

Decision Making

Faithful decision making is an important life skill. It is worth practicing with our Sunday school and CYC kids. Practically every Bible story involves decision making. The people we meet are faced with problems. They have options. They make decisions. Some of their decisions are good and some are bad. And always there are consequences to consider. In this respect, the Bible is a case book of decision making situations to study and learn from.

The story of The Prodigal Son is packed with good and bad decisions. It also offers hope. As human beings we can change from making bad decisions to making good ones. The parable has a lot to teach us about life and conversion.

The Prodigal Son ... And His Family Luke 15:11-32 ESV

1 – Luke 15:11-12.

¹¹ And he said, "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.' And he divided his property between them.

- What decision does the younger son make?
- What decision does the father make?
- Was the father taking a risk when he made this decision? Was he wise to do it?
- What options did the father have?
- Does God take a risk with us? Explain.

2 – Luke 15:13-16.

¹³ Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. ¹⁴ And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

- What decisions does the younger son make now?
- What are the consequences of his decisions?

- Are the consequences of the younger son's decisions entirely within his control? Explain.
- If the younger son had known what would happen beforehand, do you think he would have done what he did?
- Why do we often do what we want, whether we know what the consequences will be or not?

3 – Luke 15:17-20a.

¹⁷ "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! ¹⁸ I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants."'" ²⁰ And he arose and came to his father.

- What decision does the younger son make now?
- What factors influence his decision? There are several. Identify as many as you can.
- What other options does the younger son have at this point? Name some.
- What does it take for the younger son to decide to go home? Support your answer from the passage.

4 – Luke 15:20b-24.

*²⁰ But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. ²¹ And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'
²² But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. ²³ And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. ²⁴ For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate.*

- What decisions does the father make at this point?
- What other options does the father have? Name some.
- Describe the kind of person that the father is. Support your answer from the passage.

- If you had been the father, what would you have done? Be honest with yourself.

5 – Luke 15:25-32.

²⁵ "Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. ²⁷ And he said to him, "Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received *him back safe and sound.*" ²⁸ *But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him,* ²⁹ *but he answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends.* ³⁰ *But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!*" ³¹ And he said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² *It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.*"

- What decisions does the older son make?
- Does the older son appear to be offended? Is taking offense a decision that a person makes, or do they have to do it? Explain.
- What other options does the older son have? Name some.
- Describe the kind of person that the older son is. Support your answer from the passage.

Additional Questions

- Can a rebellious person develop a godly conscience and be repentant? If so, how does it happen?
- Can a person who appears to be well behaved lack a godly conscience and never come to repentance? If so, how do you explain it?
- How might this story have been different if the father had decided not to give the younger son his share of the property right away? Do you think we would have learned as much from the story? Explain.