

## Nearer Heaven in 2007 Applying Wisdom in My Decisions

**Intro: Our life is filled with decisions. Everyday we make hundreds of them. Some of them are big, some little. Some are almost automatic; some deliberate. Some are made for us (by bosses or parents); some are made solely by ourselves.**

**Some of our decisions are ultimately trivial; but some are so important that they deserve careful thought and planning. However, we should also recognize that seemingly insignificant decisions can also be very important. In fact, choosing wisely in the little things can assure us that the big decisions we make will be the right kind.**

**Daily godly living requires that we apply wisdom in our decision-making. But how do we do this?**

**What are we doing when making decisions?**

*The English word "decide" is derived from the Latin meaning, "a cutting short", or "to cut from". The word "decide" is a cousin to other familiar English words like "incisor" or "scissors". All of these words have not parted far from their original root conveying the idea of cutting away. That's what decision is all about; it is eliminating many possibilities leaving us with a single choice or the best possible choice. This is a very enlightening definition and it tells us a lot about what goes in the decision-making process.*

*It also helps us to see that some procedure or some standard must be applied to act as the "scissors" in order to "cut down to size" the many choices that we are daily faced with so that we are left with the right one. What criterion shall we use to make the cuts?*

We can do what everybody else does/tells us. When a person makes a decision on what everyone else is doing, he is using a pretty poor scissors for decision making. Following the majority can be a path to destruction:

*Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it.  
(Matthew 7:13)*

Some people use the opposite approach. They will be their "own man"; but in reality they are simply living in rebellion against the authority of parents or government, allowing their anger or rebellion to become the scissors by which they make decisions. That too can be disastrous.

*There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death. (Proverbs 14:12)*

The only real solution is to let God direct our decision-making.

*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction. (Proverbs 1:7)*

## How we can make the best decision?

### *Seek wisdom from God's word*

Become more familiar with the whole of God's word so that a word from God is available when decisions are needed.

Compare Jesus' recall of Scripture, "It is written".

*But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'" (Matthew 4:4)*

Learn from the experiences of others in Scripture

*Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. (1 Corinthians 10:11)*

*Learn from those who made bad decisions*

We could all learn an important lesson from Lot who decided to get too close to the wicked environment of Sodom and Gomorrah and not experienced the daily vexation of their ungodliness, but lost his wife as the result of the influences of city life.

We could all learn an important lesson from Peter who allowed his pride to keep him from watching and praying at a critical time and left him too weak to resist the temptation to deny the Lord.

*Learn from those who made good decisions*

We could learn from Mary who chose to sit at Jesus' feet and learn from him while she had the opportunity. (Lk. 10:28-42).

Seek specific information from the Scripture on areas where decisions are needed

*Is there not yet a prophet of the Lord here, that we may inquire of him? (1 Kings 22:7)*

There is no important decision that you will make in life that the word of God will have something to say about that subject.

*Whom should we decide to befriend?*

*Whom should we decide to marry?*

*What should we decide for a career?*

Find out what God's word says about it and use it as the scissors to cut away bad options and find the best option.

### *Seek wisdom in prayer*

Solomon at an important moment recognized his lack of wisdom and prayed for God to guide him.

*And now, O Lord my God, Thou hast made Thy servant king in place of my father David, yet I am but a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. And Thy servant is in the midst of Thy people which Thou hast chosen, a great people who cannot be numbered or counted for multitude. So give Thy servant an understanding heart to judge Thy*

*people to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Thine? (1 Kings 3:7-9)*

James urges us to do the same:

*But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. (James 1:5)*

Look at your unfolding circumstances and see what God in His providence is doing and how he may be answering your request. God's answer may come in doors opened and doors shut.

### ***Seek wisdom in wise people***

Rehoboam made the mistake of asking the wrong people and paid dearly for it.

*But he forsook the counsel of the elders which they had given him, and consulted with the young men who grew up with him and served him. (1 Kings 12:8)*

Paul thought Christians had available people of good judgment to deal with problems among Christians and he urged them to solve their problem among themselves rather than take them before unbelievers. *Is it so, that there is not among you one wise man who will be able to decide between his brethren...? (1 Corinthians 6:5).*

The value of conferring with others even after taking with God is made necessary by the fact that we may incorrectly equate our selfish desires with strong impressions of God's leading. Bouncing our idea off of others who can be more objective protects us from subjective self-delusion.

### ***Decide!***

Cut away anything motivated by selfishness or pride.

Cut away anything unauthorized by the principles of Scripture.

Cut away what is strongly advised against by wiser people.

Cut away possible doors closed by providence.

Cut away what does not glorify God.

Look for your best option based on what you've learned.

And remember: No moral decision is inconsequential. We need to remember that big decisions often are made by the little decisions we make. Choosing who we marry is a big decision that can be made wiser by the little decisions we make like: 1) choosing good friends; 2) being active in the Lord's work; 3) staying away from setting that would encourage sin

### **How can we do what we've decided?**

***Knowing the right thing to do and doing it are two different matters. You can know where to make the cuts and then not make them.***

***A good decision depends not only on wisdom to know the right thing to do but upon courage to do it!***

We must have the courage to overcome our selfishness.

We must have the courage to conquer our desire for convenience.

We must have the courage to stand alone.  
We need the courage to face the consequences of our actions.

**Conclusion: A godly life requires that we make good decisions. Read, pray, confer with wise people and then boldly choose the right course.**

**The greatest decision you'll ever make is the one to serve the Lord and obey His Son Jesus Christ. Joshua, God's ancient prophet, urged his fellow-Jews to make this important decision:**

*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 in 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. (Joshua 24:14-15)*