

Decision-Making

Session 3: Risking Imperfection

1. Engaging the Brain

a. Time Test

- i. Everyone stand for a test of their powers of concentration and find out who in the group has the greatest awareness of time
- ii. When I say go, each member will sit down when they think exactly one minute has passed.
- iii. Go
- iv. Prize
- v. Try again with some sort of distraction

b. Mini-lecture: Making decisions without all the facts

- i. Many decisions are like the ones you just made
- ii. You never have ALL the facts, but you have to make the decision. Sometimes the longer you wait, the further you move away from the right decision.
- iii. Today we are going to focus on making what we call “imperfect decisions”

c. Review Question: if you could come up with the single most important idea about decision making we have talked about, what would it be?

d. Summary Statement: we make wise decisions by becoming wise people, not by memorizing the answers or by learning a formula.

2. Igniting the Heart

a. Wagon Wheel

i. Setup

1. Move chairs to two concentric circles with the youth on the outside facing in and the adults on the inside facing out
2. Everyone has a partner (some may need to be paired out)
3. You will need to remember your partner later in the session
4. You will have 20 seconds for each partner to answer the following questions (40 seconds total)

ii. Instructions

1. I will be asking a series of questions
2. I will announce who should answer first (youth or adult) and also say when time is up
3. After I call time, the inside circle (adults) will move one chair to the right
4. After the inside group has shifted, I will give the next question and then we'll repeat the process until all the questions are asked

iii. Ask the questions

1. What are three decisions you made this week?
2. If you had a major decision to make, whom would you talk to first? Why?
3. How normal is it for you to involve God in your decisions? And if it is, how do you involve God?
4. Which are you more likely to do: make a quick decision and regret it, or take too long to make the decision and miss the opportunity?
5. Do you think the most perfectionists (people who try to do everything perfectly) have trouble making decisions?

6. If someone gave you \$10,000 right now, what would you do with it?
7. If you had to buy a book or a movie in the next 10 minutes, how hard would it be for you to pick one out? What would it likely be?
8. If you could be anyone other than yourself, who would you be?
9. When would it be okay for you to lie, if ever?
10. What are the top 3 things you want to accomplish today?
11. What did you do with this weekend?
12. You don't agree with the potentially self-destructive behavior of your best friend. What do you do?
13. Complete this sentence: the biggest fear I have about making decisions is ...
14. Complete this sentence: the biggest decision I ever made as a teenager was ...

iv. Process questions - to everyone as a group answer

1. What was the hardest question for you in that exercise?
2. Adults: if you were to add up all the different teenagers you talked to recently (not including fast food attendants), how far back in time would you have to go to total the number of conversations you had with different teenagers today?
3. Youth: if you were to add up all the different adults you have talked to recently (not including clerks at stores), how far back would you have to go to total the number of adults you talked to today?

b. Story Time

- i. Read following story from *The Road Less Traveled* by M. Scott Peck:

If you are a regular churchgoer, you might notice a woman in her late forties, who every Sunday exactly five minutes before the start of the service inconspicuously takes the same seat in a side pew on an aisle in the very back of the church. The moment the service is over, she quietly but quickly makes for the door and is gone before anyone can greet her. Should you manage to accost her and invite her to coffee hour following the service, she would thank you politely but nervously and then dash away.

If you could keep watch over her, you might see that she works as a typist in a large office where she accepts her assignments wordlessly, types them flawlessly and returns her finished work without comment. She eats her lunch at her desk and has no friends. She walks home, stopping always at the same impersonal supermarket for a few provisions before she vanishes behind her door until she appears again for the next day's work.

On Saturday afternoons, she goes alone to a local movie theater that has a weekly change of shows. She has a TV set but no phone. She almost never receives mail. Were you somehow able to communicate with her and comment that her life seemed lonely, she would tell you that she rather enjoys her loneliness...

Who is this woman? We do not know the secrets of her heart. What we do know is that she avoids taking any risks to the extent that she has narrowed and diminished herself almost to the point of nonexistence.

- ii. Process questions.
 - 1. Did this woman make decisions based on what she wanted or something else?
 - 2. What do you think she was afraid of?
 - 3. If a teenager were on course for becoming this kind of person, what would that teenager look like now?
 - c. Journal writing: Risking imperfection
 - i. 5 min to complete questions 1 and 2 on the journal sheets
 - d. One-on-One: processing the journal sheets
 - i. Return to your partner from the beginning of the Wagon Wheel exercise
 - ii. Instructions
 - 1. Each partner will have 1 minute to share his or her answer to question two and talk about anything else he or she has written in the journal.
 - 2. The listening partner is allowed to ask questions as time allows
 - iii. I will call time at the end of each minute.
3. Taking it home
- a. A Letter to God
 - i. Complete question 3 on journal sheet
 - ii. Any questions?
 - b. Circle prayer
 - i. Go around group and pray for his or her partner from the last exercise
 - ii. Each person praying one word for his or her partner

Risking Imperfection

Far better it is to dare mighty things, even though checked by failure, than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy nor suffer much because they live in a gray twilight that knows neither victory nor defeat. (author unknown)

1. Which of these excuses tempt you to stay in the “gray twilight” of indecision?
 - a. If I try, I might fail
 - b. People might think I’m stupid
 - c. I’ll stick with what I do best.
 - d. If I really commit to something, then I’ll have to change the way I live
 - e. The dog ate it
 - f. If I say yes to something, I’ll have to say no to lots of other things
 - g. I want to keep my options open
 - h. I can’t do that!
 - i. There are no fish in Arizona
 - j. There’s nothing I can do
 - k. I tried it before, and it didn’t work out
 - l. I’ll just pray about it

2. The most important decision a Christian will ever make is the decision to live first and foremost as Christ’s disciple. Where are you today in this process?
 - a. Zacchaeus in the tree (Just let me watch from a distance)
 - b. Peter stepping out onto the water (of course I can do this!)
 - c. The sick man by the pool (I’ve got a few good reasons why this could never work.)
 - d. Jonah in the boat (I know what God wants me to do, but I’m headed the other direction.)

3. Write a letter to God describing where you would like to be in your spiritual life and one risk you are willing to take to get there. (use the back of this page if necessary)