What will You Choose?

Pastor Dave Barker

 The political firestorm over Hillary Rosen’s comments about Ann Romney is going to be, sadly, the par for the course for the upcoming presidential election. Outrage over spiteful, personal attacks only promise to deafen our ears. But here, I want to look a little deeper at the target of this firestorm – the emotions and priorities of women in the United States.

 Hillary Rosen was on television responding to a statement Mitt Romney had strategically made which was, to the effect, that he listens to and respects the opinion of his wife when it comes to women’s issues in the country. Ms. Rosen was, then, trying to make the point that Ann Romney was a poor source for such information and that Mitt Romney was demonstrating an introversion and naiveté by getting such information from his wife on the grounds that she “never worked a day in her life”. This implied that Mrs. Romney had always been “cared for” by the wealth of her husband and, also, that by staying at home, Mrs. Romney had no idea of the pressures and challenges faced by women who work outside the home.

 Mrs. Romney responded the next day and had clearly been coached and prepped well in order to make the most of this juicy opportunity. First, she responded graciously in spirit, reaching out to Ms. Rosen as a fellow woman; and then she proceeded to defend herself by repeatedly and constantly using the word “choice” – “I chose”, “my choice”, “a woman’s right to choose”. Mrs. Romney succeeded in beating Ms. Rosen at her own game.

 “Choice” continues to be the magic, political word to get the attention of an entire generation of women. It’s a flattering word, a hypnotic word that is constantly being used to draw women in and encourage them to rationally excuse the temptation of the heart to live only by self-centered desires and that everything and everyone else must submit to such “choices”.

 “Choice” started much earlier, of course, with the push for a woman’s right to vote. But it became a veritable mantra of this generation with the introduction of the Pill and the Supreme Court decision regarding Roe v. Wade in 1973. Ever since, not only do all women, we’re told, have the “right to choose”, but that “real women only choose independence – in the bedroom, in the home, in the workplace – and heaven help the one – male or female – who opposes that sovereignty of choice or the woman who does not choose “correctly”.

 I see how Christian women, and the girls we are raising within the church, can also be lured and drawn in by the siren song of self-centered “choice”. Now, I am not against people of either sex having the freedom to make choices in their lives. We not only have to but want to make many determinations for ourselves without coercion. But therein lies the insidiousness of this lie. When “choice”, which is something we must exercise from to time, becomes our number one priority, our number one definition of ourselves, we have forsaken the very meaning of being a Christian and what a Christian’s duty in life truly is to be – to respond to, submit to and obey the will of the Lord in all parts of our lives. Self-denial, not self-determination, is what should characterize the Christian’s life and lifestyle and that with an eagerness and willingness on the part of both the Christian man and woman.

 Beyond that is the true sense of priority, identity and meaning of life that the Scriptures give us rather than we give ourselves. I cannot say that parenthood is described as a “calling” as such, but Scripture clearly emphasizes a high priority and duty to the raising of children in the home; of not only providing for them but raising them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and not only of teaching them a religion but of drawing them to make a profession of faith themselves. These are high and holy priorities, charged to every generation, for they are meant and aimed not only at fulfilling the lives of the individuals but of building a community that is stronger for it. The strength of commitment in marriage, the continuity of the family, the clear witness and influence of the church, and the integrity of the nation all depend on Christians answering the voice of the Lord.

 None of those things are strengthened, however, when a woman only responds to the enticing words that tell her she is the most important person on earth, that she should be absolutely free to make her own choices in all parts of her life, and that nothing will ever be more important than her own sense of self-fulfillment. Nothing, literally nothing, is strengthened by such “choice”. Instead, it is all doomed to failure.