

MAKING WISE DECISIONS AT WORK
Work Matters • Part 5
Discussion Guide

*“Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
and don’t depend on your own understanding.
Remember the Lord in all you do,
and he will give your success.”*

Proverbs 3:5-6 (NCV)

King Solomon is known to be the wisest man who ever lived. His writing of Proverbs gives us principles for making wise decisions. The following eight principles are valuable not just in work decisions, but in all life’s decisions. They are: Check the Bible...Get the facts...Ask for advice...Set a goal...Count the cost... Plan for problems...Face my fears...Step out in faith. Since your choices create your character and your decisions determine your destiny, the challenge is to continue to trust God and not our feelings or emotions.

Open your group with a prayer. This is only a guide – select the points you want to discuss.

*“It is the Lord who gives wisdom;
from him come knowledge and understanding.
He provides help and protection
for those who are righteous and honest.”*

Proverbs 2:6-7 (TEV)

1. Why do you think it is important to get God’s perspective BEFORE getting anyone else’s advice on an anticipated decision? How might that perspective be different if you were to talk to people and THEN look in Scripture to see what God says?

*“Sensible people are careful to stay out of trouble,
but stupid people are careless and act too quickly.”*

Proverbs 14:16 (TEV)

2. Has there ever been a time when you made a decision too quickly, perhaps without taking the time to gather all the facts? Discuss in your group the reason it seemed so urgent. What would have been the consequence, if any, had you slowed the process?

3. Mistakes occur often when we think we have all the answers, act prematurely and fail to take the time to learn from people who have experience. Read Proverbs 15:22. Why do you think people sometimes just skip seeking the advice of others?

*“Look straight ahead,
and fix your eyes on what lies before you.
Mark out a straight path for your feet;
then stick to the path and stay safe.
Don’t get sidetracked.”*

Proverbs 4:25-27 (NLT)

4. Our culture presses for things to be accomplished rapidly; people are rewarded for their ability to make snap decisions. Read Proverbs 20:25. Suggest ways we can slow down our decision-making, make sure our goals and milestones are wisely determined and that we have counted the cost.

Diving Deeper (optional)

1. Read Proverbs 29:25. Sometimes we may put off making a decision out of fear. However, indecision is a decision. It stagnates our life and our growth. What decision have you been putting off due to fear? Ask the group to pray with you about having the clarity of using the steps outlined above and moving forward with this decision.

2. Acting against our fears takes courage. Yet courage is only discovered when we step out in faith. Read Romans 8:31. Ask yourself where you need to trust God today. Share this with your group and commit your way to the Lord.

Review any assignments or commitments made during your previous meeting.

Sermon Discussion Guide Leader Notes

Suggestions for This Week's Study

Icebreaker: Briefly tell the group who is the wisest person you know and how you think they became so wise.

Goal: Use the eight biblical steps from Proverbs (see introduction) to help us make wise decisions in life.

Closing Prayer: Lord of heaven and earth, our creator and savior, we are daily in need of your wisdom. May we trust you in all things and learn from those who have gone before us. Help us face our fears and step out in faith, knowing that you and others are watching us. Let our lives shine as an example of Christ Jesus to those who need to see you. May our lives be counted as worthy of your sacrifice on our behalf. In your name we pray. Amen.

Preparing to Lead Your Group

Pray for insight as you begin to prepare for leading your group. Ask for God's wisdom, that the Holy Spirit will be the teacher and that you will be God's instrument to lead the group to greater understanding and a willingness to commit to becoming more like God. Prayer should be your primary source of personal preparation for leading your group.

Plan where you want to take your group in the next 60-90 days. Is your group strong in some areas and weak in others? How can you challenge the members to live more balanced Christian lives? Consider God's five purposes for the church: Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry, Mission and Worship, and make a plan to encourage your group members to growth and commitment in their weak areas.

Ponder your progress after each session and at the end of a series. Reflect on what went well and what didn't. Re-evaluation is key to your growth as a leader. Consider whether your plan is being effective in moving the group to greater understanding and commitment. How are you doing with leading the discussion: is it stimulating, challenging, and meaningful? Are you able to keep the group on track? Do you need to make some changes?

Using This Sermon Discussion Guide

Talk It Over is a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. We've designed it so it can be completed easily within 30-45 minutes. As the discussion leader, you should preview and evaluate the questions based on the needs of your group. Decide in advance what is most important to focus on, should time not allow for the entire lesson.

Feel free to adapt the format to meet the needs of your group. If your group is mature and wants to dig deeper, consider using the Diving Deeper section or add additional Scripture and ask suitable questions. Remember that this is only a guide.

The questions relating to Bible study methods are helpful to develop Bible literacy and spiritual maturity in our lives. You can help your group be aware of their needs in these areas by using these questions as a regular part of each discussion.

Personal applications are essential for growth and should be included in every discussion. When discussing how they will apply principles, group members may state very general goals such as "I need to spend more time in prayer." It is important for you to help people make goals that are very specific and commit to specific plans of action by asking, for example, "How are you going to begin?" An example is to get up 25 minutes earlier each morning, spending 15 minutes reading the Bible and 10 minutes in prayer. Encourage each group member to be accountable to the group for personal progress at the next meeting.

Your goal as the leader is to bring the group into a stimulating discussion that helps the members recognize their needs for personal life change. Ultimately you want them to be willing to commit to change with accountability to the group. Accountability helps us to persevere in our commitments and achieve the blessings of success.