

DISCIPLESHIP PATHWAY

Wise: having discernment and sound decision-making

“Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity,” Ephesians 5.15-16a

CORE - WISDOM

STARTER QUESTIONS:

Do you ever run into “decision fatigue”?

Excerpt from “Always Wear The Same Suit: Obama’s Presidential Productivity Secrets” by Drake Baer:

“President Obama always wears the same thing. Which is part of his secret to getting so much done.

As he told Vanity Fair:

“You’ll see I wear only gray or blue suits,” [Obama] said. “I’m trying to pare down decisions. I don’t want to make decisions about what I’m eating or wearing. Because I have too many other decisions to make.”

This is because, the Commander in Chief explained, the act of making a decision erodes your ability to make later decisions. Psychologists call it decision fatigue: it’s why shopping for groceries can be so exhausting and judges give harsher rulings later in the day.”

What is the bravest/craziest decision you’ve ever made? Was it wise or unwise? What was the outcome (or if you haven’t seen an outcome, how are you feeling after making the decision?

MAIN IDEA:

One of the basic values of our faith impacting our life is seeking wisdom in our choices.

From the message this week: **New definition of rich:** having more than we need!

"God has blessed me with more than I need. I'm rich.

I will not trust in my riches, but in Him who richly gives me all I need."

KEY VERSE:

“If you need wisdom-if you want to know what God wants you to do- ask Him, and He will gladly tell you. He will not resent your asking.” James 1:5 NLT

Topics for discussion:

In the message, Pastor Hank gave us 5 specific ways for us to seek wisdom in our lives and with our decisions. Let's review them (*you may wish to focus on a scripture for each one, or you can wait and discuss these later*).

1. Give your life to God

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Proverbs 9:10 (NIV)

"I have come so that you might have life and have it to the full!" John 10:10 (NIV)

"Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light." Matthew 11:28-30 (NLT)

2. Align your life with God's Word

"Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives...and teaches us to do what is right. It is God's way of preparing us in every way, fully equipped for every good thing God wants us to do." II Timothy 3:16-18

"Let the words of Christ in all their richness, live in your heart and make you wise." Colossians 3:16

3. Listen to good advice

"Spend time with the wise and you will become wise, but the friends of fools will suffer." Prov. 13:20 (NCV)

4. Decide to trust God

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." Prov 3:5-6 (NIV)

5. Ask God for help

"If you need wisdom-if you want to know what God wants you to do- ask Him, and He will gladly tell you. He will not resent your asking." James 1:5 NLT

For today, let's look at a case study in wise decision making. As we read this story, see if you can identify some of the places where we see Pastor Hank's 5 rules for wise decisions.

Esther was a young Jewish girl who lived under the reign of Xerxes, King of Persia. One day, when the king was looking for a new wife, she was gathered up with other young women, brought before the king, and ultimately he chose her to be queen. However, given the advice of her uncle, Mordecai, she did not reveal her Jewish heritage.

Fast forward: Xerxes was given some wisdom from some unwise advisors that he should wipe out the Jews from the land.

Read Esther 4:6-11.

1. **What did Mordecai tell Esther through her servant, Hathach? What did he say she should do?** *(He told her of the planned annihilation of the Jews and said she should go before the king to plead for their survival.)*
2. **How does Esther respond? What are the consequences she could face?** *(She was fearful because she faced execution by approaching the king without being summoned.)*

Pick up the story again: vs. 12-17

3. **How does Mordecai respond to Esther's fear? Encouragement? Rebuke? Acceptance?**
4. **What important rhetorical question does he ask her at the end of verse 14?** *(Who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?)*
5. **What then does Esther ask Mordecai to do?** *(Gather the Jews to fast and pray).*
6. **What is her decision?**

Finish the story in the beginning of chapter 5 vs 1-3.

7. **What did Esther do?**
8. **What happened when she approached Xerxes?**

The conclusion to the story takes 2 chapters, but ultimately God brings favor on Esther and Xerxes has mercy on the Jews.

Where did you see some of the 5 principals of wisdom in Esther's life?
(She clearly trusted God, listened to good people, and asked God for wisdom).

There is one significant piece of information missing between chapters 4 & 5, what is it?
(We have no record that God promised Esther's safety or that she was making the "right" decision).

This seems like a place where God would give Esther a miraculous answer in a dream or something, but he doesn't. Esther made her decision based on God's principles, wisdom from wise council, and then prayed for God's favor.

Why don't you think God spoke directly to Esther?

Have you ever felt frustrated that God didn't give you a clear answer on a difficult choice?

What did you do?

How can we build up our capacity for decision making?

How do we make ourselves better Godly-decision makers?

FINAL THOUGHTS:

Godly decision making can feel stressful, but it doesn't have to be dramatic. God doesn't care what pair of socks we choose to wear today. Sometimes he doesn't care what career path we choose. Sometimes we can get hung up on waiting for a dramatic sign, when God really wants us to live Godly lives whatever the context. There will be times when God wants us to pick a specific direction, but often he lets us choose our own paths. Wisdom comes by choosing paths that align with his principles and guidance.

How can our group pray for you?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

CORE... STRENGTHENING WHAT MATTERS!

“Wisdom – Making the Best Decisions Possible”

January 7, 2018

“Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and all the people.”

Luke 2:52 (NLT)

How to make Wise Decisions:

1. Give your life to God

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Proverbs 9:10 (NIV)

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John 10:10 (NIV)

“Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”

Matthew 11:28-30 (NLT)

“Start with God. The first step in learning is bowing down to God.”

Proverbs 1:7 (MSG)

2. Align your life with God’s Word

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