

Better than Potions – A look at decision making

How do we decide? Does God just say, “You make the choice...any way you decide, it’s good, as long as you honor Me”? Or does He sit up there waiting to see if you can figure out what His perfect will is for you or for this situation? Both seem distant and precarious. Maybe we’re asking the wrong questions.

There are no potions, magic words or formulas; no blue or red pill. While at times these could be quite luring, what we’re invited into is so much better.

Listen to some of the questions of Jesus.

What do you want? Matthew 20:32 (So, that’s important – what you want?)

What do you already have? Mark 6:38

What do you think? Matthew 17:25

What is this like? Luke 13:18 (What is the kingdom of God like?)

What will be the cost/consequence? Matthew 16:26

Do you want to be healed? John 5:6

You do not want to go away also, do you? John 6:67

Some of those passages don’t refer to decision making but they bring out something of what’s going on in us. In God’s overarching sovereignty He somehow loves our partnership and connection with Him in the micro and the macro paths of life. He woos us with difficulties and draws us deeply with pain. Sometimes that’s the only way He can get our undivided attention.

Presence, Promises, Partnership

Embedded in Scripture we see His powerful presence, His precious promises and His penchant for our partnership in matters concerning us, including very intimate matters. David alludes to this in Psalm 16 (my paraphrase):

You are what I need, I’m not looking elsewhere. You have been so good. You have counseled me and because of that, my mind instructs me in the night. I’m holding You, Your words, and my understanding of You before me in my decision. You are here with me. Because of that I won’t be on my own. So, I can rejoice in this nearness and this promise of help as I move ahead.

Although we’d like God to just make the choice for us and set aside the agony of the yes or the no, He never promises that it will be so clear. At times it surprisingly is, but more often it is that walk of faith that keeps us so utterly dependent on Him with each step.

Truths that we have held onto over the years:

- Trust, lean not on our understanding and He will direct our path. This assumes His greater understanding and our movement.
- He will guide us with His eye upon us. This assumes His care and our movement.
- He will teach us in the way we should go. This assumes hearing and listening to Him.
- Get wisdom, seek counsel, make plans. This assumes engagement in conversation.

How do we hear Him? That's one of the biggest questions I come across as I coach leaders.

In Scripture we see Him lead through circumstances, other people, signs of the times, His Word, His power, His Spirit, His Church, health, desires, children, emotions, nature, clouds, fire, and worms. Our following Him in decision making encompasses all the data within and without and discerning His guidance through all these possible means.

Discernment takes practice. Hebrews 5:14 "senses trained to discern..." Are we setting Him continually before us, listening to His instruction, aware of our yearnings so we can discern?

We'd love for Him to give us a sign with an arrow pointing the direction we should go...but more often it's a stepping stone of faith with a live Guide, moving toward our next decision, alert to Him opening or closing doors or windows.

Are you noticing His guidance in the inner and outer nudges throughout your day?

"The key to guidance is knowing the Guide." Elizabeth Elliot

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She grew up in Pennsylvania, USA, was captivated by God at age 12; became an RN, got a BS in Bible, then a Masters in Leadership Studies. While in university she met Dan then headed to Bolivia, South America in 1986 to save the world. She had four kids instead. 😊 They moved to Central Asia in 1994 in leadership with a non-profit agency. Currently credentialed as a personal and leader development coach, she works with individuals and groups in person and on-line.

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