

Biblical Decision Making Process

Pastor Marvin R. Barham

It is important for us to responsibly employ the capabilities God has given. God said He would meet our every need and provide. As I have said before, the question then begs an answer as to “What we define as a need in comparison to what God defines as a need.” **God sees your needs as that which is required for you to fulfill His purposes.** If God will meet my every need and knows my needs even before I, am I then to simply set back in leisure and wait on it to fall out of the sky? Is this what it means to wait upon the Lord? God forbid. **God gave to man the gift of labor. Along with the gifts and provisions of God come responsibilities.** In fact in **Heb:5:14** we are told, “*But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use (practice) have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*” What does he mean “by reason of use or practice”? What is the implication here? It is that there is a responsibility on your part to do something.

Everything in your life, good or bad, God wants us to learn something through it. Every desire or idea God puts in your spirit or mind is God trying to speak to you or get you to fulfill something for Him. Sometimes God does not want to simply give you the easy way out. **The easy way is not always the way of wisdom gained.** We have made the Christian walk and the spiritual things of God all about our ease and comfort of living.

If many Christians truly had the spiritual supernatural power that is potentially available they would be dangerous. They would go around healing everything, raising everyone from the dead, praying for everything to be fixed and everyone be richly blessed and what they would ultimately do is make a big mess of many things and actually become a detriment. People who needed to learn stewardship and responsibility would never do it. Those who needed to work would quit.

With every gift, promise, and provision of God comes responsibility. Just having the authority alone is not enough. **There are situations and times in life where God wants you to figure it out, learn and grow from it.** Maybe you prayed for God to fix your washing machine and instead of fixing it He is trying to teach you patience. Maybe instead of fixing your car, He wants you to trust Him to provide for something better. This is not to say that there are not times in desperation that God does not want you to employ the authority of the supernatural that He may even increase your faith and obedience in even His wondrous supernatural ability to provide manna as well. **The issue comes down to growing beyond a religiously superficial authority to a mature wisdom of supernatural authority.** This is a lesson God seeks for us to learn before He gives you the gifts of supernatural intervention. Often we are saying God fix this and God is saying, no, utilize the brain I gave you.

So many Christians blame the devil or others for their situation or circumstance. So many question as to why God does not do something or why God allowed them to get in a mess. Most often it is not the devil, others, or even God. It is easy to say, well God must be trying to teach me something all the while God is saying, no. I want you to do something about your situation that you got yourself into. **All too often, these messes are simply the result of poor decision making. We often say, God get me out of this mess and God is saying, learn to make better choices.**

Let's look at what the Word of God says about your God given ability to think, know wisdom, and make decisions:

Jas:1:8: A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

M't:10:16: Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

Col:4:5: Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.

Jas:1:5: If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

Jos:24:15: And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will

serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

Job:34:4: Let us choose to us judgment: let us know among ourselves what is good.

Psalms:25:12: What man is he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.

Psalms:65:4: Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.

Proverb:1:29: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD:

Proverb:3:31: Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways.

Isa:7:15: Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.

I am often astounded as I counsel with people about the situation they are in and the choices that got them there. What I have discovered is that many simply do not follow a good decision making process. Most make decisions simply based on their emotions, out of crises or desperation, out of want. Many make ill informed or completely uninformed decisions. Many simply leave the decision up to someone else or they choose to make no decision at all which ultimately is a choice in itself.

Again, referring to Hebrews 5 the writer speaks of those who by reason of practice have their senses trained. Just as this applies to the spiritual gifts it also is an applicable principle to good decision making. The more you practice and employ good decision making principles the more wisdom you gain thus improving your decision making and the more confident you become in the decisions you make. Notwithstanding that the foundation of your decisions are built line upon, precept upon precept, Biblical principle upon principle, of sound doctrine, and godly wisdom. In as such we can develop such decision making from personal experience, the experience of others, as well as knowledge gained.

I once studied a great commander who was before Napoleon. His name escapes me but his lesson I heeded. When asked how such a man of his stature and youth was able to conquer such greater armies than his own he replied, "I simply learned from their mistakes what they failed to learn. Their failure to learn from their mistakes and make better judgments became their weakness and my greatest strength."

This is one of many reasons God has given us so many examples of lives, situations, the choices they made, and the consequences that followed throughout Scripture.

Some examples of people God put in the place of decision:

- Abraham to leave his family and city.
- Moses to lead the people into the desert.
- Joshua to assume the leadership.
- David and Saul
- Peter to step out of the boat.
- Others

God gave you a brain - The Decision Making Process

1. **Recognize a decision needs to be made.** Am I at a point of decision or do I need to give more time, gain more understanding and information?
2. **Recognize where the authority lies to make the decision.** Is this decision really mine to make? Do I have delegated authority or am I overstepping my bounds?
3. **Identify the the root of the problem.** Is this a moral or ethical decision? Is this an issue of my heart, my thinking, my conduct? Is it an issue of opinion, perception, or principle?

4. **Analyze the problem and impacts.** Distinguish between faults, facts, and fiction. Distinguish between character and personality differences. Distinguish between assumptions and misconceptions or presuppositions. Distinguish between what is on the surface and looks like the problem and what is really at the root of the problem.
5. **Gather and analyze the information.** Ask questions of yourself and everything and everyone involved. Ask questions you did not ask before then ask again. Ask what is there you have not considered or what is there you do not know you do not know. Look at the situation from every angle and different perspectives then look again. Separate yourself from the problem and your emotions. Do not just gather information but make every effort to ensure you gather the right information then relate to the problem.
6. **Compare to other principles.** What principle are involved? What are the whats and whys? What sound Biblical principles, expectations and intents of God are being violated or contradicted in the situation. What wrong needs righted?
7. **Pray and seek confirmation.** Fast, pray, and seek godly counsel. **M't:18:16:** But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.
8. **Seek godly counsel. Psalms:1:1:** Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. So many in the church have often sought out ungodly counsel. The Scripture is clear here. It does not say do not seek counsel at all. If you are not seeking godly counsel it only leaves two other choices, 1. To seek no council at all or 2. Seek godly council. Would it be wise to seek no counsel at all? I think not. Nor would you seek legal counsel from your butcher or hair dresser. No more than it would be wise to take your car to your attorney to be repaired. In youth ministry I was often amazed at how young people would go to their peers for advice of live issues thus refusing or never considering going to an elder or someone of experience particularly in areas specific to their situations or point of decision that they could trust.
9. **Identify possible courses of action.** What are at least three if not more possible courses of action I could take? What resources do I have to work with? What possibilities have I not considered? What initiatives could I take? What are some long term and short term goals that could make a difference?
10. **Analyze courses of action.** What are some changes I need to make to impact the situations? You cannot keep doing things the same way and hope for a different outcome. If there is a problem something must be broke and there must be something that needs to change. What changes are relative to the situation and will make a difference and what difference will they make? What outcome am I really wanting and what am I willing to pay for it?
11. **Compare courses of action.** Weigh the ramifications or consequences of each possible course of action. If I do this what impact does it have on other people, things, etc. What other problems will it create? How will others interpret or respond if I do this? What will be the long term effects of this course of action and what will it ultimately end up costing me?
12. **Identify assumptions and facts.** What assumptions am I making about the situation, myself, and others. What assumptions am I making based on my perspective, opinions, and emotions? What is God's take on it? What can I identify as objective, factual truths verse what is left to interpretation and hear say?
13. **Identify and compare weighted criteria.** What is really important here? And what is of the highest priority?
14. **Make a decision and stick to it. Jas:1:8:** A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.



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6. There are situations and times in life where God wants you to figure it out, learn and grow from it.
7. The issue comes down to growing beyond a religiously superficial authority to a mature wisdom of supernatural authority.
8. All too often, these messes are simply the result of poor decision making. We often say, God get me out of this mess and God is saying, learn to make better choices.
9. Most make decisions simply based on their emotions, out of crises or desperation, out of want. Many make ill informed or completely uninformed decisions. Many simply leave the decision up to someone else or they choose to make no decision at all which ultimately is a choice in itself.
10. The more you practice and employ good decision making principles the more wisdom you gain thus improving your decision making and the more confident you become in the decisions you make. Notwithstanding that the foundation of your decisions are built line upon, precept upon precept, Biblical principle upon principle, of sound doctrine, and godly wisdom.

Steps to sound Biblical Decision Making:

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