

How To Make A Godly Decision

Decisions, decisions, decisions. Decisions fill the mind and schedule of a college student. A few common decisions include: Do I get involved in this campus organization? Where do I live? Who do I live with? Who should be in my inner circle of friends? Should I ask this girl out? Should I continue to date this guy? Is it okay to date someone who doesn't value his or her relationship with God as much as I do? What do I do with my summer? What role should an internship play in my college experience? What is my purpose in life? And last but certainly not least, what do I do once I graduate?

Processing through decisions like these is overwhelming, exhausting, and stressful. On top of that, trying to make a decision with God in mind can put us in a state of emotional paralysis. But there is good news! The Bible illuminates how the Christian can and should make decisions. But before we look into that, let's talk about some unwise ways that college students commonly make decisions.

Unwise Decision Making:

The first unwise way college students often make decisions is by doing whatever they feel peace about. This means making decisions primarily based on feelings, which can lead us to destruction. In Jeremiah 17:9, the Bible describes the heart as "deceitful above all things." Our hearts will deceive us. What we feel peace about in our hearts might be things that are outside of God's will for us. Additionally, God often uses people outside of their comfort zones. Let's take Moses for example. God told Moses, "I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt" (Exodus 3:11). However, Moses was scared and concerned. He told God "I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue" (Exodus 4:10). Moses didn't feel like doing what God had called him to. He tried to find excuses so God would send someone else. However, Moses ultimately obeyed God, even though he did not feel like it. If Moses had primarily relied on his feelings, he would not have been used by God to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. God often uses people in mighty ways when they step outside of their comfort zone. I'm not saying that you cannot feel peace about any decision you ever make, because you will (Philippians 4:6-7). However, if you make decisions primarily off of the expectation that you will do whatever you feel peace about, you are dangerously close to making an ungodly decision.

The second unwise way college students often make decisions is outside the input of a spiritual leader. Proverbs 15:22 says that "plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they will succeed." For some reason, students often make decisions without the input of someone who is older, wiser, and godlier than they are. That is foolish, prideful, and an unbiblical way of making a decision (Proverbs 12:15). According to Proverbs 15:22, if you do this your plans are guaranteed to fail. Your spiritual leader cares deeply for you; otherwise they would not choose to lead you spiritually. Why wouldn't you want their input in decisions you make?

The final way students often make decisions unwisely is by allowing their parents to decide for them. Many parents, even Christian parents, justify this idea because Exodus 20:12 and Ephesians 6:2 command us to "honor our father and mother." When the Bible commands you to do something, you need to do it. So, you should honor our parents. However, honoring your parents is not synonymous with allowing them to make decisions for you. What if your parents have no regard for God and His will for your life? How can they guide you in a godly direction? It is unwise to make an unbiblical decision because you followed the unbiblical advice from your parents in an effort to honor God's Biblical command. Jesus describes an appropriate attitude toward this in Matthew 10:37-38 when he says "anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me." Jesus

says you should love him more than anything else in life. He deserves to be your first priority. So, you need to make decisions in light of Jesus' commands as the first priority, not your parents.

Steps to Godly Decision Making:

Like I said earlier, you can succeed in making godly decisions! To do so, there is just one necessity you must apply to your life. That is the necessity of discerning God's direction. To make a godly decision, discerning God's direction is crucial. The good news is that God has given you some very practical ways to determine His direction. You can determine God direction by applying Biblical principles, applying your spiritual leader's input, and saturating the decision in prayer.

1. Apply Biblical Principles:

The first way you can discern God's direction is by applying Biblical principles to a specific decision. Psalm 109:105 says God's Word "is a lamp to [your] feet and a light to [your] path." When you examine the Scriptures and apply them to your life, the Bible will serve as a guide for you regarding which direction to go. Additionally, Matthew 6:33 commands believers to "seek first God's kingdom and his righteousness." When it comes to making decisions, believers should always make them through this lens. Every decision should lead you into a deeper relationship with God.

The next time you process through a decision, spend time in the Scriptures and ask yourself the following questions:

- Is there a specific command to obey?
- Is there a specific Biblical example or principle to follow from a similar situation?
- Are you taking verses out of context to justify a decision you have already made?

By asking yourself these questions, you will better discern what God's Word says regarding a decision you are processing.

Other references: Psalm 1:1-3, Psalm 119:9-11, Joshua 1:8

2. Apply Your Spiritual Leader's Input:

The second way you can discern God's direction is by applying your spiritual leader's input. God has placed a spiritual leader in your life with the responsibility of shepherding you well, and He holds leaders accountable for shepherding you well. James 3:1 says that "those who teach will be judged more strictly." Being a spiritual leader is a "noble task" that is to be treated seriously (1 Timothy 3:1).

1 Kings 12 exemplifies the importance of applying your spiritual leaders input. Here's how the story goes: Solomon's son, Rehoboam, takes over the throne of Israel. The Israelites come before Rehoboam with a big and important request. Rehoboam hears them out and tells the people to come back to him in three days for the answer. Rehoboam proceeds to consult the elders of Israel and ask them for advice about what to do. It is important to note here that these elders were wise! After all, they were advisers to Solomon, who the Bible calls the wisest man to ever live. Surely they had some intelligent thoughts on the situation. However, verse 8 tells us that "Rehoboam rejected the advice the elders gave him and consulted the young men who had grown up with him and were serving with him." Think about that. He rejected advice of the elders and consulted his peers for guidance in his first big decision. What was he thinking? This crucial mistake eventually led to a split in the nation of Israel and the downfall of his leadership.

It is easy to criticize Rehoboam, but so often college students do the same thing. Students often ask advice about decisions from family members, fraternity brothers, sorority sisters, and even peers in the same ministry. However, students can easily ignore the advice that a spiritual leader offers. That is unwise

because the person who is leading you spiritually cares about you, otherwise they would not spend the time, effort, and money needed to lead you. So, when you do not ask your spiritual leader's advice or simply do not apply their advice regarding decisions in your life, you are stiff-arming the input from an older, wiser, and godlier person who God has placed in your life. In the midst of your next decision, seek the advice and council of your spiritual leader, and apply it!

Other references: Hebrews 13:17, 1 Peter 5:1-6, Proverbs 19:20, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

3. Saturate the Decision in Prayer:

The third way you can discern God's direction in decision making is by saturating the decision in prayer.

To saturate means to soak, fill, or load to capacity. When it comes to decision-making, Christians should soak, fill, and load their decisions in prayer. But all too frequently this is not the case, is it? Making decisions pushes students into a frazzled state of stress, worry, and anxiety. Paul identifies what your response should be in Philippians 4:6-7 when he commands "do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." You do not have to be anxious to pray about everything. Everything! That includes the stress inducing decisions.

Many decisions require an extended amount of time in prayer. Why? Because you need to pray for wisdom as you are exploring the Bible for commands, examples, and principles. You need to pray for wisdom for your spiritual leader as you ask him or her for advice. You need to pray for a submissive heart towards God and what He is leading you to do. You need to pray for your anxiety and ask God to reveal any deeper sin issue that may be causing it. You know that you are serious about praying for a decision if you have: prayed about it, asked other people to pray about it, and you've prayed about it with other people.

Other references: Proverbs 16:3, Luke 22:42, 1 John 5:14-15, Ephesians 3:12, 20, 1 Peter 5:7, Colossians 1:9-10

The bottom line is that you can succeed in making godly decisions! God wants you to succeed! There is just one necessity you must apply in biblical decision making. The necessity of discerning God's direction. The next time you are faced with a decision, discern God's direction by applying Biblical principles, applying your spiritual leader's input, and saturating the decision in prayer.