

May 10, 2023 – Making Decisions -P4

Wednesday Night Bible Study

Wednesday 10 May 2023 – Spring Semester
Queens Chapel UMC * 7410 Muirkirk Road * Beltsville, MD 20705

Instructor: Rev. Dr. Will Butler

~~~~~

### **Making Decisions According to God’s**

#### **Direction for Your Life**

**Proverbs 16:9 (NIV)**

“In their hearts, humans plan their course, but  
the Lord establishes their steps.”

\_\_\_\_\_

#### **4. Count the Cost.**

“It is a trap to dedicate something rashly and  
only later to consider one’s vows”  
Proverbs 20:25 (NIV).

**Week 1:** The Power of Prayer

**Week 2:** What are the Facts?

Week 3: If you don’t know ask Somebody—(godly counsel)

**Week 4: Count the Cost**

**Week 5:** Expect Complications

**Week 6:** Facing the Giant of Fear

Nobody sets out with the intention to fail. However, many times we do fail and it’s often because we refused to count the cost ahead of time.

#### **Q = What does it mean to count the cost**

Counting the cost means:

- I must realize that every decision one makes has a price tag—it may cost you your time, money, energy, reputation, talent, or resources. Therefore, if I’m going through with my decision, I must be prepared and willing to **pay the price**

“It is a trap to dedicate something rashly and  
only later to consider one’s vows”

**Proverbs 20:25 (NIV).**

- In other words, It's a self-imposed trap
  - To decide without deliberating
  - To promise without pondering
  - To commit without first considering the cost

For example, the Old Testament story of Jephthah (**Judges 11:29-39**) is a warning about making promises without pondering the consequences

29 At that time the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah, and he went throughout the land of Gilead and Manasseh, including Mizpah in Gilead, and from there he led an army against the Ammonites. 30 And Jephthah made a vow to the Lord. He said, "If you give me victory over the Ammonites, 31 I will give to the Lord whatever comes out of my house to meet me when I return in triumph. I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering."

32 So Jephthah led his army against the Ammonites, and the Lord gave him victory. 33 He crushed the Ammonites, devastating about twenty towns from Aroer to an area near Minnith and as far away as Abel-keramim. In this way Israel defeated the Ammonites.

34 When Jephthah returned home to Mizpah, his daughter came out to meet him, playing on a tambourine and dancing for joy. She was his one and only child; he had no other sons or daughters. 35 When he saw her, he tore his clothes in anguish. "Oh, my daughter!" he cried out. "You have completely destroyed me! You've brought disaster on me! For I have made a vow to the Lord, and I cannot take it back."

36 And she said, "Father if you have made a vow to the Lord, you must do to me what you have vowed, for the Lord has given you a great victory over your enemies, the Ammonites. 37 But first let me do this one thing: Let me go up and roam in the hills and weep with my friends for two months because I will die a virgin."

38 "You may go," Jephthah said. And he sent her away for two months. She and her friends went into the hills and wept because she would never have children. 39 When she returned home, her father kept the vow he had made, and she died a virgin.

**Q = Was it right for Jephthah to keep his promise to the Lord?**

**Q = What is the lesson to be learned here?**

- The Scripture does not indicate that Jephthah sacrificed his daughter as a burnt offering.
- Old Testament Scholars believe Jephthah gave his daughter to the Tabernacle as a servant instead of sacrificing her.

**Why?**

- God had specifically forbidden offering human sacrifices.

**Leviticus 20:1-3**

1 The Lord said to Moses, 2 "Give the people of Israel these instructions, which apply both to native Israelites and to the foreigners living in Israel. "If any of them offer their children as a sacrifice to Molech, they must be put to death. The people of the community must stone them to death.

3 I myself will turn against them and cut them off from the community because they have defiled my sanctuary and brought shame on my holy name by offering their children to Molech.

- Lesson learned:**

- The account of Jephthah and his daughter serves as an example for us to not make foolish promises, vows, or oaths without considering the cost.
- **Most important:** Never make a promise, vow, or oath that is in violation of God's Word.

**Q = Are we making a vow or promise to Jesus Christ when becoming one of His disciples?**

### **The Promise of Self-denial and Cross-bearing—Matthew 16:24-26 (NLT)**

24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. 25 If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. 26 And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul?"

### **The willingness to give up—Luke 14:25-27 (NLT)**

25 A large crowd was following Jesus. He turned around and said to them,

26 "If you want to be my disciple, you must, by comparison, hate everyone else—your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple.

27 And if you do not carry your own cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple.

### **The willingness to give up all—Luke 14:31-33**

31 "Or what king would go to war against another king without first sitting down with his counselors to discuss whether his army of 10,000 could defeat the 20,000 soldiers marching against him? 32 And if he can't, he will send a delegation to discuss terms of peace while the enemy is still far away.

33 So you cannot become my disciple without giving up everything you own.

### **Q = What does it mean to be a disciple?**

- The word disciple means "a learner or a student of Jesus' teaching."
  - Jesus says a true disciple comes to Him without reservation, putting Jesus first.
  - Jesus is not saying you must divorce or abandon love ones
  - What He's saying is that relationships are definitely of lower priority when it comes to faithfulness and obedience to Jesus

**Luke 14:26**

"If you want to be my disciple, you must, by comparison, hate everyone else—your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple.

- Jesus used the strong word "hate" to show how great the difference must be between our allegiance to Jesus and our allegiance to everyone and everything else in our lives.

**Matthew 16:24**

"Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me."

- Jesus tells everyone that following Him is like **take up your cross** and bearing it. These words must have been hard to accept during this time
  - In the Roman world, before a man died on a cross, he had to carry his cross to the place where he was to be executed.
  - What this means for us today is that we must voluntarily, like Christ, die to ourselves.

**Romans 8:13**

"For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live."

**Colossians 3:5**

"Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry."

**Through the act of baptism**, we are testifying to our family, friends, and the world that we have died with Christ when we made the decision to become His disciples

**Romans 6:3-4**

**“3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?**

**4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”**

When making a decision we must take time to count the cost

**Q = What does it mean to count the cost**

Counting the cost means:

- I must realize that every decision one makes has a price tag—it may cost you your time, money, energy, reputation, talent, or resources. Therefore, if I’m going through with my decision, I must be prepared and willing to pay the price

**“It is a trap to dedicate something rashly and only later to consider one’s vows”  
Proverbs 20:25 (NIV).**

When people pressure you to make a decision, it’s ok to say, “I’ll get back to you.”

- Most important fact is: It’s not as important to make a quick decision as it is to make the right decision
- In an emergency, the right decision is an informed decision or a prayerful decision

Under ordinary circumstances: It’s easier to get in than it is to get out.

- Get into debt
- Get into a marital relationship
- Fill up your schedule than to fulfill it

**Before you make a decision—Count the Cost!!!**

This is why Jesus said in **Luke 14:31-33**

31 "Or what king would go to war against another king without first sitting down with his counselors to discuss whether his army of 10,000 could defeat the 20,000 soldiers marching against him? 32 And if he can't, he will send a delegation to discuss terms of peace while the enemy is still far away.

33 So you cannot become my disciple without giving up everything you own.

**1. Give the situation to the Lord Proverbs 16:1-3 (NLT)**

1 We can make our own plans, but the Lord gives the right answer.

2 People may be pure in their own eyes, but the Lord examines their motives.

3 Commit your actions to the Lord, and your plans will succeed.

**2. Submerge the decision in prayer Philippians 4:6-7 (English Standard Version ESV)**

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

**3. The right decision is an informed decision Proverbs 18:15 (ESV)**

"An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge."