

# **The BEST YES**

**How to Make Wise Decisions**

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Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version, 2011 (Zondervan)





# WEEK 1

## Lord, Lord: Intimacy with God Leads to Better Decisions

### Discussion Guide

**Icebreaker Question:** Other than Jesus, which person in the Bible would you most like to have a conversation with and why?

1. How do you usually make decisions? What are the pros and cons of your typical decision-making process?

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2. What are some ways you usually bring God into your decision-making?

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3. In **Luke 6:47**, Jesus shares three commands starting with “come to me.” The storms of life are too strong to not be in daily communion with God. There is a difference between just thinking about something and actually praying about it. How often do you find yourself thinking through something without praying? Why do you think that is?

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# WEEK 1

## Lord, Lord: Intimacy with God Leads to Better Decisions

### Discussion Guide, cont.

4. Communication is essential in any relationship, and it is certainly crucial for a strong relationship with God. Have you set aside a regular time to read God's word, pray, and listen to God? If yes, share with the group what that looks like. If not, what might you need to change in order to come to Jesus first in prayer?

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5. The second command in **Luke 6:47** is "hear my words." Some people become experts at hearing without understanding, but without understanding there is no comprehension. True hearing is absorbing *and* accepting information about God. Reading and studying scripture is one way to hear and begin to comprehend God's words. Read **Psalm 32:8-11**. God longs to guide us with love and wisdom. He offers to show us our "Best Yes." What challenges or decisions are you facing where you find yourself struggling against God's direction?

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6. What are one or two practical ways you can submit those areas to God's wisdom today?

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# WEEK 1

## Lord, Lord: Intimacy with God Leads to Better Decisions

### Discussion Guide, cont.

7. The third action that Jesus describes in **Luke 6:47** is “puts them into practice.” Another way to say this could be “do what I say.” The key to living, especially during a difficult season, is for us to come to Jesus for instruction, to hear what He says and then do it. When we look for God, long for God, and experience unbroken companionship with God, then we will see Him, hear Him, and be ready to obey Him. Read through **Proverbs 2** and journal below what stands out to you and why.

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8. By looking to God, you can fill your head with His wisdom and your heart with His love. End your time together by praying. As you pray, keep in mind the three commands from **Luke 6:47**: hear, understand, and put into practice. Write down any ways your group members are wanting to better hear, comprehend or obey God's direction in their lives and commit to pray for them this week.

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## WEEK 2

### Check Yes, Check No: The Importance of Prioritization

Sunday, September 4

#### Scripture

##### Mark 1:21-39

<sup>21</sup> They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. <sup>22</sup> The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. <sup>23</sup> Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, <sup>24</sup> “What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!” <sup>25</sup> “Be quiet!” said Jesus sternly. “Come out of him!” <sup>26</sup> The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek. <sup>27</sup> The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him.” <sup>28</sup> News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee. <sup>29</sup> As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. <sup>30</sup> Simon’s mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they immediately told Jesus about her. <sup>31</sup> So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them. <sup>32</sup> That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. <sup>33</sup> The whole town gathered at the door, <sup>34</sup> and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was. <sup>35</sup> Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. <sup>36</sup> Simon and his companions went to look for him, <sup>37</sup> and when they found him, they exclaimed: “Everyone is looking for you!” <sup>38</sup> Jesus replied, “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.” <sup>39</sup> So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.



## WEEK 2

### Check Yes, Check No: The Importance of Prioritization

#### Discussion Guide

**Icebreaker Question:** If you could permanently eliminate one chore from your to-do list, what would it be? Why?

1. None of us has enough time to do *everything* we want to do in a typical day. What are some of the things you make time for every day?

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2. Think back over the last seven days. What was your biggest distraction or “time-waster” of the past week?

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3. How might distractions or wasting time be keeping you from prioritizing God and His will in your life? What is one step you can take this week to reduce wasted time and prioritize God each day?

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## WEEK 2

### Check Yes, Check No: The Importance of Prioritization

#### Discussion Guide, cont.

4. Have someone in the group read **Mark 1:35-38**. Does it surprise you that Jesus refused His disciples' request to stay and minister in Capernaum even though there were still people who needed His help? How do you prioritize which needs to respond to and which needs to let someone else respond to?

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5. Have someone in the group read **Matthew 6:33**. What do you think it means to "seek first the kingdom of God?" What is one way you can seek God's kingdom as the first priority of your life?

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6. Have someone in the group read **Mark 12:29-31**. As you think about the activities that fill your week, what are some of the ways you can fulfill Jesus' commands during your normal activities (work, home, gym, family, school, etc.) this week?

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## WEEK 2

### Check Yes, Check No: The Importance of Prioritization

#### Discussion Guide, cont.

7. It has been said, every day you either move closer or drift farther from God based on the decisions you make. What steps can you take today to ensure you are growing in your relationship with God?

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**PERSONAL ACTIVITY (To be discussed at next week's small group):** Take five minutes at the end of each day to record your how you spent each hour of your day. Do this exercise every day until next week's small group and be prepared to share one or two observations about how you spent your time.

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Monday: \_\_\_\_\_

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Tuesday: \_\_\_\_\_

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Wednesday: \_\_\_\_\_

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Thursday: \_\_\_\_\_

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Friday: \_\_\_\_\_

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Saturday: \_\_\_\_\_

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## WEEK 3

### One Another: Serving Sacrificially in a World of Self-Care

#### Discussion Guide

**Icebreaker Question:** Last week, we encouraged you to do an exercise: record your daily activities and reflect on how you spent your time. Share one or two observations from this exercise with the group.

1. Our culture emphasizes putting oneself first. Have someone in the group read **Philippians 2:3-4**. What do you think it means to “value others above yourself?”

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2. Have someone in the group read **Philippians 2:5-8**. In this passage, Paul uses Jesus as the primary example of someone who set aside His own personal comfort in order to serve others. What is one thing in your life that interferes with serving others consistently?

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## WEEK 3

### One Another: Serving Sacrificially in a World of Self-Care

#### Discussion Guide, cont.

3. One helpful question to ask yourself occasionally is, "What is it like to be on the other side of me?" In other words, what do people experience when interacting with you? Do you consider yourself a generous person who is willing to sacrifice personal comfort in order to serve others? Would your spouse, children, co-workers, parents, teachers agree? Ask one of these people just to see!

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4. Do you find it easier to serve certain people more than others? Explain.

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5. We all have many God-given gifts that can be used daily to extend generosity, such as our time, our experiences, our homes, our compassion, and our insight. What is one unique gift that you possess that can be used today to show God's love to others?

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## WEEK 3

### One Another: Serving Sacrificially in a World of Self-Care

#### Discussion Guide, cont.

6. What are three ways you prioritize serving others on a regular basis? Are you serving anyone outside of your family?

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7. Talk about the benefits of serving as a small group, and identify a way to serve together at least once during this series. If you need additional information on serving opportunities, please visit our website: [venturamissionary.com/local-outreach](http://venturamissionary.com/local-outreach).

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## WEEK 4

# I Can't Do It All: Admitting our Limits and Trusting God

**Sunday, September 18**

## Scripture

### **Exodus 18:1-27**

Now Jethro, the priest of Midian and father-in-law of Moses, heard of everything God had done for Moses and for his people Israel, and how the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt. <sup>2</sup> After Moses had sent away his wife Zipporah, his father-in-law Jethro received her <sup>3</sup> and her two sons. One son was named Gershom, for Moses said, "I have become a foreigner in a foreign land"; <sup>4</sup> and the other was named Eliezer, for he said, "My father's God was my helper; he saved me from the sword of Pharaoh.

<sup>5</sup> Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, together with Moses' sons and wife, came to him in the wilderness, where he was camped near the mountain of God. <sup>6</sup> Jethro had sent word to him, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons." <sup>7</sup> So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and bowed down and kissed him. They greeted each other and then went into the tent. <sup>8</sup> Moses told his father-in-law about everything the LORD had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians for Israel's sake and about all the hardships they had met along the way and how the LORD had saved them. <sup>9</sup> Jethro was delighted to hear about all the good things the LORD had done for Israel in rescuing them from the hand of the Egyptians. <sup>10</sup> He said, "Praise be to the LORD, who rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians and of Pharaoh, and who rescued the people from the hand of the Egyptians. <sup>11</sup> Now I know that the LORD is greater than all other gods, for he did this to those who had treated Israel arrogantly." <sup>12</sup> Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and other sacrifices to God, and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat a meal with Moses' father-in-law in the presence of God. <sup>13</sup> The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening. <sup>14</sup> When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, "What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?"

## WEEK 4

### I Can't Do It All: Admitting our Limits and Trusting God

#### **Exodus 18:1-27, cont.**

<sup>17</sup> Moses' father-in-law replied, "What you are doing is not good. <sup>18</sup> You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. <sup>19</sup> Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him. <sup>20</sup> Teach them his decrees and instructions, and show them the way they are to live and how they are to behave. <sup>21</sup> But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. <sup>22</sup> Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. <sup>23</sup> If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied." <sup>24</sup> Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said. <sup>25</sup> He chose capable men from all Israel and made them leaders of the people, officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. <sup>26</sup> They served as judges for the people at all times. The difficult cases they brought to Moses, but the simple ones they decided themselves. <sup>27</sup> Then Moses sent his father-in-law on his way, and Jethro returned to his own country. <sup>15</sup> Moses answered him, "Because the people come to me to seek God's will. <sup>16</sup> Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God's decrees and instructions."

#### **Sermon Notes**

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## WEEK 4

### I Can't Do It All: Admitting our Limits and Trusting God

#### Discussion Guide

**Icebreaker Question:** What is one goal you want to accomplish this year?

1. Look back at your response to Question 3 from Week 2. What progress have you made in the area of using your time wisely?

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2. In her book "The Best Yes," author Lysa Terkeurst confesses, "sometimes I confuse the command to love with the disease to please. I dread saying yes, but I feel powerless to say no." (Terkeurst, pg. 5). Have you ever felt that way? How do you balance the importance of serving others with the reality that there is a capacity to how much you can do for others?

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3. **Exodus 18** is a great example of someone (Moses) who was trying to please everyone but was actually pleasing no one. When thinking about your limitations and priorities, saying "yes" to one person means you will have to say "no" to someone else. Who are you currently neglecting because you have said "yes" to someone else? Talk about ways you might delegate to free you up your capacity to serve those who ought to be your priority.

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## WEEK 4

### I Can't Do It All: Admitting our Limits and Trusting God

#### Discussion Guide, cont.

4. Accepting our limitations can be a struggle. However, when we let our schedules get out of control, everything around us suffers: our families, our attitudes, our stress levels and most importantly our souls. Lysa Terkeurst says it this way: “The decisions we make dictate the schedules we keep; the schedules we keep determine the life we live; the life we live determines how we spend our soul—and how we spend our soul matters.” Share an example of a time when you made a decision that you later realized was unwise? How did that impact your schedule, your life, and your soul? What would have been a “best yes” in that situation?

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5. What would have been a “best yes” in the situation you described above?

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6. Part of trusting God with our priorities is releasing control and worldly expectations. Where are you feeling pressure to prioritize something that the world deems important, but you believe that God is calling you to something greater?

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## WEEK 4

### I Can't Do It All: Admitting our Limits and Trusting God

#### Discussion Guide, cont.

7. What is one expectation you need to say "no" to this week and one priority you need to say "yes" to this week?

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## WEEK 5

### Who Am I Listening To? The Importance of Surrounding Yourself With Wisdom

Sunday, September 25

#### Scripture

##### 1 Kings 12:1-20

<sup>1</sup> Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone there to make him king. <sup>2</sup> When Jeroboam son of Nebat heard this (he was still in Egypt, where he had fled from King Solomon), he returned from Egypt. <sup>3</sup> So they sent for Jeroboam, and he and the whole assembly of Israel went to Rehoboam and said to him: <sup>4</sup> "Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but now lighten the harsh labor and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you." <sup>5</sup> Rehoboam answered, "Go away for three days and then come back to me." So the people went away. <sup>6</sup> Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who had served his father Solomon during his lifetime. "How would you advise me to answer these people?" he asked. <sup>7</sup> They replied, "If today you will be a servant to these people and serve them and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your servants." <sup>8</sup> But Rehoboam rejected the advice the elders gave him and consulted the young men who had grown up with him and were serving him. <sup>9</sup> He asked them, "What is your advice? How should we answer these people who say to me, 'Lighten the yoke your father put on us'?" <sup>10</sup> The young men who had grown up with him replied, "These people have said to you, 'Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but make our yoke lighter.' Now tell them, 'My little finger is thicker than my father's waist. <sup>11</sup> My father laid on you a heavy yoke; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions.'" <sup>12</sup> Three days later Jeroboam and all the people returned to Rehoboam, as the king had said, "Come back to me in three days." <sup>13</sup> The king answered the people harshly. Rejecting the advice given him by the elders, <sup>14</sup> he followed the advice of the young men and said, "My father made your yoke heavy; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions."





# WEEK 5

## Who Am I Listening To? The Importance of Surrounding Yourself With Wisdom

### Discussion Guide

**Icebreaker Question:** What is your favorite family tradition?

1. Share an example of a time when you made a bad decision because you felt pressure from someone else.

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2. Have four people in the group read one of the following Scriptures: **Proverbs 12:15**, **Proverbs 19:20-21**, **Proverbs 15:22**, and **Proverbs 27:6**. Discuss what you think each Proverb is emphasizing.

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3. Who has been one of the most influential people in your life? What qualities made that person so influential in your life?

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## WEEK 5

### Who Am I Listening To? The Importance of Surrounding Yourself With Wisdom

#### Discussion Guide, cont.

4. In his book, “The Aspiring Leader’s Guide to the Future,” Clay Scroggins uses the illustration of canoeing down the river. He says we all need three types of people in our lives: we need someone downstream—someone who has been here before and can tell you what’s coming, we need someone upstream—someone you can pass advice back to who can learn from what you have experienced, and someone in the canoe next to us—someone we can share our present joys and struggles with as they happen (Scroggins, pg. 44). Do you have anyone in your life right now who is “downstream?” In other words do you have a coach, or mentor, or mature Christian who is helping you navigate life? If so, talk about the benefits of that relationship. If not, talk about how you might go about finding that person.

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5. Do you have anyone in your life right now who is “upstream?” In other words, do you have anyone you are coaching, mentoring, or discipling? Describe that relationship.

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## WEEK 5

### Who Am I Listening To? The Importance of Surrounding Yourself With Wisdom

#### Discussion Guide, cont.

6. Who are the people who are “in the canoe next to you?” In other words, who are the friends, family, and ministry partners who are encouraging you as you follow Jesus and how has their influence impacted your faith journey?

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7. The early church didn't just meet in large gatherings for worship; they also had small group meetings in homes. Being a part of a small group is a great way to have people “in the canoe next to you.” If you are currently in a small group, how has that experience helped you grow in your relationship with Jesus? If you are not in a small group, what is keeping you from taking that step? (for a current list of all our small group options, please visit our website at: [venturamissionary.com/small-groups](http://venturamissionary.com/small-groups).)

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