

## Making Better Decisions

### Lesson 5-1: Introduction to Decision Making

#### Discussion Guide – Confidentiality Reminder

#### One Word Check-in

#### Update – Personal, Business, Leadership

*“Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. Don’t be impressed with your own wisdom.” Proverbs 3:5-7a (NLT)*

**This series explores how to make better decisions in your life and your career.** Every day, you make thousands of personal and professional decisions. This series will evaluate your decision-making skills in the following areas:

- |                             |                                   |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Hiring and Firing People | 4. Successful Partnerships        |
| 2. Retaining People         | 5. Resolving Conflict             |
| 3. Do I Stay or Do I Go     | 6. Recovering From a Bad Decision |

**Learning to make good decisions will lead you to a more satisfying life with fewer regrets.** Often, we focus on the large decisions, but the truth is that every decision you make affects your life. The choices you make daily can drastically alter your destiny, career and family. Many times, our decisions are driven by our emotions and environment instead of rational, logical evaluation. Having a defined decision-making process greatly increases the likelihood of making sound decisions.

**Below are five questions that we should consider in our personal decision making, as outlined by Andy Stanley in his excellent book “Better Decisions, Fewer Regrets.”** These are excellent questions to help you process personal decisions.

<p><b>1. Am I being honest with myself?</b> We tend to lie to ourselves to get something we want but do not need. Our desire for something overcomes our thinking process.</p>	<p><i>Answer: I will not lie to myself even when the truth makes me feel bad about myself.</i></p>
<p><b>2. What story do I want to tell?</b> Evaluate the range of possibilities a decision could bring in the future. Our lives should write a story that we are proud to share with others.</p>	<p><i>Answer: I will live a story I’m proud to tell. I will not decide anything that makes me a liar for life.</i></p>
<p><b>3. Is there a tension that deserves my attention?</b> Many times, we do not have peace about a decision we made. We want something but there is tension about following through.</p>	<p><i>Answer: I will pause even when I can’t pinpoint the cause of my hesitation. I will explore it rather than ignore my conscience.</i></p>
<p><b>4. What is the wise thing to do?</b> Wisdom is attained by seeking the counsel of other respected people that will tell you the truth, not what you want to hear. If you truly seek wisdom, pray for it.</p>	<p><i>Answer: I will do the wise thing.</i></p>
<p><b>5. What does love require of me?</b> Relationships can bring great joy or tremendous heartache. If we focus on loving people, we will have empathy to do the best we can for our family and our co-workers.</p>	<p><i>Answer: I will decide with the interests of others in mind.</i></p>

#### Shared Experiences:

- Can someone share a process that you have used to make good decisions?
- Can someone share when a lack of process led you to making a decision you now regret (i.e. not considering the facts correctly, making poor assumptions, letting emotions lead, etc.)?
- How often do you pray about a decision you make? Might God have a different view of what would be the proper decision for you?
- Can anyone share an experience on how they overcame emotions in making a decision? How about in buying a car or a house?

**Bottom line:** Every decision you make affects your life. You will make better decisions and have fewer regrets if you use the five questions above as your process for making decisions. What God truly wants for you is a more satisfied and meaningful life.

#### One Word Check-out

## Making Better Decisions

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#### Dig Deeper

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##### Want to learn more?

Many articles and books are written on making decisions. These typically have five to nine steps to make good decisions. While some books and articles are valid in many respects, they are often quite stale or even unwise. Two books we recommend are “Better Decisions, Fewer Regrets” and “Just Do Something—A Liberating Approach to Finding God’s Will”. These are excellent resources.

- *Book:* [Better Decisions, Fewer Regrets: 5 Questions to Help You Determine Your Next Move](#) by Andy Stanley
- *Book:* [Just Do Something – A Liberating Approach to Finding God’s Will](#) by Kevin DeYoung. If you are trying to understand God’s will for your life and for your job, this is an excellent resource. It has solid Biblical teaching.
- *Book:* [Decision Making and the Will of God](#) by Garry Friesen with J. Robin Maxson. This is another excellent book about discerning God’s will.
- *Video:* [Better Decisions, Fewer Regrets, Part 1: Deciding Our Way Forward](#) by Andy Stanley. This is part one of a six-part series.
- *Video:* [Dumb Financial Decisions That Americans Make! \(Do You?\)](#) by The Money Guy Show. This is a funny and thought-provoking video that shares how social media manipulates our thinking about decisions.
- *Article:* [The Effective Decision](#) by Peter F. Drucker in the Harvard Business Review
- *Article:* [Thinking and Feeling, Exploring the Differences](#) by Personality at Work. This article explores the decision-making process of thinkers and feelers as identified by Myers-Briggs.

Note: Andy Stanley’s book is an easy read, but the second and third book cited above give more complete and thorough investigation of understanding God’s will.

##### Drop dead decisions

(These are decisions, that no matter your personal desire or feelings, you have already decided how you will respond. These are critical answers that should be made today, not in the future.)

- Personal decisions: Making purchases when you do not have the means to buy/pay
- Business decisions: Making purchases that cannot be cash flowed or cannot be repaid in seven years

##### Deciding the decisions you need to make

Donald Miller wrote a New York Times bestselling book called “[A Million Miles in a Thousand Years.](#)” He was in his early thirties, sleeping late, getting fat and just being a lazy bum. His relationships with women all failed. Even though he wrote the bestseller “Blue Like Jazz,” he was dissatisfied with his life. So, he decided to change his life by riding a bicycle across the US with some other people. “A Million Miles in a Thousand Years” is his journey of writing the story he wanted his life to become. He is now married and runs a very successful business consulting company. He has also written several other bestselling books.

Our recommendation is to read “A Million Miles in a Thousand Years” and then complete a life story exercise. Write the story you want your life to be when you look back on it later in life. Once the story is written, then write the decisions you must make to achieve the life you desire. This is a simple task in some respect, but it can profoundly change the direction of your life.