



ACCFS Courses

Course Notes

Biblical Decision-Making



APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN

Counseling and Family Services

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These course notes were created to accompany participants
enrolled in the ACCFS Biblical Decision-Making Course.

Welcome

It is not uncommon for Christians to struggle with knowing God's will. Sometimes it seems like God provides clear guidance to other people, but our personal search for clarity on hearing God's voice can be difficult, full of uncertainty, and downright confusing. What are we to do then? Give up? Pray harder? Just make a decision and hope for the best? With big decisions such as choosing a career, getting married, going to the mission field, making significant healthcare choices, planning financially and so on, we may feel the need to know "for sure" before we can move forward. Unfortunately, as hard as we try, "for sure" often seems like an impossible standard. Is "for sure" even the right goal? Is that what God asks us to do? To know "for sure" how our health or career will turn out 20 years from now? In a simple answer, no. He wants us to seek Him and His direction and then trust Him as we move forward in faith.

This course is designed to help think through the factors involved in making wise, biblically-based decisions. We will not provide a sure-fire way to know the "right" choice to make in every decision. There also isn't any quick and easy three-step-method for knowing the future or never making a mistake. We hope these lessons will bring out both the obvious and subtle factors that affect decision making. Our goal is to encourage a right relationship with God while seeking His guidance.

This course has three goals:

- *Participants will understand the two fundamental principles of biblical decision-making.*
- *Participants will identify eight key actions to take for healthy biblical decision-making.*
- *Participants will identify ten misconceptions about discerning God's will.*

***"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.
In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."
Proverbs 3:5-6***

Lesson 1:

The Foundation for Biblical Decision-Making

Many students in this course will want to rush right to the answer of which decision to make. . . . “OK, do I buy a car now or wait longer?” Should I homeschool my son?” “Should I accept this job offer?” However, we will start by backing up and looking at common assumptions about discerning God’s will as we seek to make decisions.

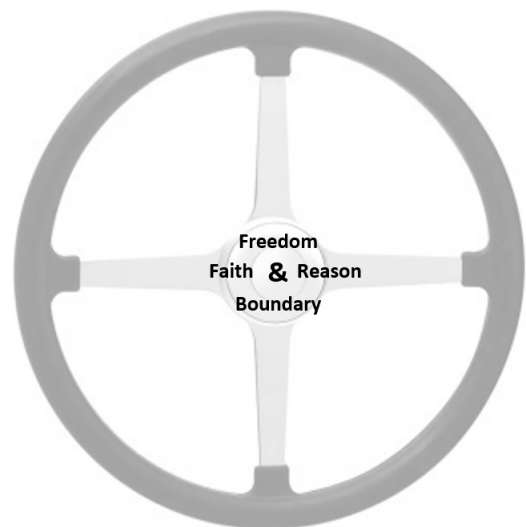
This lesson has two goals:

- Students will understand the union of faith and reason.
- Students will understand God’s purpose and plan in giving us freedom in decision-making.

Watch the lesson intro video linked in the course.

In this lesson we will be building the hub of our decision-making steering wheel. At the heart of the decision-making process, we have the importance of Faith & Reason and Freedom & Boundaries.

Intro video notes:



Biblical Decision Making Interview

Watch the video interview with Ron Messner.

Video notes:

Faith and Reason in Decision-Making

To some of us, faith and reason may seem like opposing forces when learning to make decision biblically. But the reality is, faith and reason actually work hand-in-hand.

Paul speaks of how both Jews and Greeks missed the opportunity to know Christ because of their expectations. The Jews demanded miraculous signs while the Greeks fell prey to the exaltation of human intellect. Both groups allowed their assumptions to blind them to God's plan. We must be careful to not limit God nor believe we can control how He should direct us. Below, we're going to describe two errors when making decisions based on faith and reason.

Note: Some people tend toward going back and forth between the two extremes, while missing the middle which incorporates both faith and reason together.

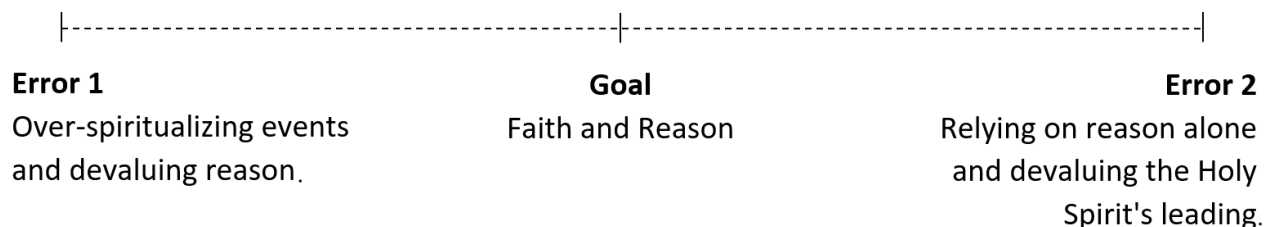
Error 1 - Over-spiritualizing events and devaluing the ability to reason.

Some individuals tend to over-spiritualize and over-interpret coincidences and benign actions. They may have a tendency to look for signs or rely on their emotions as they make decisions. They may also force their own meaning on the Scripture they read.

Error 2 - Relying on reason alone and devaluing the Holy Spirit's leading.

Some people rely too heavily on logic, facts, knowledge, education, and personal experiences when making decisions. They may have difficulty obeying the leading of the Holy Spirit because it doesn't always "make sense" to them.

Goal – Faith and Reason



1 Cor. 1:22-25, "For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

Correcting Misbelief with Truth

In this course, we will attempt to highlight and correct misbeliefs about decision making.

- **Misbelief 1:** In decision-making we over-spiritualize events and devalue thoughtful reason.
- **Misbelief 2:** In decision-making we rely on thoughtful reason alone and devalue the role faith plays.
- **Truth:** In decision-making we apply both faith and reason.

Freedom and Responsibility in Decision-Making

Have you ever approached a decision thinking, "There's only one correct option before me and the rest would be mistakes and probably separate me from God." Or maybe, "My decisions don't really matter, and even if they are sinful, God will shield me from any consequence." Below, let's consider how God has invited us into both freedom and responsibility in the decision-making process.

God has given us the freedom and responsibility to make wise decisions that are within the bounds of the Word. In His sovereignty, God has chosen to give human beings a free will, intellect, experiences, examples, and abilities with which to make decisions. God has given man dominion over creation and has asked us to be stewards of it. Sometimes Christians experience significant anguish when they try to identify God's will in circumstances where God gives us the freedom of choice.

Conversely, we must not be cavalier about our choices; decisions have consequences, both positive and negative. As it says in *Gal. 6:7-8*, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." There are consequences for actions and decisions that can last long into the future. One of the most difficult areas of decision-making is balancing freedom and responsibility.

In an effort to depict this balance, the following example shows how God has provided the believer with the responsibility to stay away from evil, yet has given us freedom to make choices within the boundaries of His Word. Here's the example: Billy is a college student living on campus who has a free Saturday coming up. Some of the choices that lie before Billy include the following.

- Choice #1 - Drive home and spend the day reconnecting with his parents.
- Choice #2 - Head to the library to get in some extra study time for an upcoming exam.
- Choice #3 - Spend the day outside on a nature hike to exercise and refresh himself.
- Choice #4 - Join a “bar crawl” and go drinking with some of his classmates.

Now, picture life as a “canvas.” We are commanded to keep our actions responsibly within the canvas of God’s principles from His Word and avoid unbiblical behaviors which are outside of the frame. Within the canvas, there is freedom to make many types of decisions. God crafts the decisions we make within His canvas into a beautiful “workmanship” (*Eph. 2:10*) for His glory.

Hopefully it is clear in this example which of these choices fall within God’s boundaries and which one is clearly outside of God’s will for Billy. The graphic below gives us a visual representation of the “canvas” upon which we may freely make choices, and the outside area that falls outside of God’s desires for us.



Correcting Misbelief with Truth

- **Misbelief:** There are many options but only ONE right choice. It is my job to decide on the ONE and thus solve the riddle.
- **Truth:** God’s Word defines the boundaries within which we choose.

Application: Who are you as a Decision-Maker?

For each of the following categories, mark an “x” that MOST matches your decision-making experience.

Social	Internal
I want to talk through decisions with others.	I want to think things through alone.

Big Picture	Here and Now
I think about long-term consequences of decisions.	I think about what is in the here-and-now.

Thinker	Feeler
I am logical and analytical.	Feelings and emotions influence me.

Decision Avoidant	Decision Maker
I do not like making decisions.	I like making decisions.

Risk	Safe
I like taking risk.	I do not like taking risk.

Satisficing	Maximizing
I choose the first satisfying option.	I research lots and lots of options before I choose.

Conclusion

Because biblical decision-making is an important and often challenging task, we must approach it with right thinking. It is critical to view walking by faith and using reason as interrelated instead of viewing them as an “either-or” scenario. This distinction will help avoid the twin errors of over-spiritualizing events or using reason alone to make decisions.

In the next lesson, you will learn about the first two principles for biblical decision-making and how to apply them to your decisions at hand.

Lesson 2 Believe & Read

In this lesson, you'll begin working through the eight principles in Biblical Decision-Making and applying them directly to whatever decision you're currently working through using the practical Decision-Making Guide worksheet. In the course, follow the link to open and print the attached guide. The two principles covered in this lesson are Believe and Read.

This lesson has two goals:

- Students will understand the role of having an accurate image of God in decision-making.
- Students will understand the role of scripture in decision-making.

Watch the lesson intro video linked in the course.

Intro video notes:



In this lesson we will add two principles to our decision making steering wheel hub.

Biblical Decision-Making Principles Podcast

Listen to the podcast linked in the course.

Podcast notes:

Dilemma

Jenny has been working as an editor in her rural hometown for a few years, but recently she was offered a “dream job” in a neighboring city. To cut down on the commute time to her new job, she’s considering moving closer to the city, but she’s feeling overwhelmed with the many options. Location, price, style of house, renting or buying are all variables that she is considering. Her overwhelming fear is that with all of these options in front of her, she might not make the “perfect” choice and thereby harm her relationship with Jesus.



Principle #1: Believe

What we believe about God, His character, and His will directly impacts the way we approach decision-making. Do we view God as a distant, demanding parent? A harsh disciplinarian? A cosmic monster? Or perhaps as a permissive grandfather-type figure? Each of these views of God are dysfunctional on a fundamental level, and they prevent us from making decisions in a way that truly honors and pleases God. Here are some examples of thoughts that result from a dysfunctional view of God. Maybe you can relate to one or more.

- God is punishing me.
- God does not care about my feelings.
- God won’t let me marry someone I love or am attracted to.
- God is disappointed in me.
- God sees me as a failure.
- God compares me to his other children and finds me lesser.

Everyone is susceptible to not discerning the Spirit and the Word of God clearly due to the “cloudy” lenses from which we see the world and God. These lenses develop out of past experiences, sin, the impact of influential individuals in our lives, emotional issues, etc. A distorted God-image leads to difficulty trusting God and submitting to His Word. The key to combating a distorted God-image is to test what we believe about God through the whole counsel of the Bible, counsel with His people, and honest, genuine prayer.

The decision-making process is directly affected by your God-image because we may think God sees the choice as all important, and that if you make the “wrong” choice, He will be there ready and willing to punish for it. The reality is that God is most interested and deeply invested in the person you are becoming. He’s even more invested in it than you are! He gave His life for it. And, in His wisdom, God has given you “say-so” over his creation (*Genesis 1:26*), not so that he can punish you if you mismanage it, but that through the process of bringing your decisions before God, your character would be continually transformed into His own. His purpose is that in making decisions for your life alongside Him, you would actually be training for your eternal purpose. (*Revelation 22:4-5*)

Correcting Misbelief with Truth

- **Misbelief:** When making decisions we believe the choice is all important.
- **Truth:** God views the decision-making process as important in developing us into who He wants us to be.

Dilemma

Franklin is trying to decide if he should go to college in the Fall or if he should take a “gap year” and travel across the United States. In search of direction from God, he turns to the Bible. Franklin has determined that when he closes his eyes, flips open the Bible, and then opens his eyes again, wherever his eyes land will be God’s answer. Franklin’s mother strongly protests in the soundness of this practice in determining God’s will.



Principle #2: Read

God’s Word provides the foundation for all biblical decision-making. Clearly, our life and all of our decisions need to be consistent with what God has revealed in the Word, “*The Word is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path*” *Ps. 119:105*. As Jesus challenged His listeners in *John 14:15*, “*If ye love me, keep my commandments.*”

Through divine inspiration, God’s Word was written exactly how He wanted. It is trustworthy and complete. He could have chosen to write it in any way He wanted. He didn’t accidentally forget to add information He wanted us to have. This includes information we often wish was in the Bible ranging from when to buy a car, how to make decisions about marriage or a career, or the perfect method to raise teenagers! We do not know why God chose to put some things in the Bible and not others. However, it does seem He is much more interested in our reliance on Him and His Word and who we are becoming than in us feeling completely certain about our circumstances. God desires our faith and trust in Him and His Word throughout our lives over certainty and clarity. Therefore, consider the Bible as authoritative; diligently give attention to reading, meditating, and applying its teachings and principles.

2 Tim. 3:16-17 & Heb. 4:12

The meaning of God's word never changes, and the depth of the Word is marvelously endless. This allows God's word to speak differently to us at different times even though the meaning has not changed. We change and our experiences change. Therefore, we will see meaning and application in God's Word which has always been there but appears new to us as we see it through a different lens of experience. Sometimes we read a passage for encouragement; other times, that same passage will admonish. We may receive a specific message for a certain situation in life or get some general direction or guidance from reading the Word. Sometimes we learn something new; other times, the Word reminds us of something previously learned. We must guard against letting our own preconceived ideas of what we wish or fear the Bible would say to distort the true message of the Word as we apply its principles accurately and in context.

When we are seeking guidance from the Word during a time of decision-making, we may be especially prone to the errors of inserting our own meanings into what we read. We need to "*rightly divide the word of truth*" if we are to glean God's guidance from it (2 Tim. 2:15).

Helpful Questions for Interpreting Scripture

1

To whom was this text originally written?

2

Who was the author and for what purpose did he write?

3

What does the text say?

4

What words do I need to look up?

5

How does this fit in the context of my life today?

Some areas of caution to be aware of when reading the Bible, especially while seeking God's direction.

- Reading too much meaning into vague scriptures.
- Superimposing specific meanings onto scriptures. For example, reading the word “go” in a verse and believing it automatically was an affirmative answer to the question, “Should I go to college?”
- Seeking scripture to support a preconceived idea.
- Over-emphasizing the need for signs or believing God must provide a sign.
- Relying too heavily on any kind of “mystical” use of the Bible such as repeatedly flipping the Bible open for a specific answer.
- Basing a decision solely on one thing that opens in the Bible.
- Taking verses out of context.
- Not using godly wisdom or wise counsel.

Application: Believe & Read

Complete the sections for Principle #1 Believe and Principle #2 Read on your Decision-Making Guide. Turn to page 24 to find the Decision Making Guide.

Conclusion

Taking care to reinforce an accurate perception of God (*Believe*) and interpreting scripture in context (*Read*) are the first two principles that should be applied when attempting to make biblical decisions. In the next lesson, we'll uncover the next two principles.

Lesson 3 Pray & Trust

In this lesson, you'll continue working through the eight principles in Biblical Decision-Making and applying them directly to your decision at hand using the practical Decision-Making Guide worksheet. The two principles covered in this lesson are *Pray* and *Trust*.

This lesson has two goals:

- Students will understand the role of prayer in decision-making.
- Students will understand the role of trust in decision-making.

Watch the lesson intro video linked in the course.

Intro video notes:

In this lesson we will add Prayer and Trust to our decision-making wheel.



Biblical Decision-Making Podcast

Listen to the podcast linked in the course. In this podcast episode, Matt and Arlan will consider the next two principles in biblical decision-making.

Podcast notes:

Dilemma

Sally has been battling cancer for months and praying fervently for healing. One day, the doctors come to Sally and inform her she is progressing to advanced stage 4 cancer and asks if she wants to continue with chemotherapy. The chemo treatments have been extremely hard on Sally, and she wonders if she just prayed with more faith that God would heal her without the treatments.



Principle #3: Pray

Fervent prayer is a key to requesting wisdom from God and submitting our will to His. God is a loving heavenly Father who wants the best for us. His plans and purposes are for our good and the benefit of His kingdom. Therefore, while submitting our will to God can be a difficult task, it also can provide us with great peace and comfort. God is good and trustworthy. He is willing and ready to give us wisdom to deal with issues we face. As Paul earnestly prayed in *2 Cor. 12:7-10* to have his “*thorn in the flesh*” removed so should we earnestly bring our requests before God. We must also realize, as Paul did in this passage, that submitting our requests to the Lord means we are entrusting Him to answer as He knows best. Making adequate time for prayer can be a difficult challenge, but it must be a priority.

Jas. 1:5-6 & Mat. 7:7-8

Correcting Misbelief with Truth

- **Misbelief:** God would answer your prayers according to your desires if you had more faith.
- **Truth:** God uses “no” for his purposes. Sometimes He changes our questions.

Dilemma

John and Jamie are struggling to determine where their son should go to school next year. Jamie thinks they should enroll their son in public school, but John prefers homeschool. They are both unsure of the effects that each option might have on their son’s moral and intellectual development.



Principle #4: Trust

Sometimes in life, we will experience a wholesome desire that goes unmet. For instance, we often wonder why a loved one who was ill had to die instead of being healed. Another example is we believe we are supposed to marry and even conclude we are ready to marry and yet it still hasn't happened. Often, it is impossible to know why. Our struggle to understand why God hasn't answered can lead to frustration and discouragement. This becomes the moment where trust in God is most crucial. Trust by definition is leaning on God and maintaining our faith in Him when we don't have clear understanding. We can take comfort in knowing that God understands the facts we do not understand. Thankfully, even in the midst of disappointment and hurt, we have the assurance of God's sustaining grace in our lives.

Ps. 62:8 & Jer. 17:7-8

Having a surrendered heart means accepting His will may be different from ours. It doesn't mean we were wrong in having our desires, but it does mean we should continually submit our hopes, dreams, and plans to Him. Most of us struggle with this to some degree. Do not be discouraged, but keep turning hopes, dreams, and plans over to God. We shouldn't hesitate to make our requests known to God; however, we must always remember to follow Christ's example in *Luke 22:42* and say, "not my will, but thine, be done."

Jas. 4:15, 1 John 5:14-15 & Mat. 7:9-11

Correcting Misbelief with Truth

- **Misbelief:** I should have certainty of the decision before the choice is made.
- **Truth:** Faith is trusting God through uncertainty.

Application: Pray & Trust

Complete the sections for Principle #3 Pray and Principle #4 Trust on your Decision-Making Guide. Turn to page 24 to find the Decision Making Guide.

Conclusion

We've covered four of the eight principles for biblical decision-making: Believe, Read, Pray, and Trust. Each of these principles will help guide us through the decision-making process in a way that allows God to work in and through us. I trust the two principles we will add on to the list in the next lesson will further help clarify our part in making biblical decisions.

Lesson 4 Wait & Seek

In this lesson, you'll continue working through the eight principles in Biblical Decision-Making and applying them to your life using the Decision-Making Guide worksheet. The two principles covered in this lesson are *Wait* and *Seek*.

This lesson has two goals:

- Students will understand the role of waiting on God in decision-making.
- Students will understand the role of seeking wise counsel in decision-making

Watch the lesson intro video linked in the course.

Intro video notes:

This lesson will add 2 more principles to our decision-making wheel – Waiting & Seeking.



Biblical Decision-Making Principles Podcast

Listen to the audio clip linked in the course. In this podcast episode, Matt and Arlan will consider a couple more principles in biblical decision-making: wait & seek.

Podcast notes:

Dilemma

Jessica feels called to marriage and being a stay at home wife, but no one has yet asked to marry her. In the meantime, Jessica is unsure if she should go to school, get a job, or stay at home with her parents and wait for marriage.



Principle #5: Wait

We must accept that ‘waiting on the Lord’ is often part of the decision-making process. Many times patient waiting is necessary as circumstances develop or change over time in order to know what to do next. God is working even when we do not see or understand it.

Ps. 27:14, Jas. 1:2-4, Ps. 130:5 & Is. 40:31

Waiting on the Lord is not the same thing as doing nothing. When we reach a point in the decision-making process and don’t know what to do, we can focus on the things we already know to be God’s will because they are revealed in Scripture. For example, *Jas. 1:27* says, “*Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unstained from the world.*” So, while trusting and waiting on God we know one thing we can be doing is caring for the fatherless and widows and striving for purity.

Correcting Misbeliefs with Truth

- **Misbelief:** Waiting is doing nothing and has no benefit in the interim.
- **Truth:** “Faith-waiting” is active and brings about renewal; “faithless-waiting” is inactive and brings about restlessness.

Dilemma

Brandon has saved up a good sum of money and wants to make his first financial investment. One day when scrolling through social media, he saw an ad for a business startup looking for investors. Brandon thinks the business looks interesting and is willing to invest his savings into the startup, but he also knows that there are a handful of financially successful individuals at his church who have advised others not to invest all of their money in just one area.



Principle #6: Seek

The principle of seeking wise counsel is shown throughout the Bible. No one should make life-changing decisions without receiving godly counsel. It is wise to think through who we can talk to when we need advice or direction (i.e. elder, parents, mentor).

Prov. 15:22, Prov. 1:5, Prov. 12:15 & Prov. 19:20-21

Wise counsel will help us seek God's best for our lives by looking at all sides of issues. Wise counselors turn their own will and agenda over to God as they help guide us. It is better to receive counsel from those who can help review pros/cons and strengths/weaknesses of our decisions rather than listening to those who simply tell us what we want to hear or criticize us. As *Prov. 27:6* shares, "*Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.*" The Bible notes that choosing poor counselors can have disastrous consequences, so it is important to be intentional about whom we seek out (see the story of Rehoboam in *2 Chr. 10*).

***Some of us find reasons not to seek counsel from others.
Below is a short list including just some of those reasons.***

- I don't know anyone who could help me.
- I don't trust other people.
- I don't want to receive bad advice.
- I don't want to be told "no" after I've already made up my mind.

***Below are some characteristics of someone
to seek out for guidance and wise counsel:***

- Genuinely concerned for you and either knows or is willing to learn about your background.
- Known to be biblically sound, spiritually mature, and aware of their own blind spots.
- Skilled at listening and asking good questions.
- Somewhat experienced, knowledgeable, or trained in the area you are seeking guidance about (i.e. using an experienced professional when making career decisions).
- Exercises confidentiality and uses discretion.
- Exemplifies humility and gentleness, yet loves you enough to tell you the truth or where you may be interpreting situations in error (even if it hurts).
- Provides an honest opinion and is direct when necessary.

Correcting Misbeliefs with Truth

- **Misbelief:** Seeking God's voice is always a personal experience exclusive of anyone else.
- **Truth:** God speaks to us in many ways including through His people.

Application: Wait & Seek

Complete the sections for Principle #5 Wait and Principle #6 Seek on your Decision-Making Guide. Turn to page 24 to find the Decision Making Guide.

Conclusion

We have now covered six of the eight principles for biblical decision-making: Believe, Read, Pray, Trust, Wait, and Seek. My hope is that you will continue to find ways to implement each of these elements into your daily decisions. In the next and final lesson, we will reveal the final two principles for biblical decision-making and take some time to reflect on all that we've learned.

Lesson 5 Walk & Rest

In this lesson, you'll learn about the final two principles related to Biblical Decision-Making and complete your Decision-Making Guide. The two principles covered in this lesson are *Walk* and *Rest*.

This lesson has two goals:

- Students will understand how to walk with God while making decisions.
- Students will understand how God's sovereignty affects decision-making.

Watch the lesson intro video linked in the course.

Intro video notes:

This lesson will add the final 2 principles to our decision-making steering wheel.



Biblical Decision-Making Principles Podcast

Take a few moments to listen to the podcast episode linked in the course. The podcast episode will discuss the final two principles for biblical decision-making.

Podcast notes:

Dilemma

Susan has wanted to become a marine biologist since she can remember. She always received pretty good grades in her science classes and has a desire to learn more about this particular field of study. As she prepares for the start of her schooling, people at her church are asking how she decided on her major. These questions are causing Susan to wonder if she really ever sought out God's direction in this decision because she doesn't really have a specific reason or story that explains why she chose this major.



Principle #7: Walk

God cares about our decisions and our life. He is aware, present, and involved. At times, however, this divine presence may not be clear or evident. It may feel as if we are diligently seeking and yet He remains silent. By faith we believe and know He is near, but the perception of His silence may be more persistent. Periods like this happen to every believer from time to time, and often, it is not fully possible to know why. During these times self-examination in light of the Word is good. However, during difficult times of searching for direction, be aware general distress can occur which can easily lead to self-questioning, over-analyzing, and using scripture out of context. Seek guidance and counsel from spiritually mature people and do not try to go through these times alone.

We don't have to fear we are alone as we make decisions throughout life. As Jesus reminded His disciples in *Mat. 10:29-31*, *"Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows."* God knows our needs, desires, and cares. Take comfort He knows our needs even before we ask (*Mat. 6:8*).

The Bible, God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are all in perfect harmony. The safest and most blessed place to be during times of decision making and uncertainty is walking with the Lord by submitting to Him, obeying the Holy Spirit, praying, and reading the Word. As we become more acquainted with Jesus, we are comforted He will not leave us comfortless (*John 14:18*) and He will be with us both on the mountain top and in the valley. We can trust and depend on Him believing He will guide us as we seek Him.

Jer. 29:11-13 & John 10:27

Correcting Misbeliefs with Truth

- **Misbelief:** Determining God's will should be difficult.
- **Truth:** Decisions are most natural when they come out of a walk with Christ.

Dilemma

Samantha is a senior in high school and is getting ready to head off to college next year. Because of her outstanding academic performance, she's been accepted into many reputable universities. As she considers the different options and related factors including proximity to home, where her friends are going to college, and cost of schooling, Samantha is feeling paralyzed that she may make the wrong decision.



Principle #8: Rest

God is sovereign. He is all-knowing (omniscient), all powerful (omnipotent), and present everywhere (omnipresent). As such, He is not bound by the limitations of time and other aspects of human finiteness. We can take comfort that His eternal purposes will be accomplished in our lives and in this world. Remember God is in control both when life is going smoothly and when it is confusing or turbulent. That includes times of uncertainty about decisions or other times when we lack clarity.

1 Chr. 29:11-13, Is. 55:8-9 & Is. 43:10-11

Correcting Misbeliefs with Truth

- **Misbelief:** If I make the wrong choice, I will be on God's "B" plan.
- **Truth:** In His sovereignty, God frequently redeems broken and bad decisions for His glory.

Application: Walk & Rest

Complete the sections for Principle #7 Walk and Principle #8 Rest on your Decision-Making Guide. Turn to page 24 to find the Decision Making Guide.

Conclusion

We have now covered each of the eight principles for biblical decision-making: Believe, Read, Pray, Trust, Wait, Seek, Walk, and Rest. I hope that will find that each of these principles, when approached with thoughtfulness and grace, will be useful markers of a healthy, biblical decision-making process. We will conclude this course with a short video in the following lesson.

Actions in Biblical Decision-Making



1. Belief - Have an accurate concept of God. (*Jeremiah 29:11*)

Misbelief: The choice is all important.

Truth: God views the decision making process as a critical catalyst for character formation.



2. Read - God's Word is foundation. (*2 Timothy 3:16,17*)

Misbelief: There are many options but only ONE right choice. It is my job to decide on the ONE & thus solve the riddle.

Truth: God's Word defines the boundaries from which we choose.



3. Pray - Pray for direction. (*James 1:5*)

Misbelief: God would answer your prayers according to your desires if you had more faith.

Truth: God uses "no" for his purposes. Sometimes he changes our questions.



4. Trust - Trust and have a surrendered heart. (*Jeremiah 17:7 & Luke 22:42*)

Misbelief: I should have certainty of the decision before the choice is made.

Truth: Faith is trusting God through uncertainty.



5. Wait - Wait on God's timing. (*Isaiah 40:31*)

Misbelief: Waiting is doing nothing & has no benefit in the interim.

Truth: "Faith-waiting" is active & brings about renewal; "faithless-waiting" is inactive & brings about restlessness.



6. Seek - Seek wise counsel. (*Proverbs 19:20-21*)

Misbelief: We either use faith or wisdom in decision making.

Truth: Good decision making uses both faith & wisdom.



7. Walk - Walk with God. (*John 10:27*)

Misbelief: Determining God's Will should be difficult.

Truth: Decisions are most "natural" when they come out of a walk with Christ.



8. Rest - Acknowledge God's sovereignty. (*Romans 8:28*)

Misbelief: If I make the wrong choice, I will be on God's "B" plan.

Truth: In his sovereignty, God frequently redeems broken & bad decisions for his glory.

Biblical Decision-Making Guide

What is one decision that you are working through currently?



Principle #1: Believe - what we believe about God matters.
List at least 4 characteristics about God that matter to the decision at hand.



Principle #2: Read - the Bible is our guide.
What scripture is guiding your thoughts and opinions concerning the decision at hand?

Biblical Decision-Making Guide



Principle #3: Prayer - humbly make your requests known to God.
Write out your prayer concerning the decision at hand and bring it before God in your times of prayer.



Principle #4: Trust - we can count on God to do what is best when we don't understand.
Is there a part of this decision that you are having trouble surrendering to God? if so, what is it, and why are you hesitant?



Principle #5: Wait - we can be patient with full confidence that God is working.
Identify one area of your life where you know you should be investing while you wait on God's timing?

Biblical Decision-Making Guide



Principle #6: Seek - God uses his people to provide wise counsel.
Through whom have you sought spiritually mature, wise counsel regarding the decision at hand, and what counsel did they offer?



Principle #7: Walk - staying near to Jesus each day helps us to know his will.
What are some practical things you are (or should be) doing each day that help “glue” yourself to Jesus?



Principle #8: Rest - nothing is out of reach for God’s redemptive love and power.
What are you reminding yourself of today that allows you to rest in God’s goodness and sovereignty?
