

Decisions, Decisions ...

One of the greatest gifts the Lord has given us is the power to choose. In fact, every day we are faced with literally hundreds of choices. The question is, *Are we making the right ones?*

Think about your own life for a moment. When you have a decision to make, do you normally go with the flow, doing whatever feels right ... or do you pray for wisdom and ask the Lord for insight?

I love Proverbs 3:5-6. It says, "Lean on, trust in, and be confident in the Lord with all your heart and mind and do not rely on your own insight or understanding. In all your ways know, recognize, and acknowledge Him, and He will direct and make straight and plain your paths" (AMP).

If you are anything like me, you know how easy it is to "rely on your own insight." However, just because something might *sound* good, *feel* good and *look* like the right thing to do, it doesn't mean it's God's best for you or necessarily the right direction to take.

Let me give you an example. Early in my ministry, I had the idea to do a local TV talk show in St. Louis. We got a group of ladies together who were well-educated in the Bible, and we rented some studio space at a local TV station to do the taping.

I was trying to do an interview show. However, every time I asked a question, I'd answer it myself! I just couldn't quiet down long enough to let anybody answer my questions.

Do you know what kind of response we got from airing that program? In six months, we received one piece of mail. Why didn't it work? Because it was *my* plan, not God's.

A few years later, the Lord directed us to go on TV, and we didn't have a clue what we were doing. We rented a banquet room where the ceiling was too low and some of the tiles were caving in. We placed a podium on a stage, and for a backdrop we took this blue thing that looked like a shower curtain and strung it up on a pole behind me.

It looked ridiculous, but the very first day my program aired, we received 125 calls! That was the beginning of our television ministry, which continued to expand and now airs throughout two-thirds of the world.

Proverbs 3:7 says, "Be not wise in your own eyes." I believe God is telling us, "Don't think you can run your life and do a good job without My help and direction!"

Sure, we can come up with some good ideas on our own, but many times we settle for *good* when God wants to give us *great*.

Looking for a Sign? Follow Peace.

I believe many Christians struggle with making decisions because they're afraid they won't hear from God. However, the Lord longs to give us direction, and He desires to speak to us in so many ways.

First and foremost, He has given us His Word. The Bible tells us that God's Word is alive, active and powerful (Heb. 4:12). In fact, Jesus is called "the Word made flesh" (John 1:14).

So, when we read and study the Bible, we're not just reading a good book; we are actually spending time with God Himself! The Bible is the instruction manual for our everyday lives.

The Lord can also speak to us through our conscience, other people and even the world around us. But one of the main ways the Lord will direct us is through peace. Take a look at Colossians 3:15:

"And let the peace (soul harmony which comes) from Christ rule

(act as umpire continually) in your hearts [deciding and settling with finality all questions that arise in your minds.”

What exactly does this mean? I like to explain it this way: The umpire in a ball game decides if the ball or player is “in” or “out.” Similarly, peace is the umpire that decides if something in our lives should be in or out.

There have been times when I have been invited to speak at a conference or special event, and I have really wanted to accept. However, I didn’t have peace about doing it, so I decided to decline.

Now, I may not always know why I shouldn’t go, but I have learned (sometimes the hard way) that God knows things I don’t!

For example, several years ago, I said no to an invitation to speak simply because I didn’t have peace. A few weeks later, I found out that my home church was dedicating their new building the weekend I would have been gone. At the time, I was an associate pastor at that church, and it was very important for me to be there.

I encourage you to let the peace in your heart decide with finality every question that arises in your mind. If you are getting ready to make a major decision, put it before the Lord and ask for His guidance. Remember, when you acknowledge Him in all your ways, He will direct your path (Prov. 3:6).

If you are not used to praying about decisions, it may seem awkward at first. But the more you seek the Lord and ask for help, the easier it gets...and the more sensitive you will become to His presence and direction.

Proverbs 16:9 says, “A man’s mind plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps and makes them sure.”

Don't settle for "good enough." God has a *great* plan for your future, and as you seek Him for guidance, He will be faithful to lead you in every single decision you make.

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