The Gospel of Luke records two encounters of Jesus with wealthy men. The encounters reveal that each one met Jesus personally, and both had the challenge of making an important decision involving their possessions. Here is what happened.

The first, a man known as “the rich young ruler,” respectfully approached Jesus. Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” (Luke 18:18). After a brief discussion Jesus confronted him. “You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was a man of great wealth (Luke 18:22-23).

Jesus’ second encounter was with Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector and was wealthy (Luke 19:2). When Jesus passed through Jericho, he saw Zacchaeus and invited himself to Zacchaeus’ home for dinner. Luke records Zacchaeus’ response to the visit. But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.” Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham (Luke 19:8-9).

What a difference in the decisions they made. One man could not give up his allegiance to material things, walked away from Jesus and off the pages of history. The second listened to Jesus and willingly decided that he should follow Him and become a generous giver.

When you are confronted with making a decision and are hesitant which way to decide, think about the results if everyone followed the way you are considering. If your decision should become a universal pattern, would it bring happiness or unhappiness, help others or hurt them?

Using that advice which of the two men is more appealing today? Which one was wise in his decision? Which response made a difference for good?

Listening to Jesus will always lead to wise giving –

- giving yourself more fully to Him that through you He can bless others and
- giving money generously to support the ministries of your church.

Make a wise decision and listen to Jesus. Become a generous giver!