



Your Decision Determines Your Destiny

(Effective Leadership Requires Making Wise Decisions)

Lesson 1: Conditions, Choices & Gray Areas

The Big Idea:

*"I call heaven and earth to witness against you today,
that I have set before you life and death, blessing and the curse.
Therefore, choose life that you may live, you and your descendants."
Deuteronomy 30:19*

Following God's Purpose

*"Now, therefore, fear the Lord and serve Him in sincerity and truth;
and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the river and Egypt, and serve the Lord.
And if it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord,
choose for yourselves today whom you will serve;
whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the river,
or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living;
but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.
And the people answered and said, '... We will also serve the Lord.'"
Joshua 24:14-21*

The Bible is clear about two fundamental truths. First, God is sovereign. He reigns providentially over earth and its history. Second, He has allowed us to choose whether we cooperate with Him in our leadership or not. The prophet Jonah is a great example of both of these truths. He freely choose to run from God's purposes. However, God ultimately persuaded him to return and fulfill His purposes in the end. In this series of lessons, we will examine the art of decision-making and how it affects not only our own lives, but the lives of those who follow us.

◆ Leader's Notes ◆
PRAY! PRAY! PRAY!

A Question to Consider:

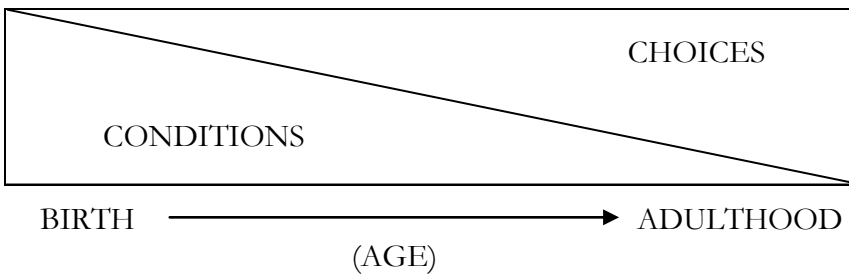
What makes decisions difficult to make?



Conclusions About Our Choices

1. Leaders bring _____ to a point of decision.
2. In some areas, we have no _____.
3. In some areas we do have a _____.
4. We are _____ to make right choices.
5. The _____ we make right choices the better.
6. Leaders make choices _____.
7. A leader's choices _____ others.

Choices vs. Conditions



In our early years, our life is determined mainly by our conditions. A baby does not choose his family or environment. But as his age increases, so do his options. The difference between the conditions and choices is as follows:

Conditions

Choices

◆ Leader's Notes ◆

1. People
2. Choice
3. Choice
4. Responsible
5. Sooner
6. First
7. Influence

Conditions:
 Early in Life
 Involuntary
 Others Choose for Us
 We React

Choices:
 Later in Life
 Voluntary
 We Choose
 for Ourselves
 We Initiate



Decision Making in the Gray Areas - 1 Corinthians 10:24-33

24 Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor. 25 Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience. 26 For "the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof." 27 If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. 28 But if someone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience - 29 I do not mean your conscience, but his. For why should my liberty be determined by someone else's conscience? 30 If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks? 31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. 32 Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, 33 just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved.

Leaders regularly face choices that affect not only their own lives, but many others. What's more, many of these decisions have no clear answer; they do not appear black and white, but gray. So, how does a leader make good decisions in the gray areas? Paul describes a system for making tough decisions like this:

1. _____

Leaders must not make decisions based on what benefits them most. The term "others" in this Scripture refers to people who are "unlike you." They are different and are not likely to see the issue as you do. Leaders must choose what is best for others, not what appeals to their own tastes.

Ask yourself: Who will benefit most from this decision?

2. _____

Does this decision glorify God or someone else? Paul would agree with the shorter catechism, "the chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." All big decisions should somehow bring honor to God.

Ask yourself: Does this decision give people a better picture of who God is?

3. _____

The ultimate purpose for our being here on earth is to bring others to Christ. While leaders may have many small goals, this is the ultimate goal. We must always move toward fulfilling this mission.

Ask yourself: Will this decision please God and fulfill His purposes?

◆ Leader's Notes ◆

1. Prioritize God's People

2. Pursue God's Glory

3. Perceive God's Purpose



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A Thought to Ponder:

*The loneliest place in leadership is reserved
for the person who makes the first decision.
The leader who will not make decisions
creates insecurity among followers and
a platform for potential leaders who recognize a decision must be made.*

What Difference Would It Make:

*What difference would it make in your leadership
if you were willing to step out and make the necessary decisions?*

◆ *Leader's Notes* ◆



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Lesson 2: Process and Principles for Decision Making

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A Question to Consider:

*What is one decision you face that you feel
you don't have the wisdom to make?*

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A Process for Decision Making - James 1:1-8

*James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,
To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings.*

*² Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,
³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.*

⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. ⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

In James 1:1-8, we read three-step process for making decisions. James tells us what to do if we lack wisdom yet face an important choice. Here are his three steps:

1. _____ (v. 2-4)

We can find joy in the midst of problems only when we recognize their purpose and results. The key is perspective. Leaders must think correctly about problems. They must see them from God's perspective so that their followers grow stronger through them.

2. _____ (v. 5)

God gives us struggles so that we will lack nothing in the end. James says, however, that if we lack wisdom, we should ask God for it. It is not sign of weakness for a leader to pray for wisdom when facing problems or big decisions.

3. _____ (v. 6-8)

If we ask God for wisdom, we must ask in faith, expecting His answer. Once leaders gain perspective and trust God for wisdom, the only things left to do is to anticipate solutions and express optimism.

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1. Contemplation

2. Supplication

3. Anticipation



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Principles on Decision Making

Read each of the following principles on making decisions and make note of any thoughts that come to mind. Do you agree with the principle? Do you need to work on applying it in your life?

1. Choice, not chance determines my _____.
2. To choose not to decide is to choose to let _____ control my life.
3. To choose to decide is to take _____.
4. Indecision is the mark of a _____ mind.
5. Decisiveness is the mark of a _____.
6. Followers can live without certainty, but they cannot live without _____.

◆ *Leader's Notes* ◆

1. Destiny

2. Someone Else

3. Responsibility

4. Fearful

5. Leader

6. Clarity



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Principles on Decision Making (cont.)

Read each of the following principles on making decisions and make note of any thoughts that come to mind. Do you agree with the principle? Do you need to work on applying it in your life?

7. The leader who _____ on perfect knowledge before he decides, never decides.

8. Decisions _____ energy, insight, commitment an support.

9. The larger the group of followers, the greater the _____ to conform.

10. Great people are ordinary people who make extraordinary _____.

11. Decisions should be made at the _____ level possible in an organization.

12. Success is not for the chosen few, but for those who _____.

◆ *Leader's Notes* ◆

7. Insists

8. Release

9. Pressure

10. Decisions

11. Lowest

12. Choose



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A Thought to Ponder:

What decisions in your leadership do you hesitate to make?

Why do you hesitate?

What Difference Would It Make:

List two action steps you can take to make better decisions.

*What difference would it make
if you were intentional about making those steps?*

◆ *Leader's Notes* ◆



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Lesson 3: Phases of Decision Making

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Question to Consider:

How do you make decisions?

◆ Leader's Notes ◆
PRAY! PRAY! PRAY!



Six Phases of Decision Making

◆ Leader's Notes ◆

1. _____ - What is the history?

1. Foundation Stage

This is where you study to understand what has gone on before you arrived, and what is underneath the structure for which you are trying to make decisions. What have been the struggles in this organization? What have been the victories? What is the organizational culture? Why is it this way? What are the peoples' goals and expectations?

2. _____ - What are the facts?

2. Fact Stage

This is where you gather all the facts and information available for give you insight concerning the situation. Often there are at least two sides to every issue; be sure to discover what's behind both sides of an issue. Your investigation will help you get beyond intuition and guesswork. You will have hard data to use in the decision making process.

3. _____ - What are the emotions?

3. Feedback Stage

This is where you ask for feedback from the people involved to hear where their heart is. They will give you insight about both the situation and about how much the people are willing to give themselves to the decision. Effective leaders read their people before they lead their people.

4. _____ - What is the wise choice?

4. Focus Stage

This is the key question to all decision making. Proverbs tells us that wisdom cries out in the streets . . . But few listen. When we are forced to make a decision, God's wisdom almost always surfaces when we simply pose the question: what is the wise choice? The greatest difficulty in making decisions is not *knowing* the right decision but in *making* it.

At this point, you make a decision.



Six Phases of Decision Making (cont.)

5. _____ - How can this decision bear fruit and be successful?

This is where you focus on the problems that can hinder the decision and the procedure of communicating the decision to others. Once you determine the direction you believe is best, you need to think through possible obstacles and how to communicate with those who need to know. Successful leaders address potential problems before the followers ask.

6. _____ - When do we move?

This is when you stop talking about doing something and you act. You determine the right time to move forward and take a step. You are no longer wrestling with what step to take, but simply when to take it. Remember these important truths:

- A. The wrong decision at the wrong time = _____
- B. The wrong decision at the right time = _____
- C. The right decision at the wrong time = _____
- D. The right decision at the right time = _____

◆ Leader's Notes ◆

5. Fruit Stage

6. Forward Stage

A. Disaster

B. Mistake

C. Unacceptable

D. Success

A Thought to Ponder:

*A CEO of a major international corporation once said:
"95% of the decisions you make as a leader can be made
by a reasonably intelligent teenager.
They simply require common sense.
However, you get paid for the other 5%."*

What Difference Would It Make:

*What difference would it make
if you followed the six phases of decision making
when faced with a decision in your life and leadership?*