

Name: _____



Direction for Decisions

What Does God Want Me To Do?

Introduction to *Direction for Decisions*

Your life story is still being written. What will you do with the remaining pages? The decisions you make today will lead you one way or another—but when you know who to trust, you'll always be headed in the right direction. In this series, we will learn how to seek God's direction for our lives and how He cares more about who we are than what we do.

Phillip Cole
Smithville Campus Pastor & Preaching Lead

Introduction To The 4G Guide

GATHER – GOD – GROUP – GIVE

It's important that we *GATHER* each week as a church family. Still, God wants us to take what He's teaching and apply it to our daily lives. This is the heart of the 4G Guides. These guides are written to encourage you in your personal *GOD TIME* and in your small *GROUPS*. They are designed to help you understand what God is teaching and apply it to your life. This understanding through application enables you to take what you are learning and *GIVE* it to others.



USING THE 4G GUIDE

Each week is divided into four sections:

Gathering Time

On Sunday mornings we gather to worship, hear God's message, and be challenged to apply His word. You'll find the weekly Gathering Time sermon outlines and notes sections in this booklet.

If you need to join us online, go to cbcfamily.net and click "Watch Live"

Group Time

We learn from one another! 4G Groups meet to dig deeper into the weekly material. Group Time outlines are simple enough for anyone to facilitate. In addition, often short videos and other helpful resources are posted on our 4G webpage.

God Times

Personal worship is vital to the Christian walk, so we've provided five daily devotionals for each weekly topic. This is your time to meet with God one-on-one in a guided devotional format. Once your God Time is finished, pray, seeking direction for the day.

Family Time

Family worship glorifies God. To help, we have created simple Family Time devotionals. In addition, to help get the conversations flowing, video or story guide links will be posted on our 4G webpage.

cbcfamily.net/4g



Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture references are from the *Christian Standard Bible* (CSB Text Edition: 2020).



Gathering Time (Sermon Outline)

Gathering Notes

Date: _____

Direction For Decisions - Week 1

God Cares About _____ Before _____.

Leviticus 11:44

God's Will Is _____ Before _____.

Proverbs 16:2

Psalms 139

Colossians 3:17

Galatians 1:10

Who Does God Want Me To _____?

Horizontal lines for taking notes.

Who, Do / Why, What / Become



Group Time

ENCOURAGEMENT 1-on-1 (See last page for directions)

Y / N
 Y / N

LOOK BACK:

Point: *Jesus is the light and life.*

- Share a really cool story (RCS) from this Christmas.

Question: (Think about the choices we have.) If you received a text to pick up yogurt and pasta on the way home, would there need to be a follow-up call? Why or why not?

LOOK UP:

Recap: We might often hear the question, “What is God’s will for my/your life?” Unfortunately, it’s not the right question. The right question is, “What is God’s will and how can I adjust my life to it? What decisions do I need to make?”

Therefore, we need to know God’s will. To do that, we first need to look at the decisions we make regarding who we are and why we are in our relationship with God. The “who” is the reason we pursue holiness (a process called sanctification – Romans 12:2; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7). The “why” is the reason we pursue opportunities to share Him with others, hoping they will join us (a.k.a., discipleship – Matthew 28:19-20, 2 Peter 3:9). Both result in our needing to make intentional decisions to fulfill His will and become closer to Him.

LOOK IN: Discussion

- Read this statement: *God doesn’t need your ability; He wants your availability.* What does this have to do with our “who” and “why?” Does it matter what we’ve done or have the skill to do?
- Read Colossians 3:12-17. This is a pretty serious list to aspire to (let’s call it perfection). Do we need to master the list before doing anything for God?

LOOK FORWARD: Application

Point: *If you are becoming the right who, God will help you choose the right do. If you’re driven by the right why, God will lead you to the right what.*

Do It All For The Glory Of God.

Make a list of 1-4 daily and/or weekly things you do to maintain or enhance your relationship with God (Bible reading, prayer, 4G Group, etc.). Include when and where you typically do them.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Now, identify how each is or isn’t making you more holy.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Why should one seek God’s will?

What is God’s will? Pick some specific verses or Biblical accounts to validate your claim.

Do the decisions you make illustrate this?

WEEK 1 – GOD CARES ABOUT THE WHO BEFORE THE DO

God Time Day 1: Our Decisions Matter



It's very common to enter the New Year thinking about improvements, resolutions, events, and plans. What might make this year better than last? How can I improve myself? What big things are on the calendar for me this year? What big decisions do I need to make?

Many of those things require decisions and making decisions can be stressful. In this series, we'll look at some practical help for making good, godly decisions. After all, our decisions matter.



Read Colossians 3:17

And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.



If we are told to do everything in Jesus' name, what does that say about the importance of our decisions?

God Time Day 2: God is Holy



Read Leviticus 11:44a

For I am the LORD your God, so you must consecrate yourselves and be holy because I am holy.



Circle what are we told to be.

Underline why we are to be this.

The holiness of God means that God is "wholly other" –*distinct* from all creation. Although, when we explain the term by saying "set apart," that really doesn't do it justice. The full meaning goes beyond that – more like: removed from common use and set apart for *God's purpose*.

God is holy. What does that have to do with decision-making? Our decisions should be godly. (Perfect? Impossible. But we should aim for godly.)

How do your decisions show that you are set apart for God's purposes? Do your decisions reflect this?

God Time Day 3: Who Before Do



If we want to make godly decisions, we need to look to God. That sounds like a no-brainer, doesn't it? When we look to Jesus, God the Son, we are shown what this looks like.

Jesus often talked about the heart– the inner person. We might call this character. Jesus was very concerned with what is inside of a person– our inner thoughts, attitudes, desires, and motivations. All of this is related to the fact that we are called to be holy like God is holy. It isn't something that we put on to dress ourselves up; it's something that begins inside and works its way out.

Read Matthew 23:

²⁵Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. ²⁶Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup, so that the outside of it may also become clean. ²⁷Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which appear beautiful on the outside, but inside are full of the bones of the dead and every kind of impurity. ²⁸In the same way, on the outside you seem righteous to people, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

Compare the differences between the *outside* and *inside*.

	Outside		Inside
v. 25		<i>but...</i>	
v. 26		<i>but...</i>	
v. 27		<i>but...</i>	

In v. 26, underline what Jesus tells the Pharisees to do first.

Rather than first asking God, "What do you want me to do?" we should ask, "Who do you want me to be?"

Ask God about that and journal what He reveals.

God Time Day 4: Why Before What



Read Proverbs 16:2
All a person’s ways seem right to him, but the LORD weighs motives.

Underline how a person’s ways seem to himself.



Circle who sees and knows the person’s motives.

If God is looking at our motives, that should be an incentive for us to make sure our motives are right. In other words, the “why” is important! And the why should come before the “what” of what we do.



Read Galatians 1:10
For am I now trying to persuade people, or God? Or am I striving to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.

Now, flip back to Day 1 and read Colossians 3:17 again. (See if you can memorize it.) Whatever we do, we do it in the name of Jesus. That means that we do things as a service to *Him* and not as a way of kissing up to others. Whether we are eating, drinking, raising children, stuck in traffic on the morning commute, serving the needy, or cleaning a toilet, we do it in His name because we serve Him. That’s our why.

Our why results from the holiness we talked about on Days 2 and 3. When we live worshipful lives, God works His holiness in us. We are holy because He is holy. That makes the “do” part (what we do, the actions we take) a lot easier! In other words, when our hearts are right, our actions will be right. It all starts with why.

For the next few minutes, look up and pray over Psalm 139.

Write verse 24 here:



Ask God to search your heart and lead you in His ways.

God Time Day Day 5 - Becoming Who God Wants



As we seek direction for our decisions, we must take into account who God wants us to become. We know that this life is one of growth and spiritual maturity.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:23

Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely. And may your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Underline the word “sanctify.”



Circle the word “completely.”

Put a box around how spirit, soul, and body should be kept.

We need to be sanctified and kept sound and blameless because we will meet Jesus Christ someday – whether in heaven when we die or if He comes back first. So, Christ wants us to live a godly life; this is who God wants us to become! It’s a process called sanctification. It transforms us and reveals Him to the world around us.

Think of someone you’ve known who was particularly godly. What made them a godly person in your view?

Make a list of characteristics that a godly, holy person might have. (E.g., faithfulness, love, generosity...)

_____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____

How could those characteristics encourage other Christians and reveal Jesus to the world around us?



Circle a few items on the list above that you’d like to adopt for yourself. Put one or two into practice this next week – for His glory, not your own.



Family Time

Main Idea:

Becoming More Like Jesus



Key Verse: Philippians 3:10 (NirV)

I want to know Christ better. Yes, I want to know the power that raised him from the dead. I want to join him in his sufferings. I want to become like him by sharing in his death.

Ask: Who do you want to be like? A football star? Someone on TV? Someone famous? The person Christians most want to be like is Jesus. Why do you think that is? What things do you do that show you are like Jesus? Are there things that show you are not like him? In what ways does Jesus want to change them?



Read the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:3-10 (NirV)

- ³ *“Blessed are those who are spiritually needy.
The kingdom of heaven belongs to them.*
- ⁴ *Blessed are those who are sad.
They will be comforted.*
- ⁵ *Blessed are those who are humble.
They will be given the earth.*
- ⁶ *Blessed are those who are hungry and thirsty for what is right. They will be filled.*
- ⁷ *Blessed are those who show mercy.
They will be shown mercy.*
- ⁸ *Blessed are those whose hearts are pure.
They will see God.*
- ⁹ *Blessed are those who make peace.
They will be called children of God.*
- ¹⁰ *Blessed are those who suffer for doing what is right.
The kingdom of heaven belongs to them.*



Activity:

This week we are going to eat soup for one of our dinners. Instead of using the money to buy a more expensive dinner, we will use that money to purchase canned food, baking items, and other festive food items that we can give to a family in need. We can decorate a basket to put the items in. Together, let’s think of a family in our community that we can give this basket.



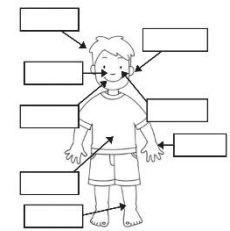
Talk:

A ‘beatitude’ is a saying that tells us how God blesses us or shows us his love for us. The Beatitudes are sayings in which Jesus describes Christians. Each beatitude gives us a promise and tells us one way in which Jesus will show his love to us.

Think of some of the parts of your body: your eyes, your feet, your ears, your mouth, etc.

How can you use each of these parts to be more like Jesus?

Draw a person with boxes pointing to different parts of the body and write in each box how you can use each part to be like Jesus.



Prayer:

Dear God, thank you for the example of Jesus that you have given us to follow. Please help us to be more like Jesus in all we think, say, and do. Amen



Gathering Time (Sermon Outline)

Gathering Notes

Date: _____

Direction For Decisions - Week 2

1 Corinthians 16:5-7

Proverbs 4:5-7

_____ Wisdom

1. _____

Proverbs 13:20

2. _____

James 1:5

Psalms 32:8

3. _____

Lined area for gathering notes.

Directional / Walk / Ask / Decide



Group Time

ENCOURAGEMENT 1-on-1 (See last page for directions)

Y / N
 Y / N

LOOK BACK:

Point: *If you are becoming the right who, God will help you choose the right do. If you're driven by the right why, God will lead you to the right what.*

- Share how you defined God’s will.

Question: Do you know these lyrics: *“If you choose not to decide you still have made a choice.”*? Five bonus points if you can name the song, 10 points if you can also name the band, and 15 if you can name the country they’re from.

LOOK UP:

Recap: When it comes to asking God for help in making decisions, He rarely makes the answers a big, clear-as-the-nose-on-your-face, production. But He will give us the wisdom we need to decide – if we pursue wisdom.

Here are three helpful tools for pursuing wisdom.

1. Walk with the wise. Who you seek guidance from matters, and it’s impossible to live the right life when you hang out with the wrong people.
2. Ask God for wisdom. Ask often and ask sincerely. And don’t forget to listen.
3. Decide. Deal with the good, bad, and ugly of that decision, learn from it, and keep walking, asking, and deciding.

LOOK IN: Discussion

- Share about how being in a close group of Believers (like this one hopefully) has helped you make a wise decision.
- Share a personal experience when you knew you received wisdom from God regarding a specific matter.

LOOK FORWARD: Application

Point: *Surround yourself with people who seek to please God, then ask for wisdom to do the same.*

“No man was ever wise by chance.”

- Who do you surround yourself with?

This next week, journal who you spent time with and what you spoke about (more than the casual “Hi, how’s it going,” but conversations). Make an entry for each person and each contact.

Use this as an outline:

Their name: _____

Your relationship to them: _____

Amount of time spent with them: _____

Conversation recap: _____

- Pray/ask for wisdom.

Using a Bible App or webpage, search for the word *wisdom*. Read each result (200+) and based upon what you learn, write a prayer seeking wisdom for a coming decision.

God Time Day 1: Options Galore!



We have so many options. The average American makes a combination of around 35,000 choices per day. While some may be insignificant, others are not and, minus 7 hours sleeping, that comes out to over 2000 choices per hour. No wonder we can feel overwhelmed! Part of why we have so many decisions to make is because we are confronted with so many options. (One example: buying cereal or shampoo.) Friends, we have options galore.



Read Proverbs 4:7
Wisdom is supreme — so get wisdom. And whatever else you get, get understanding.

John Maxwell says, “Life is a matter of choices, and every choice you make makes you.” That may seem to be an overgeneralization, but our decisions bear weight. This week we’ll look at how to gain wisdom and make good decisions when we’re faced with so many options.

Without looking it up, what is your definition of wisdom?

God Time Day 2: Gaining Wisdom



Read Proverbs 9:10
The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

Fearing the Lord means revering Him and submitting to His will, ways, and guidance. This is wisdom. In short, it is living a worshipful, obedient life. It is within this worshipful, obedient life, that we can practice making good decisions. God will not always show us *specifically* what to do, but when we submit to His will, ways, and guidance, we can trust Him to keep us within the boundaries of wisdom.

On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your level of submission to God’s will, ways, and guidance?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What will you do this week to move up 1-2 points? What is the plan?

God Time Day 3: Walk



Read Proverbs 13:20
The one who walks with the wise will become wise, but a companion of fools will suffer harm.

Underline what the verse says happens to the person who “walks with the wise.”

We are designed by God to be social; we live connected to others in a web of relationships. There is interesting research that shows that our friends’ behaviors and attitudes affect us. That makes sense. More interesting is that our friends’ friends affect us too, even if we haven’t met them. Why? Because they affect our friends, who in turn affect us.

A Bible story illustrates this. King Rehoboam, Solomon’s son, sought advice when the people complained about how he ruled them.



Read 1 Kings 12:8 and 13
⁸But he abandoned the counsel that the old men gave him and took counsel with the young men who had grown up with him and stood before him. ¹³Then the king answered the people harshly. He rejected the advice the elders had given him...

The result? The people rebelled and the kingdom was split.

The Bible tells us that if we want to be wise, we should be careful to walk with wise people. Look back at yesterday’s God Time. What is the beginning of wisdom?

Pray about this: Are those you associate with truly wise?

How will you “walk with the wise?” (E.g., join a 4G group, go to Bible study, serve with other committed Christians, find a mentor, etc.) List three ways and get started today.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

God Time Day 4: Ask



Read James 1:5-8

⁵Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God — who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly — and it will be given to him. ⁶But let him ask in faith without doubting. For the doubter is like the surging sea, driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord, ⁸being double-minded and unstable in all his ways.



Circle anything in the passage that stands out to you.

The passage above tells us how to gain wisdom: *ask God*. The context of this passage is trials; James tells us that wisdom is needed in trials. However, it also teaches that God is the giver of wisdom for any circumstance and that this wisdom is given to “askers” who have a saving faith in Christ – those who know God. This is more about the quality (or object) of faith and less about the quantity of faith. The NLT translates verse 6 this way: when asking, “*be sure that your faith is in God alone.*” If you trust God, ask for wisdom. Then trust that He’ll keep His word in giving it.



Read Jesus’ words in John 10:27

My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me.

We can know God’s voice through the Bible, or when His Spirit brings words and truths of the Scriptures to mind. But here’s the deal, once we know it, we need to show it with our actions. That is a sign of true wisdom: application.

Where would you say most people go first when they want or seek wisdom?

Where do you go *first*?

What do you need to change or keep the same, so that your answer will always be “God”?

God Time Day 5: Decide



When faced with difficult decisions, many people freeze and make no decision at all, which is a decision. Or, we might act like a squirrel in front of a moving car. Ironically, the squirrel ultimately decides which way to run, and the result can be... well, *flattening*. Deciding can be scary.

When we can’t decide, we sometimes treat the Bible like a magic 8 ball. Remember those? We ask a question, shake it up (or open it up), and seek the answer. But the Bible is written to make us wise unto salvation and to live a life of godliness. It’s all about Jesus– not all about us. So what help is there when we *just need to decide*?



Read Proverbs 4:18

The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, shining brighter and brighter until midday.

Underline what the path of the righteous is like. (Note: the righteous are Believers.)

The Bible gives many instances of how God is with us, giving us wise counsel. (Psalm 32:8, Isaiah 41:10, Colossians 1:9) Yes, sometimes, God might give us a specific nudge, but many times, we can make decisions based on the information, grace, guidance, love, and light that He has already made known to us through His Word and then brings to our mind. (John 14:25-26) Most of all, wisdom comes from walking with the Lord, or by “*keeping in step with the Spirit.*” (Galatians 5:16-26)

What decisions are you struggling with right now?

Here are a few practical steps to help you work through those decisions:

1. Pray.
2. If possible, give the decision time and thought.
3. Commit the decision to God.

Remember, if you need wisdom,

Walk with the wise, **Ask** God, and then **Decide**.

Family Time



Main Idea:

Wisdom

**Key Verse: Psalm 119:105**

Your word is like a lamp that shows me the way. It is like a light that guides me.

Say:

The Bible was written by many different people, like Moses and David, Peter and Paul. The Holy Spirit guided them to write exactly and only what God wanted. In the Bible, the Old Testament tells us how God prepared the way to send Jesus. The New Testament tells us about Jesus and teaches us how to live for Him. Throughout the Bible, God teaches us what pleases Him.

Ask:

Think of your favorite book. Why do you like it?

Think of a very useful book. What can you use it for?

The Bible is the best book of all. Which parts of the Bible do you like the best? Why?

Who wrote things down in the Bible?

How did they know what to write?

**Read:**

Read Psalm 12:6 and find out what God's Word is compared to.

The words of the Lord are perfect.

They are like silver made pure in a clay furnace.

They are like gold made pure seven times over.

Activity:

Get your Bible out and have a good look at it. Look at the list of all the books near the beginning.

How can you learn the order of the books by heart? (Here are a couple of songs to help!)



How many books are in the Old Testament? _____

How many books are in the New Testament? _____

Now add them together to figure out how many books are in the entire Bible:

Pray:

Dear God, thank you for giving us the Bible. Help us to realize how important and wonderful it is. Help us to understand it better when we read it. Help us to find out what pleases you and help us to live like that. Amen.

ON-RAMP

DINNER

SUNDAY, Jan. 15

On-Ramp Dinners are offered quarterly for anyone to:

- Apply for CBC membership.
- Discover how to serve within the CBC family.
- Understand the CBC vision to impact our world for Jesus Christ as one family in many places.

The next On-Ramp Dinner will be at the Bastrop Campus on Sunday, January 15 from 4:00-7:00 PM.

The On-Ramp Dinner is free, and childcare is available, but preregistration is required.

Register using the QR, go to our website, or contact the office at 512-303-1697, office@cbcfamily.net.



SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE

SUNDAY, JANUARY 22

- Receive A Baby Bottle. Pray over it.
- Fill It With Loose Change, Cash, Or Checks (Make Checks Payable To: BPRC).
- Bottles Are Due Back Sunday, February 5.
- Every Penny Given Goes Directly To Our Partner Ministry, The Bastrop Pregnancy Resource Center. For More Info Go To: bastropprc.org.

*Bastrop Pregnancy
Resource Center*

Men's Reset Retreat

February 24-26
Fri. Evening – Sun. Morning

tejas
CAMP AND RETREAT



Gathering Time (Sermon Outline)

Gathering Notes

Date: _____

Direction For Decisions - Week 3

Trusting God’s _____.

Acts 20:22-24

• The _____ Prompting

• Certain _____

Psalms 119:105

• _____ Resistance

• _____ Confidence

Lined area for gathering notes.

Process / Spirit’s / Uncertainty / Predictable / Uncommon



Group Time

ENCOURAGEMENT 1-on-1 (See last page for directions)

Y / N
 Y / N

LOOK BACK:

Point: *Surround yourself with people who seek to please God, then ask for wisdom to do the same.*

- Share what you learned about gaining wisdom.

Question: Why are you doing what you do? Why are you in the career you are in?

LOOK UP:

Recap: While every small decision can have big consequences, there are times when we need to make big decisions. Are we willing to follow God’s process in the big as well as the small?

It begins with the Spirit’s prompting. But we only know if it’s God’s Spirit if we have a strong relationship with Him. The strength of the relationship determines not the amount, but the degree of knowledge. Next, we may know only enough to take the next step. It’s a path of certain uncertainty, like how a flashlight can lead us on a journey of miles but only lights up the next few steps ahead. Choosing the path of God will predictably lead to resistance – every time, and often from the least expected places. But you will make it through. Why? Because He will fill you with uncommon confidence.

LOOK IN: Discussion

- Do you, as an individual or couple, have a process for decision-making that you feel works well? If so, what is it and why do you feel it works?
- Share a time when you, or someone close to you, absolutely knew for certain you were following God’s leading, and then you ran into opposition/resistance. What happened?

LOOK FORWARD: Application

Point: *The degree of our knowledge of God’s purpose is measured by our obedience.*

Our purpose is the same as Paul’s; Demonstrate, Declare, Disciple.

On a scale of 1-10, how strong is your relationship with God?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What will you do this week to move up 1-2 points? What is the plan?

What is one thing God’s Spirit keeps nagging you to do?

What is the one step you will take this week to fulfill that purpose?

When you take this step, He will reveal the next step.

When you face resistance, who will you go to for counsel?

Write a prayer, seeking God’s guidance for the journey you are about to embark upon. Thankfully seek His wisdom and will.

God Time Day 1: Becoming More Decisive



We now look at the third obstacle that many people face: a lack of experience in making decisions in alignment with God’s will. We make tons of decisions every day, like deciding what to eat. While we have all had that experience, and possibly decided poorly at times, many of us can be indecisive when it comes to living according to God’s will simply because we don’t have the experience.



Read Joshua 24:15.

But if it doesn’t please you to worship the Lord, choose for yourselves today: Which will you worship—the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living? As for me and my family, we will worship the Lord.

When we live our lives according to God’s will, we are worshipping God with our lives. So, before going any further, the very first step of this process must begin with this question:

Is it your highest priority to live according to God’s will?

Take some time to honestly reflect on this question.

God Time Day 2: Trusting the Process



Read Proverbs 3:5-6.

⁵Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; ⁶in all your ways know him, and he will make your paths straight.

Lots of people will often say that they want to live according to God’s will. For many, it is just empty words. But, if living according to God’s will is their highest priority, then trusting God becomes easier. Unfortunately, this is where the decision-making process falls apart for a lot of people. Trusting God requires that we relinquish our control and give it over to God. Many people might say they want to live a godly life, but only on their terms and according to their control. This leaves no room in our lives for God’s will.



Pray for God to humble your heart and to help you place your trust in Him by relinquishing control.

God Time Day 3: The Spirit’s Prompting and Certain Uncertainty



The next step in decision-making is to follow God’s lead through obedience. Let’s consider Paul’s journey and his obedience to follow God’s will.



Read Acts 20:22-23

²²“And now I am on my way to Jerusalem, compelled by the Spirit, not knowing what I will encounter there, ²³except that in every town the Holy Spirit warns me that chains and afflictions are waiting for me.

According to Paul, he was on his way to one destination, but the Holy Spirit “compelled” him to redirect his journey to Jerusalem. We need to understand that the Holy Spirit can speak to us in many ways, but it is dangerous when we reduce the compelling of the Holy Spirit to just a feeling. This can lead us to use the Holy Spirit as an excuse to justify all kinds of behavior (E.g., “The Holy Spirit compelled me to eat an entire large pizza by myself in a single sitting”).

This is the reason why it is so important for us to have our “who” and “why” in the right place (see Week 1). When our “who” and “why” are aligned with God’s will, we will be less likely to mistake our selfish desires and feelings for the leading of the Holy Spirit. Here are three practical tests you can use to know if what you are feeling is of the Holy Spirit.

1. Is what you feel compelled/called to do in alignment with scripture? (How well do you know scripture?)
2. Will it give glory to God, or yourself?
3. If you are married, can your spouse confirm or affirm what you feel you are being compelled/called to do?

Even when you have everything in line with God, there will always be a sense of uncertainty. After all, God is not sending you an email with specific “Step 1, Step 2...” instructions. If God did that, we would cease to be in a relationship built on faith.

Is there something you feel the Holy Spirit is leading you towards? How will you test it?

God Time Day 4: Predictable Resistance



In the process of making godly decisions, we need to address what happens after we make a decision. In Paul’s case, he decided to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit knowing that it would come with adversity. (Reread Acts 20:23 from Day 3.)



Now, read what Jesus had to say in John 16:33.
I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world.



Circle the word “suffering.”

As Jesus was teaching the people, he was not delicate about telling them of the difficulties and struggles that will come with following Him. (If you want a fuller picture, read all of John 15-16.) Jesus was upfront about these trials because He did not want people to be surprised or stumble away from their faith when facing adversity.



Jesus says it another way in Matthew 7:13-14.
¹³ *Enter through the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the road broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who go through it.* ¹⁴ *How narrow is the gate and difficult the road that leads to life, and few find it.*



Circle the word “difficult.”

Too often, people make the right decision based on God’s leading, but upon facing resistance they immediately “jump-ship” and assume that “this was not part of God’s plan.” The reality is, if we are living according to God’s will, we should be expecting resistance and trials. Jesus warns us not to be caught off-guard but to maintain a posture of peace in Him. If the road we are walking on offers no resistance or trials, it is possible we have compromised and are not walking the “difficult road” according to God’s will.

Are there areas in your life where you are facing resistance or trials?



Pray for God to give you endurance and wisdom along your road.

God Time Day 5: Uncommon Confidence



Read Acts 20:24.

But I consider my life of no value to myself; my purpose is to finish my course and the ministry I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of God’s grace.

Paul travels to Jerusalem, expecting trials and hardships to come. Even in the face of imprisonment, bodily harm, and possible death, Paul seems unwavering in his dedication to following the leading of the Holy Spirit. Paul’s confidence in the face of such trials might seem otherworldly to us, and the reason is that it is otherworldly.

Go back and reread John 16:33 from Day 4.

Underline the phrase, “in me you may have peace.”

Paul’s confidence is otherworldly, because it is not a confidence based in anything of this world, but rather a confidence rooted in the one who is beyond this world and created this world: Jesus Christ.

Because Paul has this uncommon confidence that is rooted in Jesus, he can maintain peace in trials which allows him to remain grounded in his purpose.



Circle what Paul says is his “purpose,” his “ministry,” in Acts 20:24 above.

We need to realize that Paul’s purpose is also our purpose. Everyone who is a follower of Christ is called to the same ministry, “to testify to the gospel of God’s grace.” We call it our CBC 3D Mission: Demonstrate God’s Love, Declare the Good News (of the gospel), and Make Disciples Near and Far (who then go do the same).

As we continue to explore what it means to make godly decisions, here are some practical places to start:

- Prayer is always a good place to start. And consider incorporating fasting into your prayer life.
- When struggling with a decision, consider turning to another person of faith and have them join you in seeking God’s will. Who can you ask to join you?



Family Time

Main Idea:
Trusting God



Key Verse: John 14:1

“Don’t let your heart be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.”

Ask:

Wouldn’t it be incredible to do amazing things? Fly? Trampoline into outer space? As we know from our Bible, our Savior didn’t need to imagine amazing things. He did amazing things.



When in doubt, remember to trust in Jesus, the Son of God. No matter what the weather – stormy, sunny, or cloudy with a chance of rain – Jesus’ power is timeless.

Create:

Create a paper airplane. Make a few different kinds. (If you need some creative ideas, go to YouTube and look up *paper airplanes* and watch a few videos. There are many unique ideas.)

After making your planes, have some fun flying them. Talk about how the wind and air pressure under the wings of the plane give it lift as it is flying.



Read:

Read Exodus 14:5-31

- How did Moses trust God?
- How did the Israelites trust God?
- How can we trust God as the Israelites did?

Prayer:

Dear God, trusting You is hard. I have a hard time letting go and letting you take control. We need help releasing control to you. Help us grow in our trust in you. Amen.





Gathering Time (Sermon Outline)

Gathering Notes

Date: _____

Direction For Decisions - Week 4

The Faith To _____.

Nehemiah 1:11

_____ Do You Do Something Big?

Small _____.

Zechariah 4:10

Nehemiah 2:17-18

Take _____ Step.

Nehemiah 2:19-20

Galatians 6:9

Horizontal lines for taking notes.

Start / How / Steps / Another



Group Time

ENCOURAGEMENT 1-on-1 (See last page for directions)

Y / N
 Y / N

LOOK BACK:

Point: *The degree of our knowledge of God’s purpose is measured by our obedience.*

- Share one step you took this past week.

Question: How many adventures have you been on that never started? *“Someday. That’s a dangerous word. It’s really just a code for ‘never’.” - Roy Miller.*

LOOK UP:

Recap: The decision to start is one of the most difficult decisions there is, especially when the future is unclear — and that happens often! Good, bad, or otherwise, starting is a barometer of our faith.

What makes it easier is when we open up our faith to significant, kingdom-building calls of God. It’s the difference between asking, “God, why are they so wrong?”, and crying out, “God, why don’t they know you?”, and then taking a step to tackle the real issue.

It starts with small step like sharing your 15-second testimony with a lost co-worker or two before stepping onto a plane to take the gospel to an unreached people group in India. Those small steps lead to more steps, steps we were unaware of when we started, yet they often bring great joy (Luke 2:10, 20). As the small steps add up, they lead us to the big, all-in steps that God is calling us to take.

LOOK IN: Discussion

What are some small and BIG steps we might take to serve God in each area of our CBC 3D Missions Statement?

- Demonstrate Gods Love.
- Declare the Good News (of the gospel).
- Make Disciples Near and Far.

LOOK FORWARD: Application

Point: *Don’t let the start stop you.*

“It’s someday Roy.”

List some small and big steps you might take in each of the 3D’s:

Demonstrating God’s Love:

- A First Small Step (E.g., Cleaning up an elderly neighbor’s yard):

- A BIG Step (E.g., Starting the foster-parent application process):

Declaring the Good News:

- A First Small Step (E.g., Sharing your 15-second testimony with a neighbor you’ve been praying for via *Bless Every Home**):

- A BIG Step (E.g., Sharing with guests weekly at a *Feed the Need* site):

Making Disciples Near and Far:

- A First Small Step (E.g., Inviting 2-3 others to start a new 4G group):

- A BIG Step (E.g., Starting the IMB missionary application process**):

* For more info, go to: blesseveryhome.com/cbcfamily.

** For more info, go to: imb.org/go.

WEEK 4 – FAITH TO START

God Time Day 1: The Faith to Start (or Stop)



You may have heard the saying, “The longest journey begins with a single step.” God often calls people to obey in something relatively small before they ever catch sight of His long-term objective. We see this dynamic in many areas of life: crawling comes before walking; numbers come before addition, which comes before multiplication, which comes before algebra.

The challenge in our spiritual life is that we often think we know the end goal. We fail to take the small steps God puts in our immediate path because we are too focused on our ideas of the big dream. E.g., someone may believe God is calling them to write a book, but they never clear enough space in their schedule to begin writing on a regular basis.

What is God calling you to do (or stop doing) right now?

God Time Day 2: A Little Background



After God brought the Jewish people into the Promised Land to make it theirs, they repeatedly disregarded His commands for the kind of behavior which would allow them to remain at peace within the land. Therefore, God let them be conquered and taken away into captivity. The Temple, which was known as one of the Wonders of the ancient world, was destroyed and the walls of the capital city were knocked down.

In the land of their captivity, God called a man named Nehemiah to begin something big, but it started with a commitment to prayer.



Read Nehemiah 1:11

Please, Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant and to that of your servants who delight to revere your name. Give your servant success today and grant him compassion in the presence of this man.



Look again at your response at the end of Day 1 above. Begin today by committing the calling to daily prayer. Journal your prayer times and the responses received.

God Time Day 3: How Do You Do Something Big?



Everyone wishes that their life would have significance. But we often mix up cause and effect (put the cart before the horse) and want the result without putting in the work.

After Nehemiah spent time in secret praying, he finally went before the king with his request. He didn’t ask for permission to go to Jerusalem without having considered at least some of what might be involved, and so he was ready when the king asked him how long he might be gone. Nehemiah had even thought about needing permission to cut trees for building himself a house when he got there.



Read Nehemiah 2:6,8

⁶The king, with the queen seated beside him, asked me, “How long will your journey take, and when will you return?” So I gave him a definite time, and it pleased the king to send me. ⁸And let me have a letter written to Asaph, keeper of the king’s forest, so that he will give me timber to rebuild the gates of the temple’s fortress, the city wall, and the home where I will live.” The king granted my requests, for the gracious hand of my God was on me.

What “big” or significant goal(s) do you have for your life; having a great marriage, making a good living, raising successful children, reaching people for Jesus?

None of these kinds of things will happen without a lot of work on the front end. Consider how to make one big goal happen and write the key elements for each:

- Pray: _____
- _____
- Prepare: _____
- _____
- Plan: _____
- _____
- Prioritize: _____
- _____

God Time Day 4: It Takes Small Steps



Many of the word pictures Jesus used to describe the kingdom of God communicated the idea that small beginnings often have massive, systemic results:

- A little leaven in lots of dough. (Matthew 13:33)
- A tiny mustard seed growing large. (Matthew 13:31-32)
- A little faith that moves mountains. (Matthew 17:20)

Nehemiah’s story also communicates this idea of having the faith to start small. Often just one person’s faithfulness is all that’s needed for others to also take a step forward.



Read Nehemiah 2:17-18

*17*So I said to them, “You see the trouble we are in. Jerusalem lies in ruins and its gates have been burned. Come, let’s rebuild Jerusalem’s wall, so that we will no longer be a disgrace.” *18*I told them how the gracious hand of my God had been on me, and what the king had said to me. They said, “Let’s start rebuilding,” and their hands were strengthened to do this good work.

Underline where Nehemiah told how God blessed his initial step of faith.



Circle how the people responded.

In a similar story from this time, some people were upset that the new temple wasn’t going to be as grand as the one built by Solomon, but God had something to say about it through His prophets.

Read Zechariah 4:10

For who despises the day of small things? These seven eyes of the Lord, which scan throughout the whole earth, will rejoice when they see the cornerstone in Zerubbabel’s hand.

What small step(s) have you been avoiding because they didn’t seem to be important enough?

God Time Day 5: Take Another Step



Persistence in taking small steps is also important – since once you start, the enemy is likely to step up his efforts to hinder you (Week 3, Day 4). This opposition happened with Nehemiah’s efforts to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem.



Read Nehemiah 2:19-20

*19*When Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official, and Geshem the Arab heard about this, they mocked and despised us, and said, “What is this you’re doing? Are you rebelling against the king?” *20*I gave them this reply, “The God of the heavens is the one who will grant us success. We, his servants, will start building, but you have no share, right, or historic claim in Jerusalem.”

Here is one practical example of persistent steps:

- You commit to the step of participating in “1st Saturday Serve” each month as part of CBC’s Go2 initiative*. It wouldn’t be surprising if the next month something seemingly important came up to pull you away from participating again. (* cbcfamily.net/go2)

Growing in faith requires repeated service and pushing on to further steps, like monthly participating in “Go2 Fast & Pray” by refraining from one meal during the second week of each month to pray for someone who needs Jesus.

In addition to Go2, our 4Gs can be a way to keep on stepping. Progress from not only participating in Sunday’s Gathering to joining a 4G Group and daily God Time devotionals. What about our 3Ds: Demonstrate, Declare, & Disciple?

What next step can you take this next week?



Read Galatians 6:9

Let us not get tired of doing good, for we will reap at the proper time if we don’t give up.



Set aside some time to specifically pray for the steps you are taking, and will be taking, to follow God’s will.

Family Time



Main Idea:

Steps of Faith

**Key Verse: Hebrews 11:1**

Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen.

Talk: Gephyrophobia is the term for the fear of driving over bridges. A person who suffers from this condition is afraid to cross a bridge, especially a bridge over water. He doesn't have faith that the bridge will hold him up. Millions of people place their faith in bridges every day and drive over them. But some people don't have faith and fall into fear, thinking the bridge is going to collapse with them on it.

**Read:** Hebrews 11:1-4

Talk: Faith means believing in something you cannot see or touch. The writer of Hebrews gave the example of God creating the world out of nothing just by speaking. We can read the Bible story of God creating the world out of nothing, but no one saw God do it. The only way to believe it is by faith. From the very first verse of Scripture, we are called to believe in things that we cannot see.

We also believe by faith that God is real. We can't see God or touch Him. We can read about God in the Bible, but because we can't see Him, we must have faith to believe that He is real. But believing in God is only the first step of faith. God wants us to place our faith in him to save us from our sins. To place our faith in Jesus is to trust Him with our lives by believing in God's plan of salvation. That is the only way we can be saved and the only way we can please God. Hebrews 11 is filled with people whom God commended for their faith.

Ask:

- What is faith? (Faith means believing and trusting in things that cannot be seen.)
- What example did the writer of Hebrews give of something that takes faith to believe? (The writer of Hebrews used the example of God creating the world out of nothing, simply by speaking.)
- Can you think of things you need to have faith in to believe?
- What does it mean to have faith in God and trust Him? (Having faith in God means you believe that He is real even though you cannot see Him. You believe in Jesus even though you were not born until long after He walked the earth.)

**Pray:**

Dear God, give us faith to believe in you and to not have doubt.

The 3-Step “1-on-1 Encouragement” Process

Let us hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering, since he who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to provoke love and good works, not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching.

Hebrews 10:23-25

- 1. Partner-up: Partners should be of the same gender. If there is an odd number three is okay but work swiftly.
- 2. Partners ask each other these five questions:

	1) Did you spend specific personal time in the BIBLE <u>each day</u> this past week?	These are “Yes” or “No” questions.
	2) Did you spend specific time in PRAYER <u>each day</u> this past week – not just for meals?	Any hesitations or “Well...” responses are circled “No.”
	3) Did you do something specific to show Godly LOVE to someone this past week?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If so, the partner briefly shares the encounter(s) with their partner and, on the provided line, writes the name(s) of the person(s) they showed love to, shared the gospel with, or discipled. • If not, leave the line blank.
	4) Did you intentionally share the GOSPEL with anyone this past week?	
	5) Did you DISCIPLE anyone this past week? (Ex: Sharing with others from any of the Gathering, God, Group, or Family Times)	

- 3. Each partner prays for the other: No matter how or what the partner has done over the past week, this is an intentional prayer of **encouragement** for the coming week!

What did I learn from this series?

What did I start or stop doing because of this series?
