

Cheltenham
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Living Wisely In The Age Of Multiple Choice

Psychologist Barry Schwartz, in his TED Talk called The Paradox of Choice, argues "*too much choice, produces paralysis rather than liberation. And even when we manage to overcome this paralysis and make a choice we often end up less satisfied with the result of our choice than we would have been if we'd had fewer options to choose from.*"

KEY VERSE:

Deuteronomy 30:15-18 (NLT) - "Now listen! Today I am giving you a choice between life and death, between prosperity and disaster...¹⁶For I command you this day to love the LORD your God and to keep his *commands, decrees, and regulations by walking in his ways. If you do this, you will live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you and the land you are about to enter and occupy. But if your heart turns away and you refuse to listen, and if you are drawn away to serve and worship other gods, then I warn you now that you will certainly be destroyed...*

God is concerned first and foremost about our relationship with Him.

Some key things to consider in making wise decisions:

1. Have I Considered God?

God loves for us to include Him in our decision-making process.

Proverbs 3:5-7 - Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil.

Don't look at a decision from just your perspective. Come to realise that we see in part and know in part, but God knows everything. So include God first.

- Talk To God – pray, ask God to open your eyes, to lead you, to give you discernment.
- Turn to God's Word - what does the Bible say about this decision?

2. Have I Considered The Facts?

Proverbs 18:13 - Spouting off before listening to the facts is both shameful and foolish (NLT)

Proverbs 19:2 - Enthusiasm without knowledge is no good; haste makes mistakes.

Don't be hasty in making a decision until you have all the facts.

3. Have I Considered Collective Counsel of My Community?

One of the consequences of our industrious society is the breakdown of community and family. This is creating a great disconnect and huge impact on the way we make decisions. As a result more and more people are making decisions in isolation whether by direct choice or by circumstance.

Proverbs 11:14 - Where there is no guidance the people fall, but in an abundance of counsellors there is victory.

Proverbs 18:1 - He who separates himself seeks his own desire. He quarrels against all sound wisdom.

4. Have I Considered The Cost?

Proverbs 20:25 - Don't trap yourself by making a rash promise to God and only later counting the cost.

Luke 14:28 - But don't begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it?

Every decision has a price tag. There is a cost to every decision we make including time, money, relationships, lifestyle, energy, reputation, talents and resources. It's important that we calculate the cost.

God wants us to count the cost before we make a decision.

5. Have I Considered My Motivations & Fears?

When I am trying to make a decision it's really important to be self-aware of your motives and fears. Are the motives for this decision coming from a good place or potentially something more destructive such as fear?

Proverbs 16:2 - All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, but the Lord weighs the motives.

Ecclesiastes 11:4 – Farmers who wait for perfect weather never plant. If they watch every cloud, they never harvest.

CONNECT GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

- How were you raised to make decisions? What role models did you have?
- Discuss a time when you may have made a poor decision, what made it so?

- Discuss a time when you made a good decision, what made it so?
- Are there some considerations given for decision making which are not easy for you to do? Explain why?
- Who is in your collective counsel? Where do you go?
- Has God worked some of your decisions for good?
- What potential fears might you have surrounding decision making?