

TAKE HOME SHEET



**Series:** Wisdumb  
**Message:** Ground Rules  
**Speaker:** Tough Decisions Ahead  
**Date:** February 20, 2022

Good decision-making isn't a mysterious process, but neither is it simple. It requires us to honestly evaluate our desires and motives and bring them to God humbly and with open hands. The principle isn't that we should always take the most painful and difficult option, but that we are willing to do so if that is what honors God. The following are some important passages from the Bible to keep in mind, as we approach tough decisions, both small and big.

**We need to be careful about what we “desire” and want.**

*<sup>2</sup> You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can't get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them. Yet you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it. <sup>3</sup> And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure.*

James 4:2–3 (NLT)

**Living to serve and care for others is distinctly Christ-like and at times it will cost us.**

*<sup>19</sup> For God is pleased when, conscious of his will, you patiently endure unjust treatment. <sup>20</sup> Of course, you get no credit for being patient if you are beaten for doing wrong. But if you suffer for doing good and endure it patiently, God is pleased with you. <sup>21</sup> For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in his steps. <sup>22</sup> He never sinned, nor ever deceived anyone. <sup>23</sup> He did not retaliate when he was insulted, nor threaten revenge when he suffered. He left his case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly. <sup>24</sup> He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed. <sup>25</sup> Once you were like sheep who wandered away. But now you have turned to your Shepherd, the Guardian of your souls.*

1 Peter 2:19–25 (NLT)

**If I am willing to suffer for God's sake, I can count on Him to make it worth it!**

*With all this going for us, my dear, dear friends, stand your ground. And don't hold back. Throw yourselves into the work of the Master, confident that nothing you do for him is a waste of time or effort.*

1 Corinthians 15:58 (MSG)

**BIBLE TRANSLATIONS:**

MSG – The Message

NLT – New Living Translation

TLB – The Living Bible

MESSAGE NOTES



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**A healthy process for making good decisions isn't so much steps, as ingredients.**

- Find a trustworthy main source for wisdom. Followers of Christ have the very best!
- Learn and follow the basic ground rules and principles. The Bible is where we learn them.
- Listen and learn from others who are experienced and wise. The church is designed for this.

**Jesus gives us another essential ingredient in good/God-honoring decision making.**

<sup>31</sup> *Jesus began to tell them that the Son of Man must suffer many terrible things and be rejected by the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but three days later he would rise from the dead.*

<sup>32</sup> *As he talked about this openly with his disciples, Peter took him aside and began to reprimand him for saying such things.*

<sup>33</sup> *Jesus turned around and looked at his disciples, then reprimanded Peter. "Get away from me, Satan!" he said. "You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from*

*God's."* <sup>34</sup> *Then, calling the crowd to join his disciples, he said, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. <sup>35</sup> If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it. <sup>36</sup> And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? <sup>37</sup> Is anything worth more than your soul?"*

Mark 8:31–37 (NLT)

**Question: "Am I willing to put God's desires above my own, even if it means suffering?"**

<sup>14</sup> *...if you suffer for doing what is right, God will reward you for it. So don't worry or be afraid of their threats. <sup>15</sup> Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. <sup>16</sup> But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ. <sup>17</sup> Remember, it is better to suffer for doing good, if that is what God wants, than to suffer for doing wrong!*

<sup>18</sup> *Christ suffered for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners to bring you safely home to God. He suffered physical death, but he was raised to life in the Spirit.*

1 Peter 3:14–18 (NLT)

<sup>40</sup> *The Council...called in the apostles, had them beaten, and then told them never again to speak in the name of Jesus, and finally let them go.*

<sup>41</sup> *They left the Council chamber rejoicing that God had counted them worthy to suffer dishonor for his name.*

Acts 5:40–41 (TLB)

*Yes, and everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*

2 Timothy 3:12–13 (NLT)

<sup>22</sup> *But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, and self-control...Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there.*

<sup>25</sup> *Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives.*

Galatians 5:22–25 (NLT)