

# ***DECISIONS! DECISIONS! DECISIONS!***

*Dearly Loved Friends,*

Many of us are familiar with Robert Frost's famous poem *The Road Not Taken*. He stands there where two roads diverge in a yellow wood. He must decide which one to take. At the conclusion of the poem he tells us that he chose wisely, and indicates that his choice had "made all the difference." At various times in our lives, all of us are faced with making difficult major decisions. However, many of us have not been taught sufficiently how to make these major choices in life. Yet, some of them are of such importance that we will have to live with the results for much of our lives.

Such is the case when we make the vital decision as to whom we will marry, while for others the decision sadly, is about whether they should end a marriage or another close relationship. For some of us it is the life-changing commitment to be baptized as we turn our lives - totally - over to God! For many it is something related to the choice of their occupation. Some decisions, such as going away to college, may require us to move away from the familiarity and comfort of home to live in a new environment surrounded by strangers.

Maybe already we're fairly good at making wise decisions - using wisdom from God. If so, we are truly blessed. If we feel inadequate and that we lack the necessary wisdom, we're instructed to do this:

*If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you.  
He will not rebuke you for asking.* (New Living Translation)

*James 1:5-6*

The next thing to consider is that we have the responsibility to teach our children how to make wise decisions so they can use this godly knowledge to make their lives richer and more blessed by God. The inestimable value of this knowledge is a vital part of a spiritual legacy for us to leave to our children, much as Solomon did when he wrote Proverbs for his son. He desired to teach him about human relations and how to acquire wisdom so he could make the right choices in life.

However, do we have, and use, the necessary skills for making good decisions in a wise manner? Have we ever stopped to realize that many of us plan our vacations much more carefully than we analyze and plan the actions we're thinking about taking regarding life-changing decisions?

Hopefully, already we've begun praying about each decision - asking for God's direction and help, and definitely for His wisdom as we scripturally are exhorted to do.

Let's consider some ideas about what to do when we're faced with making truly serious decisions:

1. If I choose to make a certain *particular* decision, would it please God? Perhaps it pleases me (or someone I love), but when we get right down to it, would God be pleased with this decision? Is my thinking consistent with the Word of God - the way He thinks, and the guidance he has given me in Scriptures? Are there biblical examples that would help me with my decision? Do I realize that obtaining and maintaining a deep and profound knowledge of God's Word is always going to be vital insurance in my life - about EVERYTHING?

*Your word is a lamp to guide my feet  
and a light for my path.*

(New Living Translation)

*Psalms 119:105*

2. Would this decision potentially lead someone else to sin? This has many ramifications which we must consider in all their fullness. Would I be setting the wrong example for others by doing this? Would my conscience tell me that this is good, or . . . am I compromising? Is my conscience *tender* concerning God's principles?

3. Would this decision be "loving" - expressing genuine outgoing concern for others - or would it be the result of personal selfishness? How would it affect those close to me? Is egotistical ambition involved? Maybe it's from greediness? Is it at the expense of others?

Would this decision be mainly a form of escape? Is it because I made a *mess* of things, and the reality of my situation feels so bad, that I just want to get away, instead of facing up to what I should do? Have I let my fears affect my faith in God's compassion and His ability to deliver me?

The following inspiring and encouraging verses let us know to whom we should go for deliverance and protection:

*Rescue me from my enemies, O LORD.  
I come to you for protection.  
Teach me to do your will, because you are my God.*

*May your good Spirit lead me on level ground.  
O LORD, keep me alive for the sake of your name.  
Because you are righteous, lead me out of trouble.*

(GOD'S WORD version)

*Psalms 143:9-11*

4. Would my decision be the best and most beneficial course of action for me, and for all concerned? If not, why not? Is it kind, caring, loving and honoring toward people close to me? If not, why not?

5. Would this decision go contrary to a specific command in God's Holy Bible? If so, I need to face up to it that I knowingly would be sinning! Have I rationalized my thinking so much that I've convinced myself that I know what is best for me? Am I "hell-bent" to be stubbornly and hard-heartedly determined to pursue *my* own course of action? Do I have an attitude that my way is right, and no one can budge me!

*A stubborn fool considers his own way the right one,  
but a person who listens to advice is wise.* (GOD'S WORD version)

*Proverbs 12:15*

6. Would Christ take my planned course of action? If not, why not? Just what would Jesus do if he were in my shoes? Is my decision-making process influenced by my pride and arrogance? Have I ever understood - and do I now really understand - that God weighs our actions? When Hannah prayed (in the verse quoted below) she knew about pride and arrogance - and that God *does* weigh our actions:

*Talk no more so very proudly;  
Let no arrogance come from your mouth,  
For the LORD is the God of knowledge;  
And by Him actions are weighed.* (NKJV)

*1 Samuel 2:3*

7. In addition, isn't it true that if we procrastinate long enough in making our decision, then it is likely that it will be taken out of our hands and made for us? Is that what we really want? Sadly, most of the time when we let this happen, that decision is not the one we would have chosen. By our procrastination we have lost out on the opportunity of making a "wise" decision, and often we have to live with unfortunate consequences. We have done "too little, too late." Many of us have experienced the awful sinking feeling that's expressed by the old saying: "The Train's Done Gone!"

When there are so many things to consider, we might tend to feel that only Solomon himself could decide things for us. But that does not need to be the case. Once we have successfully gone on a solid fact-finding mission, and have considered all the reasons "for" and "against," (including the points listed above), we should continue to pray for guidance, and be sure to ask God to clearly "open the door" for our possible new opportunity, or shut it so definitely that there's "no way" we will try to force our way through.

The two of us, personally, like to pray that way, asking for God's will to be done - in such a manner that we have no doubts that the path we have chosen is the right one because He has guided us. This way we can confidently walk down that path, never looking back, ("second-guessing" ourselves) and wondering at what might have been.

Whenever you are in the process of making an important decision, it's always a good time to *fast*, in order to draw closer to God so that you are humbly seeking His will, and not your own. After all, once you make this decision, you will have a real need for God's blessings in whatever it is you wish to accomplish.

When we seriously think and meditate about these points, they will help crystallize in our minds whether we are "on the right track or not!" Probably we've all heard or read about various ways to consciously work at making good decisions. So, as we utilize the helpful and godly ideas, let's be sure to trust God and *always* put God FIRST since we aspire to be faithful God-fearing and loving people!

Another thing to be sure to remember in order to have real success: When you've made your decision, it's vital that you come up with an ACTION PLAN as to what you are absolutely determined to do because of your decision! Then START, and keep on going forward - ON and ON!

Finally, when all is said and done, a vitally important thing to keep in mind is "**CONSIDER THE END!**" With God's guidance, be sure to project ahead in time (as much as possible) concerning what the end result of your decision will be!

Will the end result be what you deeply desire for it to be? Something that is GOOD, GREAT, and GODLY? It will be when you seek God's will, and place your life in God's hands. May the road you take make "all the difference" because God *has* directed your steps!

## ***THE ROAD NOT TAKEN***

**Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;**

**Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that, the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,**

**And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.**

**I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I---  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.**

**~ Robert Frost**

In Christian love,

*Aquila and Priscilla*