

Josh Pannell  
**SESSION 3 | Ask. Listen. Do.**

## 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

## II. SPEAK TO GOD IN PRAYER

### A. A Warning: Stay Away from Witches and Livers!

*The king of Babylon stands at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination. He shakes the arrows; he consults the teraphim; he looks at the liver. Ezekiel 21:21*

*If a person turns to mediums and necromancers, whoring after them, I will set my face against that person and will cut him off from among his people. Consecrate yourselves, therefore, and be holy, for I am the Lord your God. Leviticus 20:6-7*

*Saul broke faith with the Lord in that he did not keep the command of the Lord, and also consulted a medium, seeking guidance. He did not seek guidance from the Lord. Therefore the Lord put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse. 1 Chronicles 10:13-14*

### B. An Invitation: Come And Ask Our All-Wise God.

1. Pray To The God Who Always Makes Wise Decisions

*Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!  
Romans 11:33*

*For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written,  
"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,*

*and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”  
Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater  
of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For  
since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through  
wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save  
those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but  
we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to  
Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the  
power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is  
wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.<sup>1</sup>  
Corinthians 1:18-24*

2. Pray To The God Who Loves To Share His Wisdom.

*If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all  
without reproach, and it will be given him. James 1:5*

*Good and upright is the Lord;  
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.  
He leads the humble in what is right,  
and teaches the humble his way. Psalm 28:8-9*

3. Pray To The God Who Knows Everything.

C. What Should I Pray To God?

*Let me hear in the morning of your steadfast love, for in you I trust. Make me  
know the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul. Psalm 143:8*

*Teach me your way, O Lord, and lead me on a level path. Psalm 27:11.*

1. 5 Things:<sup>1</sup>

- For illumination, that God would help us to understand Scripture and apply it to our our lives.
- For wisdom.
- For good motives.
- For an attitude of trust, faith, and obedience.
- For humility and teachability.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from chapter 8 of *Just Do Something* by Kevin DeYoung

### III. LISTEN TO GOD IN PRAYER

#### A. Listen, Expecting God to Speak.

*I will take my stand at my watchpost and station myself on the tower, and look out to see what he will say to me, and what I will answer concerning my complaint. Habakkuk 2:1*

*For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation. Psalm 62:1*

*Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down, and if [God] calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant hears.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. And the Lord came and stood, calling as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant hears." 1 Samuel 3:9-10*

#### B. How Does the Holy Spirit Lead Us?

1. Working the Fruit of the Spirit in our Hearts (Galatians 5:22-24)
2. Desires (Galatians 5:17)
3. Divinely Given "Common Sense" (Acts 15:28)
4. Leadings (Matthew 4:1)
5. Perceptions (Acts 27:9-10, 13-15)
6. Gives specific words in evangelism (Luke 12:12)
7. Giving us wisdom from above (James 3:17)
8. Callings to Specific Service (Acts 13:2; Acts 20:22-23)
9. Callings away from Specific Service (Acts 16:6-7)
10. Dreams (Acts 2:17)
11. Visions (Acts 2:17)
12. Prophecy (1 Corinthians 13-14)

#### C. How Can I Know If I'm Hearing the Holy Spirit?

1. Know the Spirit's Voice by listening to him speak in Scripture.
2. Does this contradict the clear teaching of Scripture?

*Weigh what is said. 1 Corinthians 14:29*

*Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil. 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22*

*But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. Galatians 1:8*

3. Does this produce the Fruit of the Spirit or the Works of the Flesh?

*Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law....If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. Galatians 5:19-23, 25.*

4. Is this more consistent with Wisdom from Above or Wisdom from Below?

*Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. James 3:13-18*

#### **IV. STEP 4: DECIDE**

*"If I stop and consider all of the satanic might-bes, I will be in complete despair. Is this any way to make a choice?"<sup>2</sup>*

*U.S. Grant's reply when asked if he was confident that a particular strategy would work: "No, I am not, but in war anything is better than indecision. We must decide. If I am wrong, we shall soon find it out and can do the other thing. But not to decide wastes both time and money and may ruin everything."<sup>3</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup> From John Piper's Journal, October 14, 1979

<sup>3</sup> Ron Chernow, *Grant*.

A. Reasons We Don't Make Decisions

1. The Perfectionist — Immobile Because They Don't Want To Mess Up
2. The Procrastinator — Immobile Because They Would Rather Wait Until Tomorrow
3. The Escapist — Immobile Because They Would Rather Just Not Think About It
4. The Worrier — Immobile Because They Wonder "what will happen if...?"
5. The Doubter — Immobile Because They Doubt God's Desire For My Good/Joy
6. The Second Guesser - Did I make the right decision?

B. Making Decisions Takes Faith.

C. Making Decisions Doesn't have to be complicated.

*Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act. Psalm 37:4-5*

*"Love God and do as you please." Augustine of Hippo<sup>4</sup>*

D. After you decide, humbly trust God.

1. Trust that God is at work in your decision.

*Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand. Proverbs 19:21*

*And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28*

2. Trust that God can use even bad decisions to accomplish his will.

*As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. Genesis 50:20*

3. Trust that even bad decisions aren't powerful enough to stop God from accomplishing his purpose.

*[God] works all things according to the counsel of his will. Ephesians 1:11*

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<sup>4</sup> From Augustine of Hippo's Seventh Homily on 1 John 4:4-12. Lived from 354-430 A.D.