

Making Wise Decision in God's Plan

- 1) Recap of Proverbs series so far learning about wisdom (knowledge properly applied)
 - a) Proverbs is the accumulated knowledge of how to live well in God's world..
 - i) Generally: This the basic "moral logic" or formula of Probability of Proverbs
 - (1) seek wisdom and fear (awe) the lord,
 - (a) leading you to live a life of integrity, virtue and generosity and
 - (i) this will lead generally to success and peace.
 - (2) Seek folly and evil
 - (a) leading to a life of selfishness and pride
 - (i) it will lead to ruin and shame.
 - ii) This is the general rule, but we know that there are far more exceptions and the Bible deals with these in the other wisdom books of Job and Ecclesiastes

Wise Decisions and how to make good plans: Specifically how to make them and determine if they are in God's will along with touching on the bonus topic of the paradox of the responsibility of man and the sovereignty of God which is held in tension all through the scriptures. We constantly make decisions, many of which are not right and wrong but are right and left, many choices may be morally fine, within God's laws, legal, but not wise. Who do I marry, what job do I take, how much should I spend on something,.... We need God's guidance and wisdom to make these choices.

- 2) How does God Guide and what is our role? Guidance is primarily something he does, not something he gives... This introduces our concept of Responsibility of Man vs Sovereignty of God
 - i) Prov 21:5 "The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty."
 - (1) Live strategically, plan and work hard it will go well for you
 - ii) Prov 16:33, "The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD."
 - (1) Every detail even a coin toss is controlled by the Lord.
 - (2) Quick tangent... We often want that, a yes or no answer, but God wants us to grow up and in our relationship. But God wants us to know Him and make decisions that choose to further our relationship and make us closer. My wife loves it when I can anticipate and see her desires and do them (not that I am good at it) because she feels loved and cared for... we study those whom we love and want to please. BTW last time we see the lot casting is when the disciples pick one to replace Judas Iscariot, why did it stop? Just after that they

received the HS who guides us and allows his word to dwell richly in us and we can delight in his law.

b) We think EITHER our choices matter, they are significant in history and determining our future OR everything is fixed by "fate" and who cares what you do, Bible says no, Fully Free, Fully Determined.. 100% free, 100% determined

i) Proverbs 16:3- "Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will be established."

(1) I heard a sermon Tim Keller did years ago where that verse stuck out as he said, I bet you hear that and think yes I get that.. But I bet many of you actually have it backwards, commit your plans to the Lord and he will establish your ways .

(a) We want Him to guide us so I make plans that have successful outcomes, but that's not it,

(i) commit everything you do, all your ways and actions to him and you will become the kind of person who makes wise decisions because the Lord will establish them.. Commit your works to the Lord and he will lead you to where good plans and choices are right in front of you.

ii) Proverbs 16:9 "The mind of man plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps."

iii) Practical outflow:

(1) Acts 27 Paul's Shipwreck... Not one will be lost, BUT those sailors must remain or we will all be lost...

(2) If you believe that everything is completely determined, as a fatalist would say, then you think your choices don't matter and you should lose the desire to try, because who cares? This comes out in some Christians who say, why bother praying at all for someone if God is going to do whatever he wants anyway?"

(3) IF you believe, as most Americans do, that the future is not written and we are free to decide for ourselves, and every decision you make will help determine that outcome. If you have any peace in that thought, you are not thinking! Or you have deluded yourself into thinking you know best.. You should be paralyzed at every decision because what is your track record for "getting it right" with what you think is best

(4) If you realize it is 100% for both, then you are free to make the best decision you can without fear of failure or mistakes

because the Lord is “ working all things for the good of those who love Him!” or as Pr 16:4 says “The LORD has made everything for its purpose”

That is how he guides, we are in His will (not the same as not grieving Him), both our wise and our unwise decisions, so we are free to make decisions and yes we will have consequences good and bad (although we often find ourselves shielded from many of these, especially as we increase in our surrender to Him) but he is using all of that to good IN THE END. (Read the story of Joseph in the end of Genesis What you meant for evil good intended for good)

3) So how do we make decisions? Go back and listen to Bill’s sermon in week 2!

a) We COMMIT our ways to him.

i) Commit means to wholly lean on placing all of your weight on it.

(1) Proverbs 3:5-6 “Trust in the Lord, lean not on your own understanding, In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight, Do not be wise in your own eyes, Fear the Lord and turn away from evil.”

(2) In fact Chapter 3 gives lots of examples of what it looks like to commit

(3) So does

(a) Psalm 119 105-112

105 Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path.

106 I have sworn an oath and confirmed it,
to keep your righteous rules.

107 I am severely afflicted;
give me life, O LORD, according to your word!

108 Accept my freewill offerings of praise, O LORD,
and teach me your rules.

109 I hold my life in my hand continually,
but I do not forget your law.

110 The wicked have laid a snare for me,
but I do not stray from your precepts.

111 Your testimonies are my heritage forever,
for they are the joy of my heart.

112 I incline my heart to perform your statutes
forever, to the end.¹

This is total commitment, leading to total righteousness... something we cannot attain, but something that is credited to us through faith in Christ.

(4) However, we struggle to commit don't we?

(a) So what can we do?

(i) Eph 4: put off your old self,^f which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

(b) Do you have a decision in front of you? Think of what the "new self would do and go that way, knowing that you are in His will and if he wants to move you he will.

(i) What does it look like to put on the "New Self":

1. ²⁵Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. ²⁶Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷and give no opportunity to the devil. ²⁸Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. ²⁹Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. ³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³²Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

(5) This means: you will lose your self centeredness and pride and become the kind of person who realizes that you don't know everything and therefore you don't rely solely on

yourself,(Not Wise in your own eyes, but you seek counsel from those who may know more)

(a) Prov 15:22 "Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed."

(6) You will be calm as Paul was in knowing the final outcome the pressure is off to see what needs to be done in a situation and act.

(7) You can trust that God will close doors to wrong decisions and give you the knowledge to know when it is him closing the door and when as Bob Goff says, its just some guy named Lenny who closed the door.

ii) What will it cost you? Everything

"The more we pay for advice, the more we are likely to listen to it. Advice from a friend, which is free, we may take or leave. Advice from a consultant we have paid much for personally, we are more likely to accept, but it's still our choice--we can take it or leave it. But the guidance of God is different. First of all, we do not come to God asking for advice, but for God's will--and that is not optional. And, God's fee is the highest one of all: it costs everything. To ask for the guidance of God requires abandonment. We no longer say, 'If I trust you, you will give me such and such.' Instead we must say, 'I trust you. Give me, or withhold from me whatever you choose.' As John Newton says, 'What you will, when you will, how you will.' Elizabeth Elliot-*God's Guidance*

b) Commit all you do to Hlm today, as you commit more and more you will hear the HS guiding you and prompting you to act in line with his heart. He paid it all for you, He is a Good Father who knows how to give good gifts to his children and care for them far better than we do! So you can know in the end not one bit of pain is wasted, (even the pain caused by your unwise decisions and in the end all your decisions will turn out for his glory and your good.