

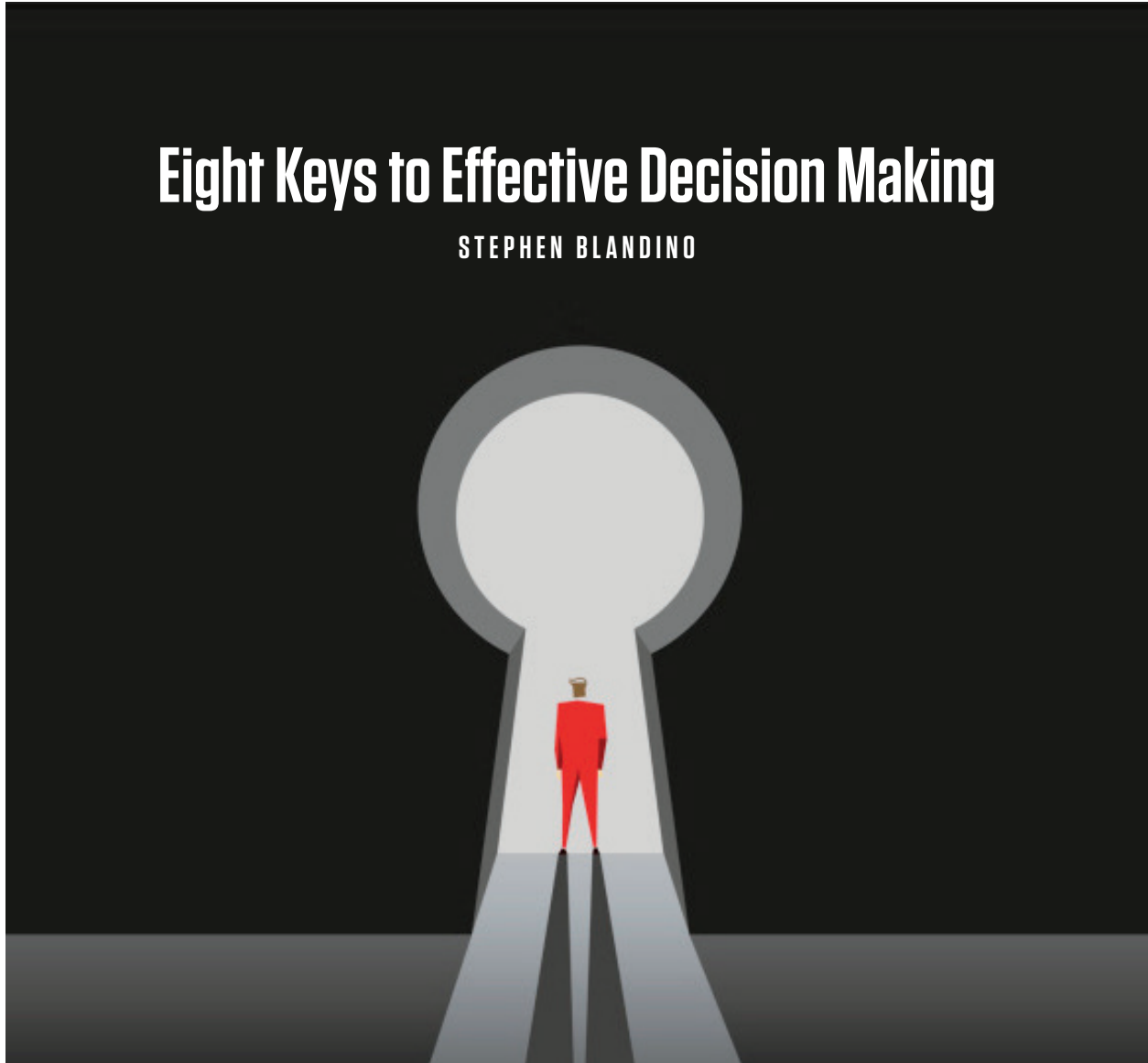
Influence
MAGAZINE

MAKE IT COUNT

An eight-week study
for leadership teams

Eight Keys to Effective Decision Making

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DISCUSSION GUIDE

Eight Keys to Effective Decision Making

God: What Is the Holy Spirit Saying?

Assess: How do you welcome the Holy Spirit's leadership in your decision making?

Insights and Ideas

It's easy to turn to the latest research, the newest books, our closest friends and the most respected leaders to help us make better decisions. There's nothing wrong with any of these, and we'll soon touch on the value of outside input in the decision-making process. However, the starting place for decision making isn't found in the wisdom of men and women. It starts with God.

James embraced this truth when he said, "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you" (James 1:5). James' wisdom-seeking instructions reveal four unique dimensions.

1. A condition. First, James said, "If any of you lacks wisdom." All of us experience wisdom-lacking moments throughout life and in the many paths our leadership journey takes. Lacking wisdom isn't sin; it's simply a condition we find ourselves in.

2. A directive. Next, James says, "you should ask God." He provides a clear directive on what to do when we find ourselves without the wisdom we so desperately need. We should *ask* God. How? Through prayer and His Word. Prayer puts us in a posture to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit, and Scripture is our go-to-source for making God-honoring decisions in life, leadership and ministry. Proverbs 1:7 says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction."

3. A behavior. James continues by pointing to how God behaves when we lack wisdom. He says, "who gives generously to all without finding fault." Notice three things in these eight words. God "gives generously." He's not a stingy God when it comes to wisdom. He gives to "all" — that covers every corner of the earth. And God doesn't find "fault." The fact that you need wisdom doesn't make God look at you with a hint of disappointment or disgust. God is generous in His supply of wisdom without holding our need for wisdom against us.

4. A promise. Finally, James says, "and it will be given to you." James makes a promise that God will be true to His nature. He will give you the wisdom to make the right decision, at the right moment.

God has wisdom beyond anything we can obtain on our own. His wisdom is infinite because He is omniscient. Seek the Lord, and invite Him to fill you with the wisdom and knowledge of His perfect will. Decision making starts with God.

Without God, decisions lack supernatural wisdom.

Reflect and Discuss

1. How do James' words change the way you view decision making?
2. When do you most seek God in the decision-making process (beginning, end, other)?
3. How do you sense the Holy Spirit is leading you to make a decision that is now before you?

Apply

Make a list of the top three decisions you are facing right now. Set aside time this week to pray specifically about these three decisions. After one week, record what you sense the Holy Spirit is saying to you. Furthermore, search God's Word for any wisdom He offers on the decisions you are praying about.

Eight Keys to Effective Decision Making

God: What is the Holy Spirit Saying?

Assess: How do you welcome the Holy Spirit’s leadership in your decision making?

Insights and Ideas

The starting place for decision making isn’t found in the wisdom of men and women. It starts with God.

James 1:5 says, “If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.”

James’ wisdom-seeking instructions reveal four unique dimensions:

1. A _____. James says, “If any of you lacks wisdom.”

Lacking wisdom isn’t sin; it’s simply a condition we find ourselves in.

2. A _____. Next James says, “you should ask God.”

Proverbs 1:7 says, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.”

3. A _____. James continues by saying, “who gives generously to all without finding fault.”

The fact that you need wisdom doesn’t make God look at you with a hint of disappointment or disgust. God is generous in His supply of wisdom without holding our need for wisdom against us.

4. A _____. Finally, James says, “and it will be given to you.”

Key truth: Without God, decisions lack supernatural _____.

Apply

Make a list of the top three decisions you are facing right now. Set aside time this week to pray specifically about these three decisions. After one week, record what you sense the Holy Spirit is saying to you. Furthermore, search God’s Word for any wisdom He offers on the decisions you are praying about.

Eight Keys to Effective Decision Making

DNA: Does the Decision Violate Our Identity?

Team Review: After praying for one week about your top three decisions, what clarity do you have? How else did this extra prayer focus shape your mindset toward the decisions you are currently facing?

Assess: How do you use your church's vision as a filter for decision making?

Insights and Ideas

Every church has a unique DNA. Unfortunately, many pastors and leaders don't carefully reflect on their DNA prior to making important decisions. As a result, the church begins to experience sideways energy as it's pulled in opposing directions.

In our last session, we discovered James' wise words for seeking wisdom by asking God for help. But the instructions James offered for decision making don't end there. He continues, "But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do" (James 1:6-8).

Double-mindedness happens when our doubts overshadow our trust in God and faith in His wisdom. Double-mindedness is also a good term to describe the inconsistencies we express when our decisions don't reflect the DNA of our church. Typically, a church's DNA consists of four things.

1. Beliefs. Your beliefs are the biblical doctrines you embrace as the foundation of your Christian faith. Every decision we make should reflect our theology and the depth of our faith in Christ.

2. Vision. Author and pastor Bill Hybels says, "Vision is a picture of the future that produces passion." Making decisions that are inconsistent with your God-given vision will produce a double-minded focus and lead you into a future you never intended to see.

3. Mission. The mission describes why your church exists. It's the biblical purpose that defines and drives your activity. When you do your mission, it should result in the fulfillment of your vision.

4. Values. A church's values define what it considers most important. Values are a small handful of principles and priorities that guide how a church behaves, how it uses its resources, what it schedules and the ministries it offers.

You can't make decisions that keep you true to your DNA if you're not clear about your DNA. But when your DNA is clearly defined, you'll have the framework necessary to stay true to your beliefs, singularly focused on your vision, committed to your mission and guided by your values.

Without DNA, decisions can lack organizational consistency.

Reflect and Discuss

1. What are our church's beliefs, vision, mission and values?
2. Which of these four defining ingredients of our church's DNA needs more clarity?
3. How can we systematically use our church's DNA to shape our decisions moving forward?

Apply

Work together with your team to identify a system to use your church's DNA as a filter for decision making. If any of the DNA factors — beliefs, vision, mission and values — are unclear, work together to gain the necessary clarity so you can make decisions strategically and purposefully.

Study 2

TEAM GUIDE

Eight Keys to Effective Decision Making

DNA: Does the Decision Violate Our Identity?

Assess: How do you use your church’s vision as a filter for decision making?

B ut when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do” (James 1:6–8).

A church’s DNA consists of four things:

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

Key truth: Without DNA, decisions can lack organizational

Apply

Work together with your team to identify a system to use your church’s DNA as a filter for decision making. If any of the DNA factors — beliefs, vision, mission and values — are unclear, work together to gain the necessary clarity so you can make decisions strategically and purposefully.

Eight Keys to Effective Decision Making

Research: Have I Done My Homework?

Team Review: Have you started using your church's DNA to make better decisions? If not, where are you in the process of clarifying your church's beliefs, vision, mission and values?

Assess: What does your research process typically entail when making decisions?

Insights and Ideas

In-depth decision making always requires some level of research. Unless you're willing to do your homework, you're liable to make misguided or misinformed decisions. Jesus warned of this danger when He said, "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, saying, 'This person began to build and wasn't able to finish'" (Luke 14:28–30).

The lesson is clear: If you don't do your homework, your decisions will lead to regret. So, what kind of research should you do before making a decision? Three practices are particularly helpful.

1. Clarification. Begin your research by clarifying the real issue at hand. The last thing you want to do is make a decision that addresses symptoms rather than root problems. Drill down on the situation until you can fully clarify the actual decision that needs to be made. This may take more time on the front end, but it will save you time and heartache on the back end.

2. Innovation. Once you have clarity, you can begin innovating fresh solutions. Take time to research best practices and creative options that will help you make decisions that produce real fruit. Your job as a leader is not to have all the answers, but to create an environment open to fresh thinking so the best answer can emerge.

3. Calculation. Finally, your research should pinpoint the resources required to execute the decision. How much money, energy and time will it demand? Calculating resources will inform what it will take to turn a decision into action. Furthermore, calculate how a decision will impact other ministries or departments in the church. Every decision creates a ripple, and failure to calculate a ripple's impact can actually diminish the buy-in you're seeking from other leaders.

Leaders tend to have a bias toward action. For this reason, it's tempting to skip the research part of decision making, especially if the leader also has a high level of intuition that informs his or her decision making. Do your homework. It will be worth it in the long run.

Without research, decisions can lack depth.

Reflect and Discuss

1. Which decisions are you more inclined to research, and for which ones are you more inclined to lean on your intuition?
2. Can you give an example of how research significantly benefited a decision in the last 12 months?
3. Which of the three research practices — clarification, innovation, calculation — are you most likely to give the least attention? Why?

Apply

Take one of the decisions you're currently facing, and use the research filter described above. Clarify the root issues shaping this decision, innovate ideas and best practices, and calculate the cost of making this decision. Don't make the decision until you've completed your research.

Eight Keys to Effective Decision Making

Research: Have I Done My Homework?

Assess: What does your research process typically entail when making decisions?

Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, saying, "This person began to build and wasn't able to finish" (Luke 14:28-30).

Three practices of decision-making research:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Key truth: Without research, decisions can lack _____.

Apply

Take one of the decisions you're currently facing and use the research filter described above. Clarify the root issues shaping this decision, innovate ideas and best practices, and calculate the cost of making this decision. Don't make the decision until you've completed your research.

Study
4

Eight Keys to Effective Decision Making

Experience: What Does the Past Reveal?

Team Review: What did you learn from your research for an upcoming decision?

Assess: What's a recent decision that was significantly helped by your past experience (or another team member's)?

Insights and Ideas

One of the greatest informers of future decisions is past experience. Job 12:12 says, "Is not wisdom found among the aged? Does not long life bring understanding?"

The longer you live, the more perspective you glean and the more insight you uncover. True wisdom is not a collection of information, but rather the application of knowledge to produce positive transformation.

That's the kind of experience you want — experience born out of wisdom. The key is to leverage that experience to make better decisions as you move forward. When you're making decisions for the church, three types of experience are particularly helpful.

1. *Personal experience.* This is the experience you personally bring to the table. It usually consists of your failures, successes, habits, education, proficiencies and observations. From this pool of personal experience, you'll be able to draw out practical insights to shape better decisions.

2. *Historical experience.* This experience draws on the church's historical trends, traditions, metrics and behaviors. The purpose of historical experience isn't so much to define a future strategy, but rather to understand how the church might respond to future decisions. Understanding historical experience can mitigate pitfalls when it comes to actually executing a decision.

3. *External experience.* This experience comes from leaders and situations outside your church. You might look to a coach, consultant, pastor, church, model of ministry or set of best practices to provide fresh ideas and input before making an important decision. Leaning on external experience is especially helpful when your church finds itself in a rut, dealing with a broken system or facing a significant barrier to forward progress.

Experience alone is not enough. Just because you have experience doesn't mean you've uncovered any wisdom from it. The wisdom is only found when you take the time to reflect, ask hard questions and search for the gold buried within it. Otherwise, you won't learn from the past; you'll simply repeat it. As author Andy Stanley observed, "Experience alone doesn't make you better at anything. By itself, experience has the potential to leave you in a rut. Evaluated experience is what enables you to improve your performance."

Without experience, decisions can lack maturity.

Reflect and Discuss

1. What types of decisions would the personal experiences of each member of our team impact the most?
2. Based on our church's history, what types of decisions are easiest to embrace, and which ones are hardest?
3. What external experience would help us make the most important decision our church is currently facing?

Apply

Have a discussion among your team members about how best to leverage one another's experience for the good of the church. While you'll need to be careful not to drift outside the parameters of your church's DNA, understanding one another's experience may actually reveal a wealth of untapped knowledge.

Study
4
TEAM GUIDE

Eight Keys to Effective Decision Making

Experience: What Does Past Experience Reveal?

Assess: What’s a recent decision that was significantly helped by your past experience (or another team member’s)?

J ob 12:12, says, “Is not wisdom found among the aged? Does not long life bring understanding?”

Three types of experience:

1. _____ **experience.**

2. _____ **experience.**

3. _____ **experience.**

Andy Stanley says this about experience: “Experience alone doesn’t make you better at anything. By itself, experience has the potential to leave you in a rut. Evaluated experience is what enables you to improve your performance.”

Key truth: Without experience, decisions can lack _____.

Apply

Have a discussion among your team members about how best to leverage one another’s experience for the good of the church. While you’ll need to be careful not to drift outside the parameters of your church’s DNA, understanding one another’s experience may actually reveal a wealth of untapped knowledge.

Study
5

Eight Keys to Effective Decision Making

Advice: Have I Sought the Wisdom of Others?

Team Review: What valuable experience did you discover among the members of your team?

Assess: Who is the wisest person you know? In what area(s) does that person exhibit the greatest wisdom?

Insights and Ideas

Scripture is full of truth on the value of seeking wisdom from others. Wisdom waits to be harvested from people all around us, but you have to seek after it. Like a weary traveler in a parched desert, you have to seek the refreshing springs of wisdom as though your life depended on it. A quick scan of Proverbs offers three ways to glean wise advice.

1. Association. Proverbs 13:20 says, “Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm.” Whom you associate with has the greatest impact on the person you will ultimately become. The problem we often face isn’t that we’re unwilling to take advice, but that we’re unwilling to change the source. Gleaning wise advice begins by carefully choosing the people with whom you associate.

2. Listening. Once you associate with the right people, you need to stop talking and start listening. Proverbs 12:15 says, “The way of fools seems right to them, but the wise listen to advice.” Proverbs 19:20 adds these words: “Listen to advice and accept discipline, and at the end you will be counted among the wise.” Your willingness to actively listen defines the measure of your growth posture. If you don’t listen, it really doesn’t matter who surrounds you.

3. Teachability. Listening opens the door to knowledge; teachability opens the spirit to receive it. It’s essential that you combine your listening with a teachable spirit and a readiness to apply what you hear. Proverbs 13:10 says, “Where there is strife, there is pride, but wisdom is found in those who take advice.”

Unless you’re willing to humble yourself so that somebody can speak into your life, challenge your assumptions and stretch your paradigm, you’ll never “take” advice; you’ll simply ignore it. Author Steve Moore observed, “In a chemical laboratory, two elements may be mixed together with no resulting change. A catalyst is needed to trigger a reaction. Humility is a catalyst for learning because it produces teachability. It is impossible to learn without being teachable.”

You can glean advice from a spouse, family member, friend, coach, mentor, consultant or pastor, among others. The key is the person (whom you listen to) and your posture (your willingness to learn).

Without advice, decisions can lack perspective.

Reflect and Discuss

1. When you look at the five people you associate with most often, what does this reveal about you?
2. Who consistently gives you the best, most reliable and most helpful advice?
3. On a scale from 1 to 10, how teachable are you?

Apply

Carefully evaluate whom you go to for advice in the most important areas of your life. On a scale from 1 to 10, how would you rate the advice you are currently receiving in the following areas: spiritual, ministry, marriage, leadership, parenting, finances, health and other? If you are unsatisfied with the advice you are receiving, what changes do you need to make in the relationships you lean on for wisdom? What’s your action plan to improve your sources for wise advice?

Eight Keys to Effective Decision Making

Advice: Have I Sought the Wisdom of Others?

Assess: Who is the wisest person you know? In what area(s) does that person exhibit the greatest wisdom?

Wisdom waits to be harvested from people all around us, but you have to seek after it.

Proverbs offers three ways to glean wise advice:

1. _____.

“Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm” (Proverbs 13:20).

2. _____.

“The way of fools seems right to them, but the wise listen to advice” (Proverbs 12:15).

“Listen to advice and accept discipline, and at the end you will be counted among the wise” (Proverbs 19:20).

3. _____.

“Where there is strife, there is pride, but wisdom is found in those who take advice” (Proverbs 13:10).

Author Steve Moore observed, “In a chemical laboratory, two elements may be mixed together with no resulting change. A catalyst is needed to trigger a reaction. Humility is a catalyst for learning because it produces teachability. It is impossible to learn without being teachable.”

Key truth: Without advice, decisions can lack _____.

Apply

Carefully evaluate whom you go to for advice in the most important areas of your life. On a scale from 1 to 10, how would you rate the advice you are currently receiving in the following areas: spiritual, ministry, marriage, leadership, parenting, finances, health and other? If you are unsatisfied with the advice you are receiving, what changes do you need to make in the relationships you lean on for wisdom? What’s your action plan to improve your sources for wise advice?

Study 6

Eight Keys to Effective Decision Making

Intuition: What Is My Gut Telling Me?

Team Review: What did you learn about the sources from whom you most often take advice?

Assess: On a scale from 1 to 10, how much do you trust your gut when making a decision?

Insights and Ideas

Intuition is the most nuanced part of decision making. At first glance, you might think intuition isn't important. After all, what can you learn from listening to your gut? How can a hunch inform your decision-making process? Believe it or not, intuition can play an important role. Here are three ways intuition shows up when making decisions.

1. Major giftedness. John Maxwell has observed that you are most intuitive in the areas of your greatest giftedness. In other words, if you're a strong leader, you'll be most intuitive in the area of leadership. If you're a great singer, you'll be most intuitive in the area of your vocal capacity. If you're a great plumber, you'll be most intuitive in the area of your craft. Wherever you have the most natural ability is the same place you will have the most natural intuition. When it comes to making decisions, pay attention to the sweet spot of your strengths. If you have no strength in the area requiring a decision, surround yourself with others who do — or delegate the decision.

2. Spirit-led nudges. The Holy Spirit will often raise a red flag when we draw close to a decision that is outside of His will or His wisdom. The Holy Spirit also knows the future, and He will reveal what you need to know when you need to know it. John 16:13 says, "But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come." Being sensitive to the Spirit's nudges is like Spirit-led intuition. In the Early Church, when it came to making a decision, the leaders once declared that it seemed good to them and the Holy Spirit. That is a great picture of Spirit-led intuition.

3. Experience, awareness and facts. Intuition is often born in the melting pot of experience, awareness and facts. In other words, intuition emerges when the wisdom of past experience, the awareness of relational dynamics and the clarity of the facts surrounding the situation merge together. These variables produce informed insight.

Pay attention to your gut. There's a reason you sense what you are feeling. Intuition alone isn't enough, but it's certainly worth noting in the decision-making process.

Without intuition, decisions lack peace.

Reflect and Discuss

1. Can you give an example of how your intuition is strongest in your areas of giftedness?
2. How have you learned to be sensitive to the nudging of the Holy Spirit?
3. How has your past experience, awareness of relational dynamics and clarity of facts surrounding a situation informed your intuition?

Apply

Choose a decision your team is facing right now. Ask each person, "What's your gut telling you in regard to this decision?" Ask each person to try to explain the intuition they are sensing.

Eight Keys to Effective Decision Making

Intuition: What is My Gut Telling Me?

Assess: On a scale from 1 to 10, how much do you trust your gut when making a decision?

Intuition is the most nuanced part of decision making.

Three ways intuition shows up in decision making:

1. Major _____.

2. Spirit-led _____.

“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come” (John 16:13).

3. Experience, _____ **and facts.**

Key truth: Without intuition, decisions lack _____.

Apply

Choose a decision your team is facing right now. Ask each person, “What’s your gut telling you in regard to this decision?” Ask each person to try to explain the intuition they are sensing.



Eight Keys to Effective Decision Making

Influencers: Are My Key Leaders Receptive and Supportive?

Team Review: What have you learned about the areas where your team members are most intuitive?

Assess: In general, how receptive and supportive are your leaders to your decision making as a leader?

Insights and Ideas

There's an old proverb that says, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." Solomon shared some similar wisdom when he said, "Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up" (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10).

In leadership, going together is essential if you want to make a lasting impact. The key is to make sure your influencers — staff, board and key leaders — are with you in the decision-making process.

Author John Maxwell often observes, "People buy-in to the leader before they buy-in to the vision." You can have the greatest ideas in the world — even ideas God has birthed inside of you — and yet still not move forward because your leaders aren't on board. How do you get your leaders to buy-in to a decision? Start with three practices.

1. Include leaders in your decision-making process. Including leaders doesn't mean you have to lead by consensus. Rather, it means deliberately seeking perspective from your core leaders. Remember, people are down on what they're not up on.

2. Test a direction without declaring a decision. Too often, leaders declare a decision publicly without first taking time to test the waters privately. Bounce your idea off a few trusted people who might be most affected by your decision. Say something like, "I've been thinking about ..." or, "What would be your thoughts if we tried something like ...?" Test the direction you want to go with a few people before declaring it publicly.

3. Communicate the decision in layers. Once a decision is made, communicate it through the layers of influence within your church. Think about these layers as concentric circles representing your staff, board, key leaders, volunteers and attendees. Begin communicating with your inner circle, and then move outward until the decision has been communicated throughout the church.

This strategy is helpful for several reasons. First, you create greater buy-in with your most influential leaders. Second, you discover possible objections each time you communicate to a different group. By the time you get to the fourth and fifth circles, you know how to answer questions before they are even asked. The bigger the decision, the more important this communication process is to create buy-in.

Without influencers, decisions can lack buy-in.

Reflect and Discuss

1. Can you share a time when you made a decision without adequate buy-in from your leaders? What was the outcome?
2. Which of the three buy-in practices do we need to intentionally cultivate?
3. What would the concentric circles look like in your area of ministry?

Apply

Take a major decision you are preparing to make, and evaluate how well you've cultivated buy-in among your influencers. You might even give yourself a grade — A, B, C, D or F. Then draft a plan to foster greater buy-in, followed by a communication strategy to your circles of influence.

Eight Keys to Effective Decision Making

Influencers: Are My Key Leaders Receptive and Supportive?

Assess: In general, how receptive and supportive are your leaders to your decision making as a leader?

An old proverb says, “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”

“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up” (Ecclesiastes 4:9–10).

Author John Maxwell observes, “People buy-in to the leader before they buy-in to the vision.”

Three practices to get influencers to buy in to a decision:

1. Include _____ in your decision-making process.

2. Test a _____ without declaring a

_____.

3. Communicate the decision in _____.

Key truth: Without influencers, decisions can lack _____.

Apply

Take a major decision you are preparing to make and evaluate how well you’ve cultivated buy-in among your influencers. You might even give yourself a grade — A, B, C, D or F. Then draft a plan to foster greater buy-in, followed by a communication strategy to your circles of influence.



Eight Keys to Effective Decision Making

Timing: Is the Timing Right?

Team Review: What steps have you taken toward building greater buy-in to a decision among your key influencers?

Assess: Why is timing so important when it comes to making decisions?

Insights and Ideas

P salm 90:12 says, “Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.” Because time is precious and short, we often think we have to do everything now. However, the right decision at the wrong time is a lost opportunity. When your timing is right, you’ll increase the level of buy-in. When the timing is right, your credibility goes up as a leader. When your timing is right, the impact for the church multiplies. When the timing is wrong, the best decision can produce the worst outcome.

Timing is not one-dimensional in its application. When you’re making a decision, you have to weigh three factors.

1. Is the timing right for the leader? Leaders feel the brunt of the biggest decisions. If the timing isn’t right, the decision can create collateral damage, beginning with the leader. Decisions can take an emotional, mental, physical, relational and financial toll, and if a leader’s reserves are not adequate, he or she can pay the highest price.

2. Is the timing right for the team? The bigger the decision, the more energy it takes to execute it. That means a single decision can require an entire team’s effort. For example, if you decide to launch a major capital campaign, it will be an all-hands-on-deck commitment from your staff, board and multiple teams of people necessary to see the best results. The question you have to answer is whether your team has the time and energy necessary to execute the decision successfully. If the timing for the team isn’t right, the leader will experience greater stress, and the outcome of the decision will be less than stellar.

3. Is the timing right for the church? Change can be difficult for a congregation. If people have not been adequately prepared to embrace the ramifications of a big decision, then your decision may be premature. This doesn’t necessarily mean the decision has to wait months or years. It may only require a few more meetings with key leaders, or a bit longer timeline to work through the circles of influence.

Patient delays are among the price tags of growth. This is especially important to remember in leadership because leaders typically have a bias toward action.

Without timing, decisions can lack impact.

Reflect and Discuss

1. Can you share an example of a time a decision was right, but the timing was wrong? What was the outcome?
2. When has the timing of a decision been wrong for our team or church? What lessons can we learn from this?
3. What would a system look like for us to evaluate the timing for a decision using the three questions above?

Apply

What decision are you preparing to make that would affect everybody — the leader, the team and the church? Carefully evaluate whether each group is ready for this decision. If this isn’t the best time, what steps do you need to take to ensure the timing is right and the decision will most likely succeed?



Eight Keys to Effective Decision Making

Timing: Is the Timing Right?

Assess: Why is timing so important when it comes to making decisions?

Psalm 90:12 says, “Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”

The right decision at the wrong time is a lost opportunity.

Three factors to weigh in the timing of a decision:

1. Is the timing right for the _____?

2. Is the timing right for the _____?

3. Is the timing right for the _____?

Key truth: Without timing, decisions can lack _____.

Apply

What decision are you preparing to make that would affect everybody – the leader, the team and the church? Carefully evaluate whether each group is ready for this decision. If this isn't the best time, what steps do you need to take to ensure the timing is right and the decision will most likely succeed?