



With no vision, people wander aimlessly.

Decision making is a learned skill that involves making choices now that shape your future. Offered below is a process you may find helpful for reaching better decisions and improving communication. It helps overcome the noise, hype and emotions that often surround difficult decisions.

Step One: *What is the issue you are facing?*

- a) **Begin by praying** for clear thinking, to be able to discern God's timing and direction, and to have the ability to make good choices. James 1:5 says, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him."
- b) **Consider Scripture.** Are there Biblical principles and insights that should drive your thoughts about what you are trying to accomplish and what success would look like?
- c) **Seek wise counsel.** Scripture has much to say about seeking counsel and developing a willingness to learn from others. "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisors they succeed" (Prov 15:22). We are to avoid ungodly counsel (Ps 1:1-2) and to seek wise counsel (Prov 1:5).
- d) **Now reduce to writing the true issue you are facing.** You want to be sure the issue is accurately stated. It is very frustrating when you reach a great answer to the wrong question.

Step Two: *How would you describe the best outcome?*

- a) **Write down your objectives.** List your goals for the outcome of this decision.
- b) **Prioritize your goals.** Not every objective will be of equal importance to you. Some will be absolute "**must haves**." Others will vary in importance; we refer to these as "**like to haves**." An option is dropped from consideration if it fails to have all the "**must haves**." "**Like to haves**" are negotiable.

Step Three: *Now, what are your choices?*

- a) **List all possible choices.** Think creatively. Consider the question, "What else might work?" Make sure you include all the possibilities you can think of. This is a good time to seek the insight of trusted counselors to help you identify additional options. You want everything on the table, because your decision can be no better than your best alternative.
- b) **Analyze your choices.** Fundamental principle: Every decision is made to accomplish certain objectives, not just to arrive at a pre-determined alternative. Compare your options to your goals. A choice is good only if it meets your objectives.
- c) **Which choice best meets your objectives and priorities?**

Fundamentals to recognize about decision making:

1. Learning to make good decisions is a skill that helps equip you to live successfully.
2. Every decision requires making a choice from among many alternatives.
3. Decisions should be made to fulfill prioritized objectives, not feelings.
 - Feelings may be indicators of objectives but they are not objectives.
 - What are the objectives I'm trying to accomplish?
 - Are they all of equal importance to me?
4. A decision is a good one only when it satisfies your objectives and priorities.
5. A decision can never be any better than the alternatives considered.
 - Consider other ideas that may prove to be your best alternative.
 - Avoid the trap of limiting your choices.
6. When making decisions, keep your focus on your desired destination.
 - Knowing your desired destination, you will likely make better decisions.
 - Make decisions today that will best accomplish your long-term goals and objectives.
7. Knowing you own the decision, how will you evaluate your progress?
 - Regardless of the effort you put into making a decision, every step along your path may not work out as expected. This tool provides the framework for successful adjustments.
8. What are the outcomes that we are seeking from this process?
 - to discern God's leading,
 - to bring unity, and
 - to develop the criteria necessary to assess this decision in the future and make changes as necessary.