

Decisiveness

INTRODUCTION

Are you committed to doing right, even *before* you have a decision to make? A decisive person has firmly-held convictions based on God's Word. He is ready when difficult decisions come. Sometimes, however, the wisest choice may not be clear at first. God promises to give wisdom when we are uncertain, as we ask in faith, nothing wavering. (See James 1:5–6.) The Bible guides us to know what is right. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105). When we choose to pray for God's wisdom and search His Word, He will answer. Committing to obey God prepares you to make right decisions. Will you commit to do what pleases God? By making this commitment *now*, before a difficult decision arises, you will be better prepared to have a clear, sure response when needed.



The Ephesians Burn Their Evil Books

DECISIVENESS

The ability to finalize difficult decisions based on the will and ways of God

Decisiveness Overview

What is Decisiveness?

Read aloud, study, and discuss what decisiveness means and how it applies to life.

The operational definition of *decisiveness* is “the ability to finalize difficult decisions based on the will and ways of God.” Did you know that each of us makes thousands of decisions every day? Some decisions are as simple as when to brush your teeth. Other choices are more difficult, such as what to do when the cashier returns too much change from your purchase. Decisiveness involves the skills of discerning the factors of a situation, listening to the Lord’s leading, and confidently knowing and making the choice that would bring the best results. You know the excess money does not belong to you, so you go back in to return the extra change to the cashier. This difficult yet correct decision honored the Lord, and inwardly you know you chose rightly. “For the LORD



God’s Word is the sure foundation a decisive Christian needs in order to make right choices and hold to them.

giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding” (Proverbs 2:6). The opposite of *decisiveness* is *double-mindedness*. Double-mindedness is wavering between two opposing opinions or options. Often, those two “minds” are God’s way versus our way. We are pulled away from God’s way by what we want to do. The Bible describes such a double-minded person as a friend of the world and, therefore, an enemy of God! (See James 4:4, 8.) You may struggle because you do not truly believe that His will

is best. You know you should confess if you break a lamp because you disobeyed your parents’ instruction to not throw a ball inside the house, but you want to hide your guilt. Your thoughts are tossed back and forth like the waves of the sea. (See James 1:8.) Your father has instructed you to always admit wrongdoing, and your decision to humbly confess brings correction, repair of the lamp, and restoration with your dad and the Lord. Your faith in God’s ways is strengthened, and you grow in your desire to choose His will. God delights to work in our hearts both to *will* and to *do* what is best! (See Philippians 2:13.) Peace will fill your heart and confirm your decision as you walk in His ways.

A decisive person will seek God’s will and ways through both the direct instruction and the underlying principles of the Bible. As he faces choices

throughout the day, he recognizes that sensitivity to the Holy Spirit’s leading is essential. He knows that God confirms His Word through authorities, circumstances, and abiding peace. Before making a final decision, a decisive person may examine other related facts or picture the possible outcomes of a choice. Finally, he will take courage and hold to his decision. A decisive person does not second-guess God’s direction but stands firm.



A double-minded man, like the waves of the sea, is unstable. He continually changes his mind.

Decisiveness in Scripture

Read aloud and discuss each verse, question, and concept.

Proverbs 2:1–6 says, “My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.” What a privilege to study the rich truths of God’s Word, hide them in your heart, and apply them to daily life! These truths are priceless treasures, far above the value and beauty of rubies and diamonds. As you dig deeper into God’s Word, see Who He is, and allow Him to work in you, your life will be a radiant expression of His love. He will be glorified as His character is seen in you.

THE CHARACTER OF GOD

We see examples of decisiveness in God’s character in the following ways:

- God’s decisions are always righteous. (See Psalm 119:160.)
- God has already appointed the day and the Judge by whom all the world will be judged. (See Acts 17:30–31.)
- Before the foundation of the world, God chose us to be His accepted and adopted children. (See Ephesians 1:4–6.)
- Jesus steadfastly resisted temptation by using Scripture. (See Matthew 4:10.)
- Jesus did not allow anything to deter Him once He decided to go to Jerusalem to complete His work on earth. (See Luke 9:51–53.)
- Jesus carefully selected His disciples for the purpose of multiplying committed followers of His heavenly Father. (See John 15:16.)

- The Holy Spirit reveals God’s will and ways to us. (See I Corinthians 2:9–11.)

DECISIVENESS IN MY LIFE

Now let’s examine some ways God wants us to live out decisiveness daily.

- Will God accept my worship if I am double-minded? (See Exodus 34:14.)
- What will happen if I choose to reject the Lord’s counsel? What will happen if I determine to heed His Word? (See Proverbs 1:29–33.)
- Do I seek wise counsel from knowledgeable people before making a decision? (See Proverbs 11:14.)
- Can I trust my own thinking, apart from the Lord, to lead me to the right conclusions? (See Proverbs 16:25.)
- When making decisions, do I keep in mind that my body is the temple of the Holy Spirit? (See I Corinthians 6:19.)
- Do I surrender to the Holy Spirit’s leading in everyday choices, or do I trust Him only for my salvation? (See Galatians 3:2–3.)
- How can I learn the will and ways of God? (See II Timothy 3:16.)

DECISIVENESS KEY VERSE

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”

JAMES 1:5

Bible Story

THE EPHESIANS BURN THEIR EVIL BOOKS

Silver statues and shrines gleamed brilliantly in the morning sun. Ephesus, one of the greatest cities of the Roman Empire, was a bustling center of commerce and religion. The Ephesians believed that an image of the mythological goddess Diana had fallen from Jupiter to Earth. Thus, Ephesus became an international hub for the worship of false gods. The city was home to the famous Temple of Artemis (Diana's Greek name), one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. The Ephesians were not only involved in mythology and idol worship but also in other forms of the supernatural world, including witchcraft, magic, and evil spirits.

One day, Paul arrived in this pagan city to preach Christ. He met twelve followers of John the Baptist and led them to understand that salvation is through Jesus Christ alone. As a result, many who once worshiped false gods trusted in Jesus. Soon thereafter, the Ephesians witnessed a startling incident that greatly impacted their lives. How would the Ephesians respond when confronted with God's power and their own sinfulness? Would Jesus be Lord of their lives, or would He merely be added to their idol worship? What changes and commitments would the Ephesian believers make as a result of their relationship with Christ?

BIBLE STORY QUESTIONS

Read Acts 19:8–20 together and discuss the following questions:

1. **Was Paul committed to follow God's will despite the opposition in Ephesus? How many people in Asia Minor heard the Gospel?** (See Acts 19:8–10.)

When did you personally decide to trust Christ? Without salvation, will a commitment to do right earn you a place in heaven? (See Galatians 2:16.)

2. **What miracles did God do through Paul? When the sons of Sceva tried to cast out demons, what happened? Why?** (See Acts 19:11–16.)

What should be your motivation for doing right? (See I Thessalonians 4:1.) On Whose strength should you depend so that you can do right? (See John 15:5.)

3. **As the name of Jesus was magnified, how did the Ephesian believers respond?** (See Acts 19:17–18.)

Do you recognize ways God is working in your life? When you are truly sorry for your sin, what will you want to do? (See Proverbs 28:13.)

4. **What did some of the Ephesian believers do as a result of their commitment to Christ? Did they**

base their decision on the will and ways of God? (See Deuteronomy 12:3.) **Who watched as they did this?** (See Acts 19:19a.)

Do you own anything that violates God's Word, compromises your relationship with Jesus, or damages your Christian testimony? What decision would God desire you make regarding that item? (See Ephesians 5:11.) Who can you be accountable to by letting them watch you dispose of it?

5. **How much were the evil books worth altogether?** (See Acts 19:19b.)

Why is destroying such items better than storing them, selling them, or giving them away? Are you willing to honor the Lord and do right, even if it costs you something?

6. **As the Ephesians committed to do right, what was the greater result of their decision?** (See Acts 19:20.)

With God's help, what commitment to do right can you make today?

Memory Verse

JAMES 1:5

Play the game together to help the children commit James 1:5 to memory. In the section “Doers of the Word,” have the children record how they will apply the verse to their lives.

“If any of you lack wisdom,
let him ask of God, that giveth to all
men liberally, and upbraideth not;
and it shall be given him.”

JAMES 1:5

MEMORY VERSE GAME

Clap-the-Word

Have everyone say the verse together three times. Next, select a child to leave the room while the rest of the children agree on a word they will clap instead of say when quoting the verse. The child re-enters the room. He listens as the others quote the verse, and he tries to guess which word they clapped. Select another person to step out of the room and repeat the game until all the children have had a chance to guess a clapped word.

DOERS OF THE WORD

In the blank below, write how this verse could be applied in your life, e.g., “first ask You for wisdom when I don’t know what to do,” or “prayerfully consider all the options before making a decision,” or “seek counsel from Godly authorities.”

“Dear Lord, I yield to You and am willing to apply this verse. Help me to _____

_____.”

I ask that You would develop decisiveness in my life. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.”

When the Lord gives you an opportunity to apply this verse, write it in your journal to later recall God’s working in your life.

Activity

WORD SEARCH

INTRODUCTION

Enjoy meditating on and thinking about the words of the decisiveness key verse and definition as you find them in the word search below. The underlined words are hidden horizontally, vertically, diagonally, or backwards.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B | A | S | E | D | G | A | S | K | H | Y | M | Y |
| L | O | S | L | O | G | Y | K | J | M | S | U | S |
| H | T | E | D | I | A | R | B | P | U | L | H | G |
| O | T | N | V | W | B | J | A | M | E | S | K | F |
| F | A | E | E | S | R | E | H | T | N | K | B | A |
| O | N | V | V | M | H | E | R | O | C | X | D | H |
| Y | T | I | L | I | B | A | I | A | N | D | N | N |
| O | F | S | M | L | G | S | L | L | L | Q | A | Q |
| U | D | I | F | F | I | C | U | L | T | L | N | A |
| G | H | C | O | C | O | W | T | H | E | O | Y | I |
| X | O | E | E | Z | I | L | A | N | I | F | N | Z |
| M | O | D | S | I | W | T | V | T | Z | G | R | E |
| O | A | O | G | I | P | E | H | V | L | H | V | S |

James 1:5

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”

Decisiveness

The ability to finalize difficult decisions based on the will and ways of God

If finding the underlined words is too difficult or frustrating for your child, assign only a few words to find, such as “men” and “of.” Younger children could point to the ABC’s. Older children may enjoy the extra challenge of finding all the words instead of only the underlined words.

Object Lesson

HOLD TO IT!

Instructions

You will need two neckties or nylon cords, each about 24 inches long, and three volunteers. Choose a volunteer to be the “decision maker.” Hand him both neckties and have him hold the ends of the ties, one end in each hand. The decision maker must try to stand his ground (not move) throughout the activity. Have an adult or responsible, older child stand on each side of the decision maker. Then have each person hold the other end of the neckties. If both people pull on their neckties at the same time, the decision maker will be unable to hold both ties.

I am going to read aloud a Bible verse to the decision maker. Next, I will read two choices and indicate which

person represents each choice. As the decision maker stands between both choices, he will consider the Bible verse and make his decision. He will hold tightly to the tie of the right choice and release the tie of the wrong choice. At the same time, the ones who represent the two choices will gently tug their ties. (*For safety concerns, please encourage the children to tug gently to prevent falling and injuring themselves.*) The decision maker can only hold on to one tie. He should be able to make a wise choice quickly, releasing the tie held by the “wrong choice” and affirming his commitment to hold to the “right choice”! In the following situations, which would you choose to do?

Decision Scenarios:

1. “Get up in the morning at the set time” vs. “Roll over and go back to sleep.”
“As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed.” PROVERBS 26:14
2. “Watch a questionable movie” vs. “Quietly leave and do another activity.”
“I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes”
PSALM 101:3
3. “Come when Mom calls” vs. “Pretend I didn’t hear.”
“Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.” COLOSSIANS 3:20
4. “Lie about what happened” vs. “Tell the truth.”
“The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment.” PROVERBS 12:19
5. “Forgive my brother” vs. “Stop speaking to him.”
“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” EPHESIANS 4:32
6. “Look for something to be grateful for” vs. “Complain about my situation.”
“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”
I THESSALONIANS 5:18
7. “Give the last cookie to my brother” vs. “Keep the last cookie for myself.”
“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”
PHILIPPIANS 2:4
8. “Fret over disappointing news” vs. “Turn to God in prayer.”
“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” ROMANS 8:28



The Ephesians Burn Their Evil Books



“Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men So mightily grew the word of God” (Acts 19:19–20).

Hymn History

“I Have Decided to Follow Jesus”

Sing “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus” and read about the decisiveness proclaimed by an unknown Indian Christian martyr.

Over two hundred years ago, northern India was a very superstitious region. Following a great revival in Wales, Welsh missionaries journeyed to the Assam area in northeast India to bring the Gospel to tribes of idol-worshipping headhunters.

In one village, one of those fierce headhunters listened to a missionary, and his heart grasped the Good News of Christ. Not only did he believe, but his wife and two sons also became Christians. As the redeemed man eagerly shared his newfound faith with other villagers, they, too, became believers!

The changes among his people infuriated the village chief. Summoning all the villagers, the chief angrily addressed the first convert among the tribe: “Renounce your faith, or be killed!” Moved by the Holy Spirit, the man replied:

“I have decided to follow Jesus. No turning back.”

The incensed chief next ordered his archers to kill the man’s young sons. Then he harshly demanded, “Will you deny your faith? You have lost both your children. You will lose your wife, too.” The man solemnly spoke:

*“Though no one joins me, still I will follow.
No turning back.”*

Furious, the chief then ordered the man’s wife be killed. Within minutes, she joined her two sons in Heaven. The chief yelled, “I will give you one more opportunity to deny your faith and live! There is no one for you in the world!” Now facing death himself, the man again gave his steadfast reply:

*“The cross before me, the world behind me.
No turning back.”*

The chief motioned to his archers and the man was killed. As the chief looked at the dead bodies of the four Christians, a spiritual awe gripped his heart. What supernatural power had these four believers possessed? In a spontaneous confession of faith, the chief astonished everyone by suddenly shouting out, “I, too, belong to Jesus Christ!” The villagers were moved. Soon the entire village accepted Christ.



India

This one man and his family are an inspiring depiction of *decisiveness*: “the ability to finalize difficult decisions based on the will and ways of God.”

This heart-touching story was passed by word of mouth, and eventually the words were written down and placed to the melody, “Assam,” after the region where the martyrdom occurred. The song is popular in many Indian churches and around the world today. Now when you sing “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus,” may it remind you that being decisive for Christ and following Him is worth our all!

I Have Decided to Follow Jesus

Unknown Christian Martyr

Folk Melody from India

1. I have de - cid - ed to fol - low Je - sus; I have de -
2. The world be - hind me, the cross be - fore me; The world be -
3. Tho' none go with me, still I will fol - low; Tho' none go

cid - ed to fol - low Je - sus; I have de - cid - ed to fol - low
hind me, the cross be - fore me; The world be - hind me, the cross be -
with me, still I will fol - low; Tho' none go with me, still I will

Je - sus; No turn - ing back, no turn - ing back.
fore me; No turn - ing back, no turn - ing back.
fol - low; No turn - ing back, no turn - ing back.

Word Search Answer Key

B A S E D G A S K H Y M Y
L O S L O G Y K J M S U S
H T E D I A R B P U L H G
O T N V W B J A M E S K F
F A E E S R E H T N K B A
O N V V M H E R O C X D H
Y T I L I B A I A N D N N
O F S M L G S L L L Q A Q
U D I F F I C U L T L N A
G H C O C O W T H E O Y I
X O E E Z I L A N I F N Z
M O D S I W T V T Z G R E
O A O G I P E H V L H V S

Hymn History Bibliography

Job, Dr. P. P., *Why God Why?*, Sabina Printing Press, 387-24, Faridabad, Haryana-121005, India, 2003, pp.113–116.

Recommended Resources

- *2018 Biblical Character Illustrated Calendar*
- *Hymns for the Family* CDs (“I Have Decided to Follow Jesus” is sung to piano accompaniment on Volume 4.)
- *The Power for True Success*
- Character Cards
- Character Cards Memory Game
- *Character Sketches*, Volumes 1–3
- *Achieving True Success*
- *Eric Liddell: Pure Gold* by David McCasland
- “Pitching Your Tent Toward Sodom” (Message by Gil Bates, available at embassymedia.com.)
- “God of Choices with Consequences” (Message by Karl Coke, available at embassymedia.com.)

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