



# LESSON 5-4: Healthy Decision Making

## PARTNERING

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*“If we are together nothing is impossible. If we are divided all will fail.”-*  
Winston Churchill

*“A friendship founded on business is better than a business founded on friendship.” -*  
John D. Rockefeller

### WELCOME & PRAYER

### KICK OFF QUESTIONS

- List all of the partnerships that you have in life. Which ones failed and which ones succeeded? Why? (For purposes of this lesson, “partnership” is defined as spouses, friends, business associates, employers, managers, and co-workers)

### PRIMARY SCRIPTURES

“Don’t team up with those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness? What harmony can there be between Christ and the devil? How can a believer be a partner with an unbeliever?”  
(1 Corinthians 6:14-15 NLT)

**Discussion Question:** In what situations do you believe this Scripture applies and/or does not apply? How might this apply specifically to business? Is it black or white in every situation?

### PARTNERING

Every aspect of life involves partnership. We partner constantly; spouses, friends, employers, managers, co-workers. These are all partnerships. In some partnerships an equity stake is at risk, while in others there is relational risk. Each partner brings something to the relationship, and each partner is expected to conduct themselves in a manner that enhances the partnership. The reality is that 50% of marriages end in divorce, with 67% of second marriages and 73% of third marriages ultimately experiencing the same fate. Professionally, the data is even more alarming. 50% of business partnerships fail within the first 2-3 years, with 70% of those ultimately failing. Given the data, it is obvious that partnering professionally is even more difficult than partnering personally. So whether you are in the middle of an existing partnership, or contemplating taking on a business partner, we will all have to confront this topic throughout our lives. Our goal in today’s lesson is to equip you to answer a very important question:

- How do I select the right partner(s)?





## CONCEPTS TO UNDERSTAND

Selecting the right partner involves ensuring that there is proper alignment as it relates to three broad areas:

1. Common Values
2. Common Vision
3. Common Expectations

If one of these areas is misaligned, the probability of having a negative outcome in the partnership is drastically increased. This applies to marriages, business partners, employee to employer relationships, and team members. Additionally, it is important to evaluate these three areas sequentially, otherwise there is a tendency to short-circuit the process.

**Common Values.** This is the first and most important concept to address in evaluating a partnership. If you do not have common values, the idea of partnering should end immediately. Values reflect a person's sense of right and wrong or what "ought" to be. Words that help describe this are *trustworthy, accountable, honest, respectful, forgiving, fair, ethical, and dependable*. (Caution: Just because someone says they are a "Christian", it does not mean you have common values.)

**Common Vision.** The reality is that partners must have a broad, common understanding as to what they want their company to be. Another way to say this is "What does success look like and how are we going to achieve it?" Vision involves the services you will provide, how you will provide them, the market you want to tackle, the growth you want to achieve, exit strategy, and many others.

**Common Expectations.** This is all about execution. It describes how you will handle debt, achieve proper cash flow, bonus structure, staff compensation, how you will navigate difficult situations, and share authority. Additionally, it is important for the partners to agree on the level of effort each will dedicate to the business. When this gets out of proportion, there is significant potential for conflict.

As you are working through these three areas, make sure you go back to the LOOK process in lesson 5-1 and do the parallel evaluation "Is This a Good Decision?"

You will have conflict in any partnership because we are all human. The less attention you pay to these three areas, the more conflict you will experience. The more conflict you have, the less likely your business is to succeed, and you could face financial ruin. If you short-circuit any part of the above evaluation you are increasing the likelihood of failure. This is true for marriages, friendships, or business partnerships. We will address how to properly deal with conflict in lesson 5-5.

## Exercise

A Partnering Matrix is presented at the end of this lesson. It provides a process to help you think and create dialogue between you and your potential partners. Please complete this form from your perspective. It is a great exercise to help you begin the process of making wise, thoughtful decisions on potential partnerships. Use this as practice for when you will need to actually go through this process to optimize the potential for success.





## Discussion Questions

1. What have you learned by walking through this process?
2. When evaluating potential partners, look at the historical evidence. Have they promoted unity with their friends, marriage, or other partnerships? Or does conflict seem to follow them?
3. Which of these three areas do you tend to undervalue? Have you had discussions with wise counsel regarding a potential partnership?
4. How would you have dialogue about these three areas with a potential business partner? What steps would you take?
5. Is there tension with this potential partnership? If so, what/where is the tension?

## TAKE ACTION

- After the discussion of this lesson with your group, go back and re-evaluate your answers to the exercise.
- If you are currently considering entering into a partnership, give the exercise portion of the lesson to your potential partner(s) to complete. Discuss how each of you answered the questions.
- If you decide to partner, complete the exercise form for the partnership, clearly stating what the collective partners agree upon. Every partner should sign the document.

## CLOSING PRAYER

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **Decision Making and the Will of God** by Garry Friesen





## Partnering Matrix

**Instructions:** This matrix is to be completed by each potential partner separate from others. Partnerships can be for a business venture, work teams, and can even form the basis for a conversation about marriage. Once completed, the partners should sit down and discuss their thoughts. There is no shortcut. Each person must be very honest in their thoughts about the partnership. A final document should be developed that reflects the agreed upon thoughts of the group. Each person should sign the document. Be willing to amend the document as the company grows and evolves.

Partnership: _____	
Potential Partners: _____	
Your Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>
Your Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>
Your Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>

