely private and personal.

The safest road to hell is the gradual one - the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts. C. S. Lewis

*They followed and worshiped various gods of the peoples around them. Judges 2:12*

Think: A SLIDING SCALE of spiritual connection to God.

## **The Third Chair:**

**Person** \_\_\_\_\_ **Relationship with the Lord** – No knowledge/experience with God.

**Key Characteristics:** \_\_\_\_\_ - God not worth following; Go with the flow - \_\_\_\_\_

**Result:** \_\_\_\_\_ - No heart for God – Rejects wise counsel - \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary motivating question:** What do I think?

**Bible:** An ancient relic from another culture and time; the Bible is irrelevant – Ignore it.

**God:** Pretty much ignores God and doesn't want to be talked to or bothered with Him.

**Prayer:** Does not believe in or practice prayer, except in dire emergencies.

Galatians 5:22-23 (Message) *“What happens when we live God’s way? He brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard—things like affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity. We develop a willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people. We find ourselves involved in loyal commitments, not needing to force our way in life, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely.”*

## **Your next step:**

First Chair: Remain committed, faithful and in a daily personal relationship with Jesus!

Second Chair: Re-evaluate your relationship with God. Decide to move to the First Chair!

Third Chair: Repent and turn back to Jesus. Determine to get into the First Chair!