

**Decision Making  
10/SO/3**

**AIM:**

To make Christ the focus of all our decision making from the most trivial matters to the more serious. It is only by seeking his guidance and through knowing God's will, that we will be able to handle all challenges in our life.

**VERSES:**

Proverbs 3:5-6; 10:23; 19:20; 21:3; Jeremiah 29:11

**FOCUS ACTIVITY- part 1**

Do you have trouble making decisions? Think about a recent matter or issue on which you had to make a decision. Perhaps it was on how to deal with a trouble maker at your school, or a teacher who incorrectly or unfairly accused you of disrupting the class, or all your friends going to an annual dance party and invite you to attend, or which uni course you may wish to study? Etc. How do you know whom you should listen to, or in what way you should react or what action you should take? How can you know if you've made the right decision or not (sometimes it could take years before you know the outcome of your decision, such as which uni course to choose and whether you end up liking your career, or parents who decide on which school to take their child to)

**LESSON**

Some of these decisions are huge; others are not such a big deal. But they all involve one thing: the individuals making the decisions desire to make the "right" decision, go down the "correct" path, do the "right" thing for their lives.

But we cannot see the future, so we do not know how things are going to turn out for us. We have no way of knowing how one decision may effect the course of our lives.

Read Luke 6:12-16. Jesus prayed all night to God, before selecting the twelve disciples. This was a crucial decision. It was these twelve who would be eyewitness' to His Divinity, His death and resurrection, and would be responsible for spreading the Good News. To this day, before selecting any leader in our Church or a bishop, the Church spends a long time in prayer seeking God's guidance and Grace.

So how can we make "good" decisions?

One commentator suggests that we should change our focus from trying to make "good" decisions, to start making "God" decisions. God decisions are made by people in-tune with the Lord, who know the Bible's teachings, and make decisions for themselves after praying about it and seeking His guidance and wisdom. Wisdom is one of the best things that we could possibly ask Him for!

In the same way that Solomon asked for Wisdom, and God gave him not only wisdom but unimaginable wealth, power, recognition, and authority.

When we are serving Christ and staying in-touch with Him through prayer, then almost any decision we make will be a good one. It will be a "good one", meaning that it is in God's plan for us. He will use it for His good purposes (which may be much different from our own initial thinking), and that He will bring us closer to Himself because of it. When this happens we may then see His Grace and mercy working in our lives.

Nothing is too small for God. We should ask for God's help with *anything & everything*, no matter how menial, how small, or how insignificant we think it may be. God wants to be a part of our everyday, mundane life. He thinks that nothing is too small for His attention. So we must ask for His help with everything, and take everything to Him in prayer. The worst He will probably say is "no", and that is because it is not in His Will for us.

One of easiest ways to decipher if we made a correct decision about something is a feeling of a strong sense of **peace** about it. God will give us His peace, which *surpasses all understanding*. Then we know that we have probably made a great decision that God can and will work with.

Even if we make the wrong decision, we still must not worry but rather lean on God, and trust in Him that He will pick us and help us. But we must also repent, and confess our sins.

The Book of the Paradise of the Holy Fathers<sup>1</sup> recounts an occasion when St Anthony was confronted by two philosophers who wanted to test him. This was not uncommon for many persons of different faiths or intellect wanted to either mock him, or test him. He was at the time living by himself on a far mountain. He perceived them from afar off and discerned whom they were by their garb. Having gone to meet them, he said to them by means of an interpreter: "Why have you gone to all this trouble to come and see a man of low self estate?"

They answered: "you are not a man of low estate, but a wise man". Then after he understood their words, he began to say to them: "if you had come to a man of low estate, you would have gone to all this trouble in vain, but if your words are true, and if you indeed believe that I am a wise man, you would become then even as I am, for it is meet that we should at all times be zealous to obtain the things which are fair. Had it happened

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<sup>1</sup> Vol 1, 1994 at p.59

that I had come to you, I should have been impelled to become like you, and now that you have come to me, become Christians like myself”.

And when the philosophers heard these words, and saw in what a state of subjection the devils stood before him, they marveled exceedingly and turned back in silence.

Here we see the wisdom of St Anthony allowing him to discern that these philosophers were not coming to learn about Christ. The effect of his wise response saw the two philosophers return back to their homes in shame, with St Anthony maintaining his peace and dignity given to him by God.

### **FOCUS ACTIVITY- part 2**

Divide the class into groups of 2 or 3, as the size of the class and number of students permit. Hand out a piece of paper and ask each group to reflect and list the steps they would follow which would help them in making the right decision. Discuss the groups' responses. A suggestion of the steps to follow before taking a decision are:

1. **Begin with prayer.** Your attitude should be one of trust and obedience as you commit the decision to prayer. Do not be fearful in decision making knowing that God has your best interest in mind.

#### ***Jeremiah 29:11-12***

*”For I know the thoughts that I think toward you”, says the LORD, “thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.”<sup>12</sup> Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.”*

2. **Be ready to accept and obey God's answer.** It's unlikely that God will reveal his plan if he knows already that you won't obey. It is absolutely essential that your will be completely submitted to God's. When your will is humbly and fully submitted to the Master, you can have confidence that he will illuminate your path.

#### ***Proverbs 3:5-6***

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.*

If we cannot entirely trust God, then we are not looking at pleasing God, but pleasing man. In that case, we can never be true to God, and rather than fearing God, we will be fearing man – those who might laugh at us, or ostracise us. This is a recipe for a disastrous decision.

3. **Exercise faith.** Remember also, that decision making is a process that takes time. You may have to resubmit your will over and over again to God throughout the

process. Then by faith, which pleases God, trust him with a confident heart that he will reveal his will.

**Hebrews 11:6**

*And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He exists, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

4. **Obtain counsel.** In difficult decisions it's wise to get spiritual and practical counsel from the leaders in your life. A priest, parents, Sunday School servant, parent, or simply a mature believer can often contribute important insight from their experience and answer questions or remove doubts. Make sure to choose individuals who will offer sound biblical advice and not just say what you want to hear. Follow also the footsteps of the saints, and the leaders of the Church.

**Proverbs 15:22**

*Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.*

**Hebrews 13:7-8**

*Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.<sup>8</sup> Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever*

5. **Weigh the decision.** Make a list of the pros and cons connected with the decision. You may find that something on your list clearly violates the revealed will of God in his Word. If so, you have your answer. This is not his will. If not, then you now have a realistic picture of your options to help you make a responsible decision.
6. **Choose your spiritual priorities.** By this time you should have enough information to establish your spiritual priorities as they relate to the decision. Ask yourself which decision best satisfies those priorities? If more than one option will fulfill your established priorities, then choose the one which is your strongest desire.
7. **Act on your decision.** If you have arrived at your decision with the sincere intention of pleasing the heart of God, incorporating biblical principles and wise counsel, you can proceed with confidence knowing that God will work out his purposes through your decision.

**Romans 8:28**

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

**CONCLUSION**

May we pray that our Lord may always grant us discernment to know what's right and right, an earnestness to zealously seek out wisdom, and a heart filled with the love and fear of God, so that God may reveal His Will to us, and guide us into always making decisions which are befitting of His plans for us.