

Chad Hester
**SESSION 2 | The Counsel of the Lord
& the Counsel of Friends**

I. INTRODUCTION

Four Steps to Christians Decision-Making (adapted from *Just Do Something*, by Kevin DeYoung)

1. Know the counsel of the Lord (read the Scriptures)
- 2. Get the counsel of wise and godly friends**
3. Pray & depend on the Holy Spirit
4. Decide

*How can a young man keep his way pure?
By guarding it according to your word.
With my whole heart I seek you;
let me not wander from your commandments!
I have stored up your word in my heart,
that I might not sin against you. (Psalm 119:9-11)*

*For the LORD gives wisdom;
from his mouth come knowledge and understanding;
he stores up sound wisdom for the upright;
he is a shield to those who walk in integrity,
guarding the paths of justice
and **watching over the way** of his saints.
Then you will understand righteousness and justice
and equity, every good path;
for wisdom will come into your heart,
and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul;
discretion will watch over you,
understanding will guard you,
delivering you from the way of evil,
from men of perverted speech (Proverbs 2:6-12)*

“Guidance is one facet of that total covenant care whereby the King of Love draws me into the destiny of deliverance and delight that he planned for me before the world was made.” --Packer, *God's Plans for You*, p. 98

II. ASSURANCE THAT GOD LEADS

- “It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.” (Deut. 31:8)
- “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.” (Psalm 32:8)
- “In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him *who works all things according to the counsel of his will.*” (Eph. 1:11)
- “I’d like us to consider that maybe we have difficulty discovering God’s wonderful plan for our lives because, if the truth be told, He doesn’t really intend to tell us what it is. And maybe we’re wrong to expect Him to...God does have a specific plan for our lives, *but* it is not one that He expects us to figure out before we make a decision.” –DeYoung, *Just Do Something*, p. 16; 22

III. AUTHORITY THROUGH GOD’S WORD—SCRIPTURE

- The character-forming nature of God’s Word
 - “For this is the will of God, your sanctification...” (1 Thess. 4:3)
 - Guidance through Scripture is less often event-specific and more of a daily/monthly/yearly molding that shapes our desires, motives, and priorities to align more with God.
 - When we come to more major decisions we have a huge advantage because we are already viewing ourselves, the circumstances, and the obstacles with a God-centered, Gospel-motivated perspective.
 - As we immerse ourselves in the Scriptures we begin to have our motives revealed - this is invaluable when it comes to decision making (both the small and the big)
- God’s Word as our treasure
 - “I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways. I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.” (Ps. 119:15-16)
 - We soak in the Scriptures - memorization, meditation, journaling
 - “God wants us to drink so deeply of the Scriptures that our heads and hearts are transformed so that we love what He loves and hate what He hates.” –DeYoung, *Just Do Something*, p. 90

- The Lord is faithful to recall Scripture to our minds when we are faced with decisions, temptations, and anxiety over decision making; but we need Scripture lodged in our minds for that to happen!
- Categories to look for:
- Commands/prohibitions:
 - “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.” (Exodus 20:12)
 - “Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do. You shall not add to it or take from it.” (Deut. 12:32)
 - “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.” (Phil. 2:3)
- Principles
 - “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. (Titus 2:11-14)
 - “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. (Phil. 4:8)
- Examples
 - We have numerous examples of godly (and ungodly) men and women in Scripture that we can learn from in our pursuit of guidance.
 - “Follow the examples of godliness in Scripture. Imitate the love and humility of Jesus himself. If we do this, we cannot go far wrong.” –Packer, *God's Plans for You*
 - “looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith...” (Heb. 12:2)

IV. AFFIRMATION (MAYBE) THROUGH GOD'S PEOPLE— COUNSEL

- “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice.” (Prov. 12:15)
- The beauty of the Church
 - We have been brought into a family of Spirit-indwelt Christians - use them!
 - “We spend all this time asking God, ‘What’s your will?’ when He’s probably thinking, ‘Make a friend, would you? Go talk to someone. There’s a reason I’ve redeemed a lot of you - because you do fewer dumb things when you talk to each other. Get some advice. You might just hear My voice.’” –DeYoung, *Just Do Something*, p. 93-94
 - “...and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, so that *through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known* to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.” (Eph. 3:9-10)
 - We also are fallible and fallen - even with the best intentions we don’t always get things right - nothing is binding!
- Choosing Counselors
 - Who has God placed in your life that you can lean into for spiritual counsel and care?
 - Have you pursued these people?
 - Have you asked them about choices, issues, challenges, or concerns that you face right now?
 - Consider the importance of finding people in seasons of life and maturity beyond your own.
 - Community Groups / Man2Man / One2One / Mom2Mom / Internships
 - A call to students/teenagers to honor and learn from their parents. (Prov. 2; Eph. 6:1-4)
 - “Mark the blameless and behold the upright, for there is a future for a man of peace.” (Psalm 37:37)

- Humility Needed!
 - “Personal guidance that we believe we have received by an inner nudge from the Lord needs to be checked with believers who are capable of recognizing unrealism, delusion, and folly when they see it. The Holy Spirit regularly uses the fellowship of the body of Christ to deepen our discernment of God’s will.” -Packer, *God’s Plans for You*, p.100
 - How to ask for insight. Don’t jump straight into what you think the best solution to the situation is; set the stage, give relevant info, then let them ask questions and give feedback.
 - “If no one has ever heard you change your mind about something, then you are either a god or you have mistaken yourself for one.” - DeYoung, *Just Do Something*, p. 93
 - “Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.’” (1 Peter 5:5)

- How to Counsel
 - “Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:4-5)
 - Caring for others takes sacrificial love!
 - Steps to Providing Care and Counsel (Gary Ricucci)
 1. Get to know the person you’re caring/being cared for
 2. Listen to the problem
 3. Ask questions
 4. Speak Scripture
 5. Bring hope with the Gospel
 6. Agree to a plan of action (James 1:25)