

**THE IMPACT OF DECISION-MAKING ON SUCCESS****By Elyana Kuwae**

We are constantly making decisions. Whether in personal or professional settings, we all must decide what to do on a daily basis. From the moment we wake up, we decide whether to get out of bed or not. Then we choose the clothes we will wear, whether to have breakfast, where to go to work, which friends to spend time with, and lots of other decisions of major and minor importance.

There are many things we cannot decide, such as the weather. We also cannot decide what others will think or do. But when it comes to our own lives, we are responsible for every decision we make: For the kind of person we want to be, the words that come out of our mouths, our principles and values, how we treat others, who we build relationships with, how we respond to people, and so forth.

Making decisions can present dilemmas: Young people, wanting to fit in with friends, expose themselves to many dangers – vices, forbidden relationships, or unhealthy situations. Many workers, fearing the potential of losing their jobs, choose to ignore or compromise their values and give in to unethical practices their bosses demand. Parents may make poor decisions, trying to befriend their children instead of setting boundaries and enforcing discipline. These are among the many ways we can fail to see the importance of our decisions and how they influence others.

How can we succeed in making better decisions? The Bible is filled with many examples of decision-makers, some good and some bad. In Genesis 39 we see Joseph, who was tempted by his master's wife but chose to remain loyal to God and his master, willing to accept punishment rather than dishonor.

In Daniel 6 we read the account of Daniel, who did not fear breaking the king's laws and chose the lions' den rather than to cease praying to the true God. The book of Esther tells us about Queen Esther, who agreed to speak to the king despite the risk to her life, ultimately saving her people from annihilation.

On the other hand, Cain's envy led him to kill his brother (Genesis 4). Jesus told the story of the prodigal son who had to lose everything before realizing his poor decision (Luke 15:11-32). And we find the ultimate example of bad decision-making in Genesis 3. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve, despite having everything they needed, chose what was forbidden. Even today we suffer the consequences of their rebellious decision.

If we desire to make the right decisions and succeed in the marketplace and in our personal lives, we would be wise to use the Bible as the best source of guidance for whenever we face a dilemma or need to make an important decision. King Solomon gave us many wise sayings. One of them teaches, "Wise choices will watch over you. Understanding will keep you safe. Wisdom will save you from evil people, from those whose words are twisted" (Proverbs 2:11-12).

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Through the Scriptures, God gives us the key to success. He declares, "This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live" (Deuteronomy 30:19).

The Lord has not left us adrift on this earth; He has given us His Word. And Jesus Christ, through His life on earth, His teachings, His crucifixion for our sins and His resurrection, gives us the power to make wise decisions and enjoy a successful life, in the workplace, in our homes, and our communities.

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### Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. What is the best decision you have ever made? Why do you consider it the best?
2. What is one of the worst decisions you have ever made? What have been some of the consequences of that decision?
3. When faced with an important or difficult decision, what is the process you follow for arriving at the best possible conclusion?
4. Have you found the Bible to be a reliable source for wisdom and direction in decision-making? If so, in what ways?

### Challenge for This Week

Every day we are faced with decisions, some of very little importance and others of major, even life-changing consequences. Take time this week to evaluate your decision-making process. Are you cautious and deliberate, or impulsive and spontaneous? What are the strengths and weaknesses of both approaches?

If you are facing an important decision, seek out a trusted advisor, a mentor, or even a small group of friends who can serve as sounding boards, offer advice, and perhaps offer different perspectives you might not have considered.

### NOTE:

For more about what the Bible says, consider the following passages:

Joshua 24:15, Proverbs 1:7, 2:6, 3:13-15, 11:14, 15:22; Jeremiah 33:3; James 1:5-8

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