

Meeting the Ups and Downs of Life – Week 6

Lesson 3 – When We Have Multiple Good Options in Decision-Making

Goals

- To learn to apply God’s Word and his will as we wrestle with decisions regarding the use of God’s blessings of our skills, talents, wealth, and possessions.

Life Example

Rodney is a gifted 18-year-old. As he went through high school, Rodney had planned to go to college to get a degree in computer science. His parents hope he does that.

But the computer software company he has worked for part-time has offered him a full-time job after he graduates later in the year. His starting salary would be \$45,000, plus benefits.

Rodney is also a talented guitarist and singer. He has played in a band with some of his friends for three years. After playing at the county fair this past year, an agent told Rodney’s band that they have a chance to make it big; but that’s only if they devote all their time to the band.

Rodney and his family are strong members at the local WELS church.

Reflections of Faith

1. Rodney has some life-changing career decisions to make. Each of them is something he has the gifts to do, yet each of them could have some unintended consequences attached to them. Discuss the consequences of each potential career choice.
 - a. College –
 - b. Full-time job –
 - c. Band –
2. Imagine you’re a trusted teacher of Rodney’s. He’s come to you for advice before; he comes to you again for this situation. He’s going to want to make sure the decision is his own and not anyone else’s. As you talk with him, what are some important things you want to make sure he’s thinking about as he makes his decision?

Light from the Word

3. As you encourage Rodney, what insight can you remind him about from **John 16:30**?
 - a. In what way does that verse apply to Rodney’s situation?

4. Some people, when faced with decisions like these (job changes, moving, etc.), are consumed with worry. What helpful truths do each of these passages give you as you make your decision (whatever it may be)?
 - a. **Psalm 139:2-3** –
 - b. **Matthew 6:31-34** –
 - c. **Matthew 7:7-11** –
5. Would it be wise to give Rodney this advice? “Put your decision in God’s hands and flip a coin or draw straws.” Consider what **Luke 14:28-30** has to say about decision-making.
6. What cautions from **1 Timothy 6:6-10** are in order as we make decisions regarding our future?

Life Example

Barnabas and Alexis are a young Christian couple (about 30 years old) with a three-year-old son. Both are college graduates who now have good jobs. They are discussing (note: not arguing about) the subject of sticking to a budget, which they have had problems doing in the past. Barnabas would like to save for their future, but he would also like to take nice vacations. Alexis would like to save for their son’s college education, but she really likes to buy useful products and spend money on meaningful day-to-day experiences. Neither wants to go back to living paycheck to paycheck like they did in college. They agree that they should enjoy the money they have now, but they also know they should save something for the future. With so many things for which they could save, it’s hard for them to decide. So, they put the decision off every time it comes up.

Reflections of Faith

7. What tensions arise as Barnabas and Alexis discuss their budget?
8. Both of them want to save for the future. Under what circumstances would saving money become a sinful abuse of God’s blessings?
 - a. When might a failure to save be a sinful abuse of God’s blessings?

Light from the Word

Turn to **Ecclesiastes 3:1-15**. The inspired writer says that there is a time to do certain things and a time to do just the opposite. The decision about which things need to be done at the moment will create a sense of tension in the decision-making process.

9. Evaluate this statement: It is actually good to experience a sense of tension when we make decisions on how we use what God has given us.

10. Verses 1 through 8 point to a proper balance in life. How might we apply these words to the discussion between Barnabas and Alexis?

11. What truths from this section might help Barnabas and Alexis balance the tension in their budget planning?

What comments and questions do you have?

Closing Prayer 749 God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending v. 2

**Skills and time are ours for pressing toward the goals of Christ, your Son:
all at peace in health and freedom, races joined, the church made one.
Now direct our daily labor, lest we strive for self alone;
born with talents, make us servants fit to answer at your throne.**