

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

Toward Sound Decision-Making, Pt 3

Selected Passages

Keywords: Decision-Making, God's Will, Prayer, Word of God, Wisdom, Counsel

PowerPoint Presentation included: NONE

SermonAudio Blurb: Having examined several common methods in decision-making for Christians Pastor Henry now seeks to establish a basic paradigm for decisions. This process is established in the Word and moves out from there, resting on the sufficiency of Scripture coupled with the freedom given to us in Jesus Christ.

I. Introduction.

A. Finally we come to the time where we can

II. Basics of Decision-Making.

A. Scripture.

1. This means the imperatives of the bible. And at the core of this is what you believe, really believe regarding the bible.
 - a. Psalm 19.
 - b. Psalm 119.
 - (1) Psalm 119:89 Forever, O LORD, Thy word is settled in heaven.
 - (2) Psalm 119:105 Thy word is a lamp to my feet, And a light to my path.
 - (3) Psalm 119:140 Thy word is very pure, Therefore Thy servant loves it.
 - (4) Psalm 119:160 The sum of Thy word is truth, And every one of Thy righteous ordinances is everlasting.
 - c. It goes back to the essence of the message in Deuteronomy 29:29.
2. The very first step in making a decision is to ask if you are in obedience to what God has revealed as commands in the bible.
 - a. First, remember you are not Israel and your are not under the Mosaic Law.

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- b. Second, be very careful to keep your decision-making verses in their contexts when you consider Old Testament texts. Often you will find that they will not have the application you thought they did.
 - c. Third, therefore, focus on the New Testament and its commands.
 - d. Fourth, remember to keep your commands and promises in the New Testament within their proper context. Example is Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." Speaks to the ability to be content in whatever situation the Lord places Paul.
3. Simple principle: Don't think you will make good decisions while you are actively rebelling or resisting what God has already shown you.
 4. Be busy in practicing what God has clearly revealed to you as to His will.
 - a. MacArthur's *Found! God's Will* simple argument that if we will invest a life pursuing what God has clearly revealed then our desires will naturally bend toward a life pleasing to Him.
 - b. Matthew 6:25ff.
 - (1) What the Lord desires of us is not to wonder if this house or that house is His will.
 - (2) He desires that we order our decisions under the idea of His Kingdom (which is not yet) and to express His righteousness, or faithfulness, in this world.
 - c. 1 Thessalonians 4:3.
 - d. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.
 - e. Colossians 1:9.
 - (1) Filled here speaks of being to a fullness. It is a maturing in our knowledge of God's will. You can think of saturation as well if that is helpful.
 - (2) Notice the realm in which this occurs, wisdom and understanding.
 - (3) vs 10 then gives the goal, "worthy of the Lord," which is defined in three ways.
- B. Wisdom.
1. This is a knowledge of Scripture and how to skillfully apply it to your life in every area.

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2. 2 Peter 1:3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.
 3. Proverbs 2:1-6.
 - a. Note the "if-then" construction.
 - b. There is an attitude here of desiring wisdom and therefore ordering your life in line with the commands of God (tier one).
 - (1) Notice how vss 7ff show that wisdom is stored up for the upright ones.
 - (2) This is not merely nice thoughts about being in God's will. It is a life that is lived daily under a conscious awareness of God's sovereign, glorious rule and that I walk under His gaze.
 - (3) Or, if you wish, being God-centered in all that you do.
 - c. See how in vss 12-22 we are rescued from so much folly that can dog our steps if we attend our hearts to pursue God.
 4. Too many believers possess a level of Biblical knowledge but have no real idea how to skillfully handle it.
 - a. What also stuns me over and over again is that the very same people who are disobedient to God's revealed will, or handle it very clumsily at best, are the ones who seem to best discern the "hidden" will of God!"
 - b. This is what the book of Proverbs would call a fool or one who is wicked.
 5. Beloved, be busy with the known, revealed will of God. Be men and women who yearn to walk wisely. When you are well trained in those two things, then, and only then will the next couple of steps come easily and filled with joy.
- C. Purposeful Freedom.
1. Matthew 22:37-40
 2. 1 Corinthians 6:12.
 3. 1 Corinthians 10:23-24.
 4. Galatians 5:13.

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D. Desire.

1. With God's glory in mind.
2. When other people would not be affected negatively.
3. Held loosely, not clung to jealously. It is not demanding its "rights."
4. Don't try to read into things. Sometimes the wise way is very hard and costly. Sometimes it is broad and easy.
5. Don't create a false dichotomy between spiritual and secular.
6. When you make a decision, hold onto it lightly and be prepared to change it as you see more insight or conditions change. Don't get stuck in the thought that once a decision is made that you can't change your mind.
7. Keep in mind and approach with care decisions that set in motion long-term effects. Marriage, children, moves, career choices, and education decisions can end up being costly if you just wander around without care.

E. Process.

1. Use good tools—Bible concordance, topical Bible (use care here), language and historical helps.
2. Note direct principles/statements within Scripture.
 - a. Are there any direct principles/statements in Scripture concerning this particular issue?
 - (1) Marry an unbeliever?
 - (2) Church discipline?
 - (3) My boss asking me to lie?
 - (4) Using critical, cutting language?
 - b. Be exhaustive in your research. Don't stop too soon.
3. Note indirect principles/statements within Scripture.
 - a. Are there any indirect principles in Scripture concerning this particular issue?
 - (1) Watch television?
 - (2) What I watch on television?

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- (3) Music?
 - (4) What church I attend?
 - b. Think, think, think—what is all that is involved in this issue?
 - c. Ask other godly individuals for Scriptural input.
4. Purposeful Freedom.
 - a. Questions to ask yourself.
 - (1) Is there anything wrong with this activity? Is it lawful?
 - (2) Is it self-serving at the expense of someone else's benefit?
 - (3) Is this something I can thank God for?
 - (4) Is this something that will bring God glory?
 - (5) Is this something worth imitating?
 - (6) Is this following the example of Jesus Christ?
 - (7) Will my choice affect others around me? If so, in what way?
 - (8) Will it promote my spiritual life?
 - (9) Is it a practice that may over time master me? Will it stimulate a desire that will be difficult to control?
 - (10) Will it promote the spiritual walk of others, especially if they practice it too?
 - b. Read illustration of “Adam and Eve.”
5. Desires.
 - a. If other people are not a concern, what would I like to do (remember that all should be to God's glory)?
 - b. Is this an occasion where my “flesh” (sinful) is seeking to indulge itself? Don't be deceived, know where you are weak.
 - c. Read illustration of “chauffeur driver.”
6. If you still can't decide.

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- a. Romans 14:23 applies if it involves your conscience. This is the “holding principle.”
 - (1) Romans 14:23 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.
- b. Gather more data—start over.

Small Group Questions

- Was this helpful and if so how?
- If you find yourself still stuck regarding decisions throw them out to the group and in light of this sermon discuss how you might approach the decision.
- Discuss how this sermon affected those who heard it.
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