



DEVOTIONAL

DECIDE | JANUARY 17, 2021

GRACE
FELLOWSHIP

Discussion Starter: How do you think through major decisions you make in life (Do you pray? Seek counsel? Just go with your “gut feelings”? etc.)? Why is this your approach?

Key Passage: “*And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.*” (Mark 12:30)

We learned in our last lesson that in Mark 12:30, Jesus was answering a question posed to Him by a scribe regarding which of God’s commandments is most important. Jesus’s response is recorded in verse 30: “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.*” By telling the people to love God with all their “*heart...soul...mind...strength*,” Jesus is saying that we are to love God with the totality of our being, and when we do so, we will be obeying all other commandments.

In today’s lesson, we’re focusing on what it means to love God with all of our soul and how to make decisions that are honoring to God. In His Word, God gives us counsel to guide us through decision-making steps.

Step #1: Pray for wisdom.

James 1:5 tells us, “*If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.*” Asking God for wisdom shows that we are trusting in Him for guidance. Notice that James assures us that God gladly and generously gives wisdom when we ask—He does not find fault with us when we ask.

Discuss: When have you experienced God’s wisdom when facing a major decision? How did it affect your decision?

Step #2: Pursue biblical wisdom.

Psalms 119:105 says, “*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.*” Like a lamp, God’s Word will illuminate the fog or darkness we may feel when we are facing a tough decision (v.105a); and like a light, God’s Word can guide us one step at a time along the path God wants us to take (v.105b). God’s guidance can be like driving a car at night. Our headlights never shine all the way to our destination; they illuminate only about 160 feet ahead. But that doesn’t stop us from moving forward. We trust our headlights. All we really need is enough light to keep moving forward. God’s Word is like headlights in dark times—the Holy Spirit uses the Word to guide us along the right path one step at a time. We’ll never stumble or take a wrong turn in the dark if we walk in the light of God’s Word.

Discuss: Why do you think God usually leads us one step at a time in our journey with Him rather than showing us our destination from the beginning?

Step #3: Seek godly counsel.

Proverbs 15:22 says, “*Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed.*” In addition to wisdom and guidance, God also provides other godly people who can help us when we don’t know what to do.

Discuss: What criteria do you look for in a friend whose counsel you will seek?

Discuss: What are some benefits of receiving counsel from others? What are some dangers?

Step #4: Obey God when He gives guidance.

We must be willing to obey when God gives us guidance. Sadly, some people say they want to know God’s will, but they really only plan to consider His way as one of many options. The Bible indicates that God already knows the deep things of our hearts—thus, He might not reveal His plan to a stubborn person who has no genuine intention of obeying. God gives His guidance as a command, not as an option (Proverbs 1:28–29).

Discuss: Why do you think some people—including some Christians—are reluctant to seek or obey God’s will?

Step #5: Make your decision and then trust God with it.

Once you have completed Steps #1-4, trust God with the outcome. Proverbs 3:5-6 says, “*Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.*” The phrase “*he will make straight your path*” gives the idea that God will do whatever is necessary to get you to where He wants you to be if you truly trust Him and obey Him.

Discuss: How would you counsel a new Christian to follow Proverbs 3:5-6?

Step #6: Make course adjustments as necessary.

If you make a mistake in a decision, be willing to admit it and change your course. Generally, there is no benefit or wisdom in continuing down a wrong path once you have realized it’s the wrong way. Proverbs 24:16 says, “*For the righteous falls seven times and rises again, but the wicked stumble in times of calamity.*”

Discuss: When have you made a wrong turn or faced a dead end, but the Lord helped you change toward a better direction?

For Further Study

Cure for the Common Life: Living in Your Sweet Spot by Max Lucado

Wisdom from Above by Charles Stanley

“How Can I Get Wisdom from God?” article at www.gotquestions.org