

We have decisions to make all the time, some of them are a little consequence and some of them have great impact on our lives and the lives of other people and somehow it seems to be a little bit more difficult to make decisions today than it was in the past. Part of the reason I think is that there are so many more options today than there were not so long ago. It used to be that in any number of choices, we just had a few options, uh, uh, heard it said that, uh, when he asks about what color you could get the first model t in any color as long as it's black and it take a breakfast cereal for example. Let's just set aside all the other things that you might cook for yourself and just focus on what you might call what we call cold cereal or breakfast cereal. And some time ago it was a handful of things. Corn flakes, raisin bran, maybe cheerios, but now there are more curios varieties. And I think that there were serials not so long ago. I mean, you can go to the store and there's all kinds of choices, a whole row, countless varieties and that's just one part of our life. There's a lot of choices that we can make, a lot of options and I think this is part of why it makes it a challenge for us to decide at times.

The second reason that can help contribute to the challenge of making a decision is something that's come up more recently and especially so for emerging generations. And, and that's what I'll call the illusion of perfection. The illusion of perfection. It's a common problem. It used to be that you knew your imperfect home. You're imperfect family, you're imperfect France, you knew everything wasn't quite right, but, but that's how it was. Hey, we've got a first row seat to the imperfections in our life and that continues today. But what's relatively new is a, uh, social media and to some extent magazines and other media. It's, you see a picture of other people and it seems a snapshot into their lives and they look what they look perfect. You look on line and you see what I look at them and their perfect relationship, perfect family and their perfect close and we'll just look at what they're eating. That looks delicious and here I am eating. I'm not even sure what I'm eating, but I sure wouldn't want to take a picture of this and share it with anyone. This illusion of perfection is something that we struggle with and then you start to feel not only is what you have perhaps not good enough, but, but it, it begins to eat into yourself and you as an individual began to feel. Maybe I don't have it all together.

OK?

And of course when it comes to our life of faith, we don't. We aren't immune from that either. Sometimes we have in our heads a in mind, something that, that what we'll call the perfect plan, God the exact thing that we need to do, every choice that we need to make and God has everything in mind from, from who we're supposed to spend the rest of our life with, to how many children were going to have any number of things. And maybe you think if there is a perfect plan, what? Well, what happens if I make a mistake? What happens if I find marry the wrong person and you know, this is really a crazy idea because if someone gets it wrong, there will kind of. The whole system is blown, right? But let me be clear. I don't think that's exactly how it works, but it's easy to fall into that to think that God has a particular plan for us and what if we miss it? I don't want to miss the perfect plan that God has for my life. So there's this whole illusion of perfection out there and that can lead to a whole group of people. And maybe you've had a challenge like this. I know I do at times of struggling to make a decision of making the decision about whether to do this or to do that. Maybe I'll get it wrong.

OK?

And so we ended up making no decision at all.

Wow.

And sometimes that can lead to even more trouble.

Yeah.

So how do we grow in our ability to make decisions? How do we begin to seek God's divine direction in our life in both big ways and small? Let's take a look at the scriptures and the stories of the Apostle Paul and begin to see if we can get some idea. Now you remember the apostle Paul. If anybody's going to understand God's will, surely it's Paul. He was one of the great apostles of the faith. He wrote most of the New Testament. He started churches all over the ancient near east. If anybody had in mind what God was going to do or knew what God had in mind for them, certainly it was

Paul.

Let's take a look at one of Paul's own letters and see what we can find here. See how much he knew about the future from First Corinthians Chapter Sixteen, beginning with verse six. Paul writes this, I'm may stay with you or even spend the winter there in Corinth so that you can send me on my way to wherever I'm off to next. I may stay with you or I may not. I might even be there all winter. Have you ever had a guest come and you're uncertain how long they're going to stay? That can make it a little bit awkward at times. You want to have a beginning and an end no matter who they are and no matter how long they're staying and what's after corn. Who knows? Wherever I'm off to next.

Yeah,

verse seven. Don't want to make a quick visit to use since I hope to spend some time with you. If the Lord lets it happen, I don't want to see you just for a little visit. However, I know that I'm going to be here this song, I'm certain no, Paul doesn't write that I hope to spend some time with you. If the Lord lets it happen, it seems that perhaps even Paul didn't have a clue about what was coming up next. He didn't know the details and

yet he was able to serve God effectively. One of the great pillars of the faith.

So if you ever feel a little bit like Paul uncertain about what's going to happen next, take comfort in knowing that God doesn't always show us the details of the future, but God walks with us every step of the way.

OK?

God doesn't always show us the details, but God walks with us into whatever the future will have.

Yeah,

and a lot of times that I don't know about you, but I find myself asking why God just show me what to do, just just show me the way. And what happens more often than not is that God doesn't always show us what to do. Instead, God gives us wisdom to discern the pathway ahead. God gives us wisdom to decide when we need to make this choice or that one.

No,

this is one of the ways that God is at work in our lives. Wisdom. It's one of the great traits that we can pursue and seek after. Do you remember the story in the Old Testament of Solomon, one of the great kings of Israel in a dream God said to him, you can have anything that you want and what Solomon doesn't ask for is, God, I want you to destroy my enemies, or I want a bunch of wealth, or I wouldn't say you gotTa, give me more power, but instead what Solomon says, I want you to help me be a good king.

Yeah,

give me the wisdom to know right from wrong. Help me be able to discern whether this decision or that decision is more faithful. God gives me wisdom.

Yeah,

and God says, because you didn't ask for all these other things, I'm going to give them to you as well and I'm going to give you wisdom.

Yeah.

This very same. Solomon is the one who according to tradition, wrote the words from proverbs chapter four, verse seven, the beginning of wisdom. Get Wisdom, get understanding before anything else, and I love it. How are you supposed to get wisdom or the begin with? Get it. I don't know exactly how that works, but we know it's important, but getting wisdom is the wisest thing you can do. You want to know the wisest thing yet? Wisdom. Proverbs tells us and you know, uh, you've had some experience with this. I imagined that every one of you has a game with him at some time or another, and while you may have not have had a dream from God, you, I imagine at some point, if you haven't yet, you will sometime in the future, no matter what age, you will have an experience where you say something like this, I wish I knew back then what I know now. I wish I knew back then what I know now. Friends. That is wisdom.

Yeah,

you've received wisdom. When you've had that experience. Wisdom above anything else is more valuable than gold. Solomon said, get wisdom. God, I want your divine direction. Show me what to do. God won't always show us what to do.

OK?

But God offers us the wisdom to discern the way ahead, that wisdom to decide. So how do you move towards wisdom? How do you gain more of that? I'm going to give you three things to consider for today and it should be pretty easy to remember that and things that might help us move in God's divine direction, direction towards wisdom, and the first one is this. It's to walk with the wise. Again, we see this in the proverbs chapter 13, verse 20. Walk with wise people and become wise, but friend fools and get in trouble. Our second reading for today, walk with wise people. What happens when you do this? You become wise. Be Friends with fools and what happens when you make friends with fools. Things don't go well. You get in trouble. Maybe you've had a parent tell you. Pay attention to who your friends are and this is true. If you spend time around people that are doing things that maybe you don't really want to be doing, you'll find yourself doing them and if you find your spend time around people that are

doing things that you want to be doing, you'll find yourself doing more of those things. Walk with wise people and become wise. Walk with fools and get in trouble.

Yeah,

I love this imagery of, of walking with the wise, in other words we do life together isn't just like I want to go and ask a wise person for advice from time to time. We're walking with each other actually connected and doing life together. We're walking together. It's. It's one of the reasons why we created Wesley Small groups and we invite you to be a part of them. What we need, all of us is strong believers consistently in our lives because being in worship just an hour every week isn't, isn't enough. We need to walk with people consistently. People that help lead us in the right direction. If you want to make faithful decisions, hang around faithful people. You want God's direction? Hang out with God's people. Now, this doesn't mean that you're not connecting with people who are far from God, inviting them to know the love of God and Jesus Christ, but, but it does mean that you're walking with those who are walking with Jesus. You walk with the wise and you grow wise,

OK?

The second thing is this. Ask, ask God. James Chapter one, verse five says this, but anyone who needs wisdom should ask God who's very nature is to give to everyone without a second thought, without keeping score. Wisdom will certainly be given to those who ask. If any of you lacks wisdom, what should you do? You should ask God, ask God for wisdom and God will give you wisdom.

OK,

we'll get another picture of this in the psalms chapter 32, verse eight in which God says this, I will instruct you and teach you about the direction that you should go. I'll advise you and I'll keep my eye on you. And I love this first because when I, when I read it, it reminds me of a moment that many parents have with their children and it's learning to ride a bike. Maybe you remember learning to ride a bike or, or teaching a child to ride a bike. And, and for us, it was last summer and training wheels, but last summer we took the training wheels off and maybe you remember, at least for us it was dad or sometimes mom, but, but mostly dad holding onto the seat and running behind him, holding him up, making sure it doesn't fall, and then when I thought it was really letting go and what happens, crashes and we'll do it again and again and again. But then there's a moment where you let go and they keep writing, but you don't stop running because if they know that you let go, then by Golly they're going to crash again. So you keep running alongside until finally they recognize, hey, I could do this on my own.

OK.

I think perhaps in a similar way, this verse reminds us that is true for God as well.

Yeah.

I'll advise you. God says, and keep my eye on you like a parent running behind a child ready to be there when we fall.

OK?

God will teach you about the direction you should go. God will keep an eye on you walking with us every step of the way. Walk with people that are wise and God will give you wisdom. And finally the third thing is decide, decide, ask, walk. Decide. Maybe some of you have seen the movie a karate kid or the original. Um, it's got a lot of great lines in that movie. I'm one of them. Mr Miyagi says, ah, I'm gonna. Do my best not to give you a Mr Miyagi accent, but you can just picture it in your mind and maybe you remember this one or it says, a Daniel son must talk. Walk on road, walk on right side safe. Walk on left side safe. Walk Middle. Sooner or later, get squished. Just like grape. Remember that line? This is good advice. Don't be afraid of making a mistake. The biggest mistake, maybe just walking down in the middle, not decided to be on the left or the right and maybe not making the decision, not making a choice.

So here's the question. How do I know if this thing is from God? How do I know if I'm going to step off the edge? And it's going to be the wrong decision? Perhaps it's the forces of evil that are placed in this in front of me. Is this an open door from God or not? One of the guides that we have is the scripture. When we looked at the Bible, when we look to the traditions of our faith, there are things that God says, this is what you should not do and do not do them to the best of your ability and there are things that God says you should always do these things and it always do those to the best of your ability, but then there's a whole bunch of things that have to do with our particular life and our particular circumstances, a swath of things as where God doesn't have anything to say. It seems like a Bible. Come on, tell me what to do here, and it's just not there. There's no clear direction there where there is clarity. Follow the scripture and the teachings of our faith, but where there isn't,

God gives you wisdom to decide. God offers you wisdom to discern the path ahead. When there's not clear direction from our faith. God gives you wisdom. There's so many different things that you can get all worked up about and God says, you decide. I trust you. Make the call.

First Thessalonians Chapter [inaudible] tells about when Paul this says this, so when we couldn't stand it any longer, we thought it was a good idea to stay on an Athens by ourselves. Yeah, Paula seeking God's direction and this is what he says. We thought it was a good idea. We thought about it, we considered it, and we thought it was a good idea. We thought it was a good idea. Garden directors, I didn't say anything, didn't give us a clear map about what the day is. The head would be, we just made a decision and there are times when you'll just have to make a decision.

Yeah,

in the very best to your ability because God gives us wisdom to discern, to see the way ahead, to make a decision, and the good news is that God watches over you and guides you. So walk with the wise. Ask God for wisdom. When it comes to it, decide and know that God walks with you every step of the way.

Will you pray with me?

God, we need wisdom, and so we asked for it.

OK?

We ask that you would give us clarity and whether there's not clarity that you would help us to trust you.

OK?

Listen for your words and your guidance, all us, that you're there with us and for us, strengthen us. We pray. Help us to move forward faithfully

in your holy name. Amen.