

## How Do I Know My Decisions Are Right?

**Luke 14:28:** (NASB) *For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it?*

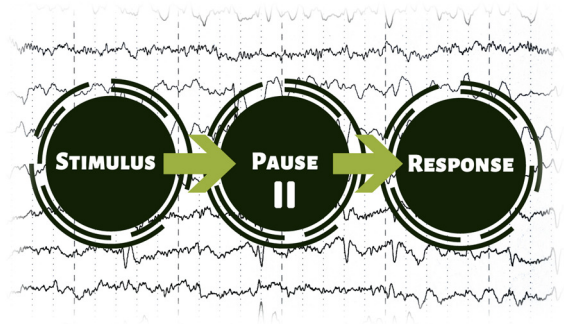


To live is to decide. No matter who you are and what environment you live in, you will most likely be pressed with making an untold number of decisions that have a direct influence on how your life will unfold. This can be a scary thought because no one wants to make bad decisions. Yet, most of us do not seriously put in the time and effort to be sure our decisions are good. How can this be? Much has to do with the way our minds work, social pressure and our desire for comfort. As Christians, we need to be keenly aware of these challenges because our decisions are supposed to always be in line with God's will and Jesus' footsteps. How must we think and what must we do in order to keep our decisions in line with all that would bring glory to God?

To expand on the following decision principle, please search our archives for Episode 863: So, How Do You Make a Decision?

*Between stimulus and response there is a space...in that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom. — Viktor Frankl, Auschwitz Survivor, MD, PhD (3/26/1905 - 9/2/1997)*

There is a basic mind process that begins all decision-making. First, there is **STIMULUS**, some kind of input that evokes a **RESPONSE** with multiple possibilities. In between these two events, there is space, perhaps a small space, but space, nevertheless. In this space lies the destiny of our decision-making. James teaches us about recognizing and using this space.



**James begins by defining the complete positivity of spiritual input in our decisions:**

**James 1:16-22:** (NASB) <sup>16</sup>*Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. <sup>17</sup>Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow. <sup>18</sup>In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.*

We want to have light on the process of our decision-making, and there is no better place to go than *the Father of lights*.

**Now he gives us the principles of decision-making to be applied as we seek God's will in our decisions:**

<sup>19</sup>*This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger <sup>20</sup>for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. <sup>21</sup>Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. <sup>22</sup>But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.*



1. We need to keep our emotions in check.
2. Ask ourselves what is righteous.
3. Humbly glorify God.

These three processes can help us stretch out the space between the stimulus and the response. When we give ourselves a little more space, we give ourselves the opportunity for a clearer decision.

### Defining heuristics, *What Are Heuristics, Learn Liberty*

- *Every day you make decisions and judgments. Sometimes you're able to think about them carefully but other times you make them on the fly using little information. This is where heuristics come in. Heuristics are straightforward rules of thumb that we develop based on our past experiences. They're cognitive tools that help us make quick decisions or judgments. Life would be exhausting if we had to deliberate over every one of the hundreds of choices we make every day. Instead, we use our heuristics as shortcuts to make judgments about the world around us. For example, rather than spending time deciding what to wear every day, you might have some default outfits. Or when faced with a lunch menu with too many options, you may opt for what you've enjoyed in the past. Heuristics aren't about making the perfect decision or judgment, just about making one quickly.*

#### **Merriam Webster:**

**heuristic: adjective**

**involving or serving as an aid to learning, discovery, or problem-solving by experimental and especially trial-and-error methods**

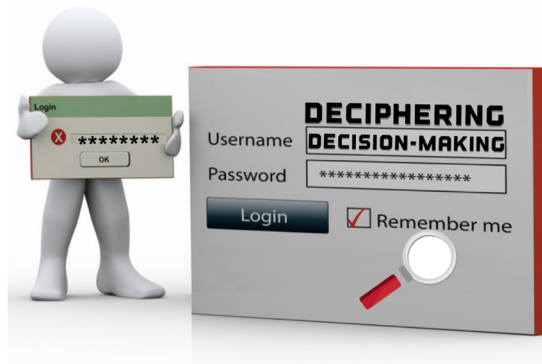
**heuristic: noun**

- 1. the study or practice of heuristic**
- 2. a heuristic method or procedure**

Heuristics are about making quick and convenient decisions based on a cognitive rule in our heads reached from past experience. They are not about making perfect decisions.

### **Theme: The sound principles of good decision-making as recounted in James 1:**

1. *Be quick to hear* - be alert and focused to truly understand the stimulus.
2. *Slow to speak* - stretch out the space between the stimulus and response far enough to adequately and appropriately decide on a course of action.
3. *Slow to anger* - use the space to pin anger down - to control it and not allow it to be your response, but to be a tool of response only if necessary.
4. *Putting aside all filthiness* - establish yourself as having rejected the human default of a sinful and broken basis for decision-making - replace the heuristic we may have in our mind that makes it easy with something righteous.
5. *Receive the word implanted* - embrace the new higher spiritual default for decision-making of enlightened thinking.
6. *Prove yourselves doers of the word* - learn to consistently apply principles 1-5.



Every Christian decision should first  
 \*\*\* seek God's influence \*\*\*  
 from above and then  
 attempt to apply it with  
 patience and thoughtfulness.

We have hardly begun and already what we would do naturally is being challenged to be completely overhauled.

**How do we not only introduce these principles  
 but maintain them for a lifetime of decision-making?**



The necessity for consistency usually ends up as a sticking point when we are facing the opportunity to lift our lives higher than they once were. It is always easy to start something new, as the novelty and excitement are palpable. What is difficult is maintaining the goodness when the newness is gone. It is like a New Year's resolution. We get excited about a new goal and soon thereafter we forget. An old-fashioned way to remember something was to tie a string around our finger. The modern way is to put a reminder on our smart phone.



**Availability heuristic, What Are Heuristics, Learn Liberty**

- Heuristics play a role in our reasoning about the broader world, too. As an example, consider the rate of violence in the world over the past century. Is the world more or less violent in the past 20 years than previously? Heuristic reasoning might lead us to think that the world is more violent today than it has been in the past. Every day we're confronted with images of tragedy in the news and on social media. We might reasonably assume that the world is more violent today than ever before, using what's called an availability heuristic. That is, examples of violence that are so readily available; we just naturally assume the world is more violent today. But in fact, the world is more peaceful today than ever before in human history. We may hear a lot about violent events but in terms of raw numbers, fewer people die today at the hands of other human beings than ever before. So, that heuristic about how violent the world is, is incorrect.*



When a news report is repeated many times in a day, it becomes “true” because we see it often. Just because something is available does not mean it is something we should use in decision-making.



When Solomon became king, God “spoke” with him in a dream and told him to request what he wanted from Him.

**Solomon expressed how the responsibility before him as king was bigger than his capacity:**

1 Kings 3:9-10,12,14: (NASB) *<sup>9</sup>So give Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours? <sup>10</sup>It was pleasing in the sight of the Lord that Solomon had asked this thing. <sup>12</sup>Behold, I have done according to your words. Behold, I have given you a wise and discerning heart, so that there has been no one like you before you, nor shall one like you arise after you. <sup>14</sup>If you walk in My ways, keeping My statutes and commandments, as your father David walked, then I will prolong your days.*

Solomon asked for *an understanding heart* because he knew he was not capable of judging God’s people. God was pleased with Solomon’s request and gave him wisdom above all others. God also promised to prolong Solomon’s life if he followed His *statues and commandments*.

Decision-making should be with God first and foremost.



**Important point: Even before Solomon had this conversation with God, he already had a foreign wife:**

1 Kings 3:1: (NASB) *Then Solomon formed a marriage alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt and took Pharaoh’s daughter and brought her to the city of David...*

Solomon formed a political alliance by marrying the daughter of Pharaoh.

(Source: John Gill’s Bible Commentary) ...married her; who, according to Ben Gersom, was proselyted first to the Jewish religion; which is very probable, or otherwise it can hardly be thought Solomon would marry her; and as the forty-fifth psalm, (Psalm 45:1-17), and the book of Canticles, supposed to be written on that occasion, seem to confirm.

Solomon’s wife became Jewish *before* she married him. It was in accordance with God’s will. He put aside his desires because he wanted to serve God.

Again, decision-making should be with God first and foremost.



**Representativeness heuristic, What Are Heuristics, Learn Liberty**

- *Anyone can place too much trust in the mental shortcuts they use to make sense of the world. Take this example. Let’s say a person tests positive for a rare disease, one that only one in a thousand people have. What is the likelihood that he actually has the disease? Most of us would say the likelihood is very high based on the test results alone. But what if the results were inaccurate 10 percent of the time? If the false-positive rate is 10 percent, a common number in medical tests, then it is highly unlikely our patient has the disease. In fact, based on the prevalence of the disease and*





*the test result, we can be 99 percent sure he doesn't have the disease. This is because the odds of the getting a false positive result, one in 10, are much higher than the odds of actually having the disease, one in 1,000. But in multiple studies, physicians routinely get this wrong, overestimating the likelihood that their patient actually has the disease. Psychologists call this the representativeness heuristic. People assume an individual case is more representative than it actually is.*

We assume something to be a picture of truth because we see it. It becomes a representation of what we assume to be true.

Heuristics affect how we think, and we need to be aware so we can override them to get to a higher level of decision-making.

**Over time, wise decisions may give way to lustful decisions. Solomon married those who worship idols:**

1 Kings 11:1-4,9: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>Now King Solomon loved many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh... <sup>2</sup>from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the sons of Israel, You shall not associate with them, nor shall they associate with you, for they will surely turn your heart away after their gods. Solomon held fast to these in love. <sup>3</sup>He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines, and his wives turned his heart away.

The wisdom and humility went to his head. He started following how he felt rather than what was right in the sight of God.

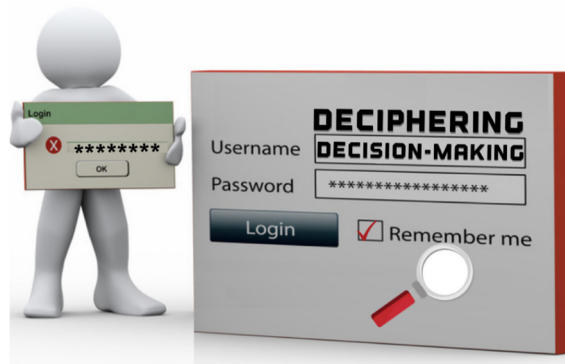
Remember when Elijah asked, *how long will you hesitate between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.* (1 Kings 18:21).

Our touchstone for decision-making should be to follow God's will. It requires experience and discipline. Even though we make mistakes, we should remember Romans 8:28: (KJV) *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.* The key is to learn from our mistakes.

**With Solomon's new pattern of decision-making being ego-driven, he himself became an idolater:**

<sup>4</sup>For when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been. <sup>9</sup>Now the LORD was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice.

Solomon had a wonderful start and was given incredible gifts from God, but because of his ego, he ended up turning away from God.



**To consistently seek out godly decisions is to  
\*\*\* live a life of principle. \*\*\*  
When we do not decide to push unrighteousness away, we will only find trouble and despair.**



**Proverbs 23:17-19:** (NASB) <sup>17</sup>*Do not let your heart envy sinners but live in the fear of the LORD always.* <sup>18</sup>*Surely there is a future, and your hope will not be cut off.* <sup>19</sup>*Listen, my son, and be wise, and direct your heart in the way.*

Many of our Scriptures today were contributed by some of our listeners on social media. Join us on Facebook, Instagram or email us at [Inspiration@ChristianQuestions.com](mailto:Inspiration@ChristianQuestions.com).

Even when one is specifically blessed by God with wisdom, there is still a danger of deciding on the wrong path.

### Are there differences in our decision-making approach when it is a group decision and not individual?

For the most part, principles remain principles whether we are solo in our thinking or part of a larger group. What changes with a group decision are the factors of compromise and understanding. We need to be careful that we do not allow the powerful force of “groupthink” to subdue principle.



(Source: Psychology Today) Groupthink occurs when a group of well-intentioned people make irrational or non-optimal decisions spurred by the urge to conform or the discouragement of dissent. This problematic or premature consensus may be fueled by a particular agenda or simply because group members value harmony and coherence above rational thinking.

Heuristics exist and thrive in politics to the detriment of all.

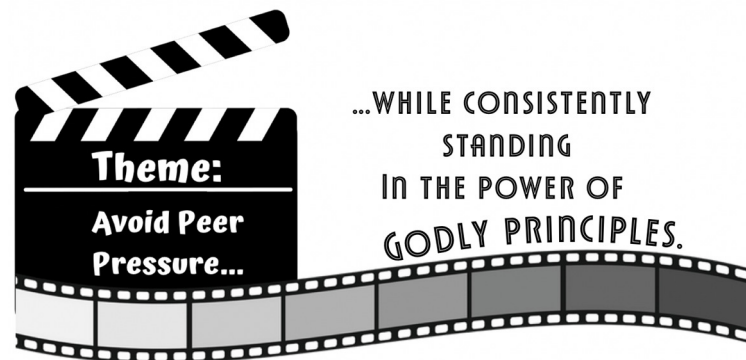


### Heuristics in politics, *What Are Heuristics, Learn Liberty*

- *Our political views can especially suffer from an overreliance on heuristics. Just consider how we deal with political issues. We'll often let our political identities and our heuristics about how right we think they are stand in lieu of important details and information we need to have an informed viewpoint. Because our heuristics can so easily lead us to faulty conclusions, it's important to be humble about our views. In light of our fallibility, we have to do something that doesn't come easy; we must recognize that the world is an uncertain place and that our judgments about it are often wrong. We ought to listen to opinions we may initially consider wrong or even offensive. Our intuitions are useful, even necessary when it comes to making quick judgments about the world. But that doesn't mean they're correct. Recognizing the flawed nature of your thinking is a bold first step to challenging it.*



Our political knee-jerk response is to not listen to opinions we may initially consider wrong. Find what the other side sees as wise and try and understand it. We need to be humble to do this. Strong decision-making needs humility as a foundation.



**The sons of Samuel (who was a judge in Israel) were appointed to be judges but did not follow God's ways. The people were unhappy with this and complained:**

**1 Samuel 8:4-5:** (NASB) *<sup>4</sup>Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah; <sup>5</sup>and they said to him, Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations.*

Israel wanted a king and a new course of action, based upon certain facts. While these facts were good, the facts did NOT reflect the entire context they should have considered. The people were looking around at other nations and saw *what they thought* were good things. The availability and representativeness heuristics kicked in and they thought they should have a king also.

**The reaction:**

**1 Samuel 8:6-7,9:** (NASB) *<sup>6</sup>But the thing was displeasing in the sight of Samuel...and Samuel prayed to the LORD. <sup>7</sup>The LORD said to Samuel, Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them. <sup>9</sup>you shall solemnly warn them and tell them of the procedure of the king who will reign over them.*

God was their king! God told Samuel - *they have rejected Me from being king over them.* They wanted a human king because they were observing the other nations around them.

God gave Samuel permission to heed their decision, but He also disclosed the consequences.

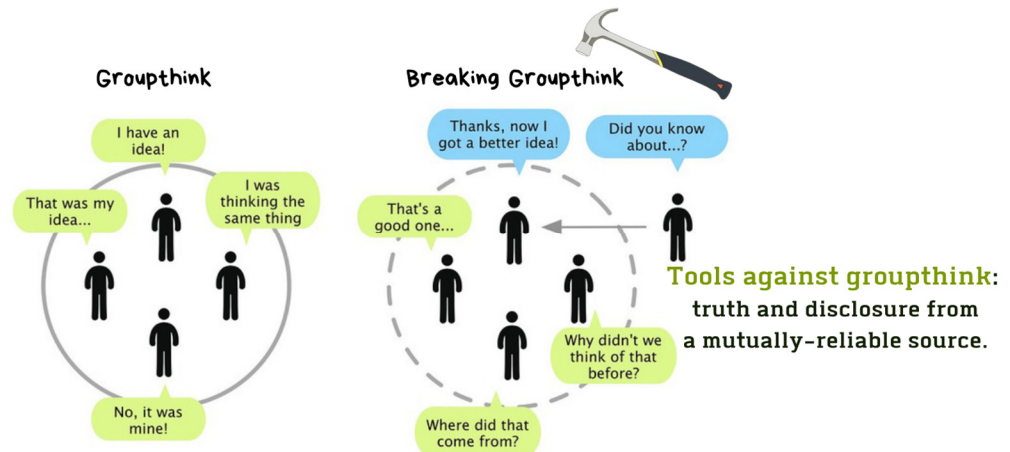
**Samuel's response:**

**1 Samuel 8:11-18:** (NASB) *<sup>11</sup>He said, This will be the procedure of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and place them for himself...and they will run before his chariots. <sup>12</sup>He will appoint for himself commanders...and some to do his plowing and to reap his harvest and to make his weapons of war...<sup>13</sup>He will also take your daughters for perfumers and cooks and bakers. <sup>14</sup>He will take the best of your fields and your vineyards and your olive groves... <sup>15</sup>He will take a tenth of your seed and of your vineyards.. <sup>16</sup>He will also take your male servants and your female servants and your best young men and your donkeys and use them for his work. <sup>17</sup>He will take a tenth of your flocks...<sup>18</sup>Then you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the LORD will not answer you in that day.*



All evil consequences are laid out BEFORE any group decision is made. God gives full disclosure.

A powerful tool against “groupthink” is truth and disclosure from a mutually-reliable source. Israel had God (through Samuel) as their mutually reliable source and were given everything they needed, and yet they still made a wrong decision.



The heuristics idea leads us to group biases we are not even aware of because there are things convenient in our thinking.

Kim Papillon proves the biases exist and looks at how young they begin.

**Nine-year-old and bias, *The Neuroscience of Decision-Making*, Kimberly Papillon, TEDxNashvilleWomen**

- This should disturb us, that there are groups of people who we are failing to encode as fully human on both skills. We'll have different levels of empathy for them when they're in crisis. We'll allocate resources differently for them, we'll want to create more space between us and them, draw a clear line of demarcation between us and them; but how early does this begin? Let's take a group of nine-year-olds. And let's take nine-year-olds from the north and nine-year-olds from the south, and let's let them listen to a children's story being read by somebody from the north and somebody from the south. On our human encoding scale, first, for nice - how do they do? Oh, we find interesting, your luck, the nine-year-olds from the south decide that the person from the south is indeed nicer than the person from the north. And the nine-year-olds from the north agree, yes, all things being equal, they would rather play with the person from the south, right. Well, what happens for smart? Oh, now our nine-year-olds from the south decide that the person from the north is two times smarter than the person from the south, and the only difference is that the nine-year-olds from the north decide that the person from the north is three times smarter than the person from the south. That's how insidious implicit bias is. It's what's in a name, it's what's in a face, it's what's in a voice, and we have to get control of our brains to do something about it. Just as neuroscience gives us insight into the problem, it also guides us on the solution.*







There is the internal wiring that says the southern voice is friendlier but not as smart.



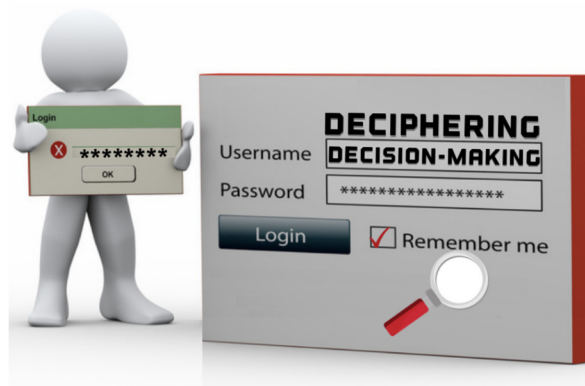
I am in the service business. I have a client I have had for many years, and he is an old Italian man with a very thick Italian accent. My first impression was, I have to go slow with him because of his accent. Well, he is smart. I started explaining services to him, and he was a step ahead of me. I figured out early on not to let his accent fool me. He is older and wise and knows what he wants.

We need to be careful because these biases are built into us.

### The group response - the group decision:

**1 Samuel 8:19-22:** (NASB) <sup>19</sup>Nevertheless, the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel, and they said, No, but there shall be a king over us, <sup>20</sup>that we also may be like all the nations, that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles (they forgot God used to fight their battles). <sup>21</sup>Now after Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the LORD'S hearing. <sup>22</sup>The LORD said to Samuel, Listen to their voice and appoint them a king... (God lets them have what they want).

Israel was given their king and there were consequences! All the generations following them would have to suffer through good and bad kings because they forsook their true King.



**Beware of the power and pull of large numbers when involved in a group decision.**

**\*\*\* ALWAYS \*\*\***

**stand in the power of godliness and with the consistency of principle.**

The consistency of principle overrides peer pressure.

**Proverbs 21:5:** (NASB) *The plans of the diligent lead surely to advantage, but everyone who is hasty comes surely to poverty.*

It is sobering to realize how easy it is to give in to preconceived notions and choose them over godly actions.

**As Christians, what about dealing with the decisions of other Christians we might not agree with?**

This is where we need extra care. Obviously, there are some decisions of deep moral consequence that we need to stand firmly upon without compromise. However, the vast majority of the things we may not see eye to eye on are not that serious, but they are still of vital importance.

How much of our thinking is based on convenience programmed in us without us even realizing it?



## ))) Shoot/No Shoot test, *The Neuroscience of Decision-Making*, Kimberly Papillon, TEDxNashvilleWomen

- See, there are lots of solutions that the neuroscience provides to us, but I believe that the most profound one is based on a test called the “Weapons Identification” test and its sister test, the “Shoot/No Shoot Test.” You can take the Weapons Identification test online at any time, but here’s how the Shoot/No Shoot test works. A person pops up on the screen and they’re either holding a wallet, a cell phone or a gun. A wallet, a cell phone or a gun. If they’re holding a wallet or a cellphone, you say, “No shoot.” If they’re holding a gun, you say, “Shoot.” It’s called the Shoot/No Shoot test, right? Now the only thing that you have to pay attention to is that half of the people who pop up on the screen will be African American and the other half Anglo American, and you’re going to hit the “e” or the “i” key on the computer to make your decision to shoot or not shoot. And the computer is going to pay attention to two things. First, it’s going to measure in milliseconds how much longer it takes you to categorize to one side or the other, or say shoot versus no shoot; and second, it’s going to measure the number of mistakes you make.

In this test you need to make split-second decisions. It is not as simple as we think because our minds have shortcuts, which we will see towards the end of this segment.



**We have an opportunity and privilege to express our Christianity by tolerance and acceptance of things we may disagree on - not things that may violate principle:**

**Romans 14:1-4:** (NASB) <sup>1</sup>Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions. <sup>2</sup>One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only. <sup>3</sup>The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him. <sup>4</sup>Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

The weak one is standing for God and his conscience. Even though not fully tuned correctly, he will be able to stand.

**This next example is not necessarily contrasting weakness with strength, but a difference of opinion:**

**Romans 14:5,7-8:** (NASB) <sup>5</sup>One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind... <sup>7</sup>For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; <sup>8</sup>for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

In this case, there are just differences of opinion and both are living and dying for God. Both are able to stand before God and can get along.



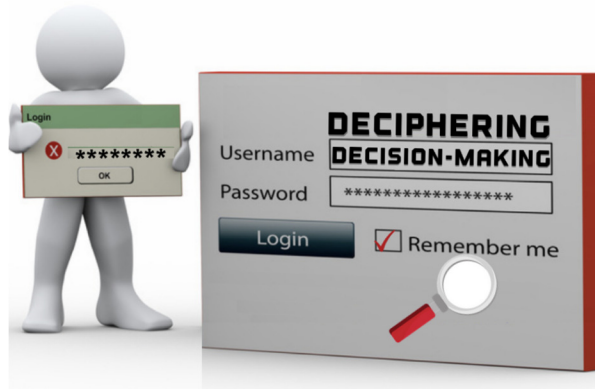
Our decisions regarding the differences we have are decisions of fellowship. To decide to accept is to reach out to build up.

### What if we decide not to accept?

**Romans 14:10,12-13:** (NASB) <sup>10</sup>But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God... <sup>12</sup>So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God. <sup>13</sup>Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this—not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way.

The decision not to accept is an immature attitude. This can cause a stumbling block to our brother in Christ.

**Matthew 7:2:** (NASB) *For in the way you judge, you will be judged.*



Our personal decisions regarding those of like faith are profoundly important. **We must consider their \*\*\* hearts and minds \*\*\*** lest we end up judging inappropriately.

**Proverbs 19:1-2:** (NASB) <sup>1</sup>Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity than he who is perverse in speech and is a fool. <sup>2</sup>Also it is not good for a person to be without knowledge, and he who hurries his footsteps errs.

We need to take our time in the space between the stimulus and the response. When dealing with our personal preferences one with another, take the time in that space to honor and respect our brother.



**Shoot/No Shoot results, *The Neuroscience of Decision-Making*, Kimberly Papillon, TEDxNashvilleWomen**

- *Interesting results for the United States data that we're able to take in. We find that when the African American man is holding the gun people say, "Shoot," quickly and accurately, no problem. And when the Caucasian man is holding the wallet or the cell phone people say, "No shoot," as they should. The problem comes in in the other two categories when the African American man is holding the wallet or the cell phone; people still say, "Shoot." And when the Caucasian man is holding the gun people say, "No*





*shoot.” In fact, in a series of trials they found that people were more likely to say shoot for the African American man holding the wallet or the cell phone than they were for the Caucasian man holding the gun. This was disturbing to everyone who had that strong value system for fairness. So, the scientists got to work to use the neuroscience to solve the problem and they figured it out.*

It is interesting - she is saying, PEOPLE say, “Shoot” when they shouldn’t or “No shoot” when they shouldn’t. She is saying across the board, EVERYBODY is misrepresented. It is not showing systemic racism. It is among all groups. It is that heuristic we all have in us because of the availability and repetitiveness. The lesson is we must be careful. Just because we see it all the time does not mean it is a representation of truth.

What kinds of things might **hinder** our decision-making?

Three things to consider:

(Source: John Maxwell Maximum Impact Series lesson called, “Making Good Decisions Better”)

1. The Power of Procrastination: Procrastination is often disguised as rational thinking. It ends up a welcome response when disguised this way because it feeds our desire for inaction and seems to give us great reasons for doing nothing.
2. The Slippery Slope of Surrendering: When a decision is exceptionally difficult, it can cause us to cave in, as we have been depleted of so much energy that we lose our will to fight.
3. The Inaction of Information Gathering: The “necessity” of gathering an ever-larger pile of information before actually deciding to do something about it.

Decision-making is difficult. So much rides on many things. We need to keep looking up.

**With all of these examples showing us what not to do,  
is there one that shows exactly what to do?**

It is interesting that finding faulty decisions is so easy. Fortunately, Jesus did show us a simple yet eloquent process for our decision-making that can take the headache out of a lot of this. The key here will be for us to decide to pay attention and actually follow the advice as it is given. It is like following the ingredients and process of a recipe.

 **Shoot/No Shoot resolution, *The Neuroscience of Decision-Making*, Kimberly Papillon, TEDxNashvilleWomen**

- *See, there’s a part of the brain called the rostral anterior cingulate cortex. The rostral anterior cingulate cortex. The RACC turns on whenever you want to do a good job on a test like this. If you can get that part of the brain to turn on, you’ll say shoot when you’re supposed to say shoot, and no shoot when you’re supposed to say no shoot. So, they had to figure out how to activate the brain; how to literally teach us to take control of our own brains to turn on the parts of our neuroanatomy that will help us use our value system with particular types of decisions. And they figured it out. They just told people while they were taking the test that they were going to be monitored for race-related bias - no*



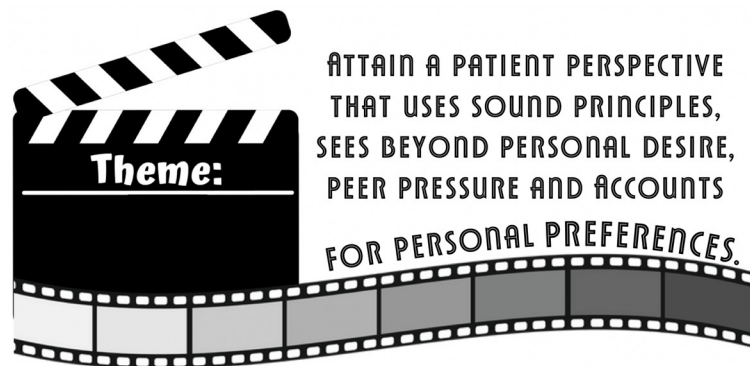




*pressure, no pressure. And suddenly the RACC lit up. The RACC was critical to the analysis and people were saying, shoot when they were supposed to say shoot, and no shoot when they were supposed to say no shoot. So, can we self-monitor? Sure, we can. We can look at our own decision-making and track it one moment to another, and indeed we should. And we can also do it systemically, where we try to see if there are patterns in our decision-making, and of course we should.*



The resolution is to create an awareness of the deficiency. Pay attention to the details. When we are dealing with someone who disagrees with us, pay attention to their perspective. When dealing with peer pressure, pay attention to the fact there could be a built-in bias.



Long ago, Jesus taught us a profound lesson in awareness regarding our life decisions:

Luke 14:25-33: (NASB) <sup>25</sup>Now large crowds were going along with him; and he turned and said to them, <sup>26</sup>If anyone comes to me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.



**FIRST POINT:** *This decision has a clear objective - to follow Christ. Is this what I want? Jesus is saying, love ME more.*

<sup>27</sup>Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.



**SECOND POINT:** *Are you aware that the cost of the decision before you is life-altering? Stimulus > Pause > Response. This is the classic verse that says we should sit down and think about it.*

<sup>28</sup>For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it?



**THIRD POINT:** *Time and consideration are paramount. Are you serious about fulfilling this decision?*

<sup>29</sup>Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, <sup>30</sup>saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'



**FOURTH POINT:** *What are the resources needed to live with this decision? Will you commit them? If not, the consequence is failing.*

<sup>31</sup>Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? <sup>32</sup>Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace.



**FIFTH POINT: *What level of discipline and tenacity is needed to complete this decision? What do I need to fulfill the objective and the cost?***

<sup>33</sup>So then, none of you can be my disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.

**SIXTH POINT: *Are you willing to pay the price in full to succeed in this decision? It will cost us our all.***

Jesus gave us all these steps for the most important decision of our life, which is to follow Christ. It is not the decision to love God or Jesus; it is the decision to be a footstep follower of Jesus, even unto death.

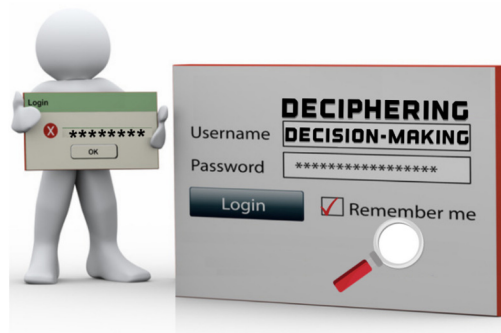
 **Fair people, *The Neuroscience of Decision-Making, Kimberly Papillon, TEDxNashvilleWomen***

- The most difficult people to teach fairness to are people who value fairness the most. It's the fair people who must take control of our brains. We're the ones that have the motivation and now we're the ones that have the information to go and make the changes that need to be made. It's what's in a name, it's what's in a face, it's what's in a voice, it starts early, and it ends late, and it depends on you.*

Be aware and then be fair.

James 4:13-16: (NASB) <sup>13</sup>Come now, you who say, Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit. <sup>14</sup>Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. <sup>15</sup>Instead, you ought to say, If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that. <sup>16</sup>But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.

The icing on the cake in decision-making is - *If the Lord wills.*



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**None of our decisions as Christians are to be taken lightly.**  
**Godly principles, consistency, personal conviction and respect for others are all factors that need appropriate consideration.**  
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Decision-making is a process. It takes time, thought, effort, wisdom, humility, godliness and a scriptural basis so we can do things to honor and please God.

Proverbs 24:3-6: (NASB) <sup>3</sup>By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; <sup>4</sup>And by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches. <sup>5</sup>A wise man is strong, and a man of knowledge increases power. <sup>6</sup>For by wise guidance you will wage war, and in abundance of counselors there is victory.

Our decisions need to be God-based. The best way to do this is to have others involved who have the same principles as ourselves. Be careful of peer pressure and personal desires.

Be godly and scriptural in all we say and do. That is what makes a good decision right.



*So, how do I know my decisions are right?  
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!*



Join us next week for our podcast on December 23, 2019:  
Ep. 1105: What is the True Spirit of Christmas?



### Bonus Material

*A wise man makes his own decisions; an ignorant man follows the public opinion.*  
— Chinese Proverb

**This classic example is regarding what we hear, what we process and what we decide:**

**Numbers 13:25-32: (NASB)** <sup>25</sup>When they returned from spying out the land, at the end of forty days, <sup>26</sup>they proceeded to come to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the sons of Israel. And they brought back word to them and to all the congregation and showed them the fruit of the land. <sup>27</sup>Thus they told him, and said, We went in to the land where you sent us; and it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. <sup>28</sup>Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there. <sup>29</sup>Amalek is living in the land of the Negev and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan.

**What did they know - what did they see - what weighed most in their thinking?**

<sup>30</sup>Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we will surely overcome it.

**What did he know - what did he see - what weighed most in his thinking?**

<sup>31</sup>But the men who had gone up with him said, We are not able to go up against the people, for they are too strong for us. <sup>32</sup>So they gave out to the sons of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, The land through which we have gone, in spying it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great size.

**The human reaction default was fear and faithlessness - most were overcome - what can we learn?**

**An interesting process for decision-making:**

(Source: From [www.virtualsalt.com](http://www.virtualsalt.com))

1. Identify the decision to be made together with the goals it should achieve.
2. Get the facts.



3. Develop alternatives.
4. Rate each alternative.
5. Rate the risk of each alternative.
6. Make the decision.

### **An example of procrastination getting in the way of an important decision:**

**Joshua 24:14-18:** (NKJV) <sup>14</sup>Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD! <sup>15</sup>And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD. <sup>16</sup>So the people answered and said: Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; <sup>17</sup>for the LORD our God is He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, who did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way that we went and among all the people through whom we passed. <sup>18</sup>And the LORD drove out from before us all the people, including the Amorites who dwelt in the land. We also will serve the LORD, for He is our God.

### **An example of fear getting in the way of making an important decision:**

**1 Kings 18:15-24:** (NRSV) <sup>15</sup>Elijah said, As the LORD of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself to him today. <sup>16</sup>So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him; and Ahab went to meet Elijah. <sup>17</sup>When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, Is it you, you troubler of Israel? <sup>18</sup>He answered, I have not troubled Israel; but you have, and your father's house, because you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and followed the Baals. <sup>19</sup>Now therefore have all Israel assemble for me at Mount Carmel, with the four hundred fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table. <sup>20</sup>So Ahab sent to all the Israelites and assembled the prophets at Mount Carmel. <sup>21</sup>Elijah then came near to all the people, and said, How long will you go limping with two different opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him. The people did not answer him a word. <sup>22</sup>Then Elijah said to the people, I, even I only, am left a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets number four hundred fifty. <sup>23</sup>Let two bulls be given to us; let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire to it; I will prepare the other bull and lay it on the wood, but put no fire to it. <sup>24</sup>Then you call on the name of your god and I will call on the name of the LORD; the god who answers by fire is indeed God. All the people answered, Well spoken!

### **The basis for any Christian decision:**

**Matthew 6:31-34:** (NKJV) <sup>31</sup>Therefore do not worry, saying, What shall we eat? or What shall we drink? or What shall we wear? <sup>32</sup>For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. <sup>33</sup>But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. <sup>34</sup>Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

### **We need to aggressively manage our decisions:**

**Philippians 3:12-14:** (NKJV) <sup>12</sup>Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. <sup>13</sup>Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, <sup>14</sup>I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.