

Marriage • Parenting • Spiritual Growth • Sexuality • Relationships • Mental Health
Men • Women • Hurts and Emotions • Singles • Ministers and Mentors • Technology



a resource in:

Sunday School

Biblical Decision Making Lessons

High School



APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN

Counseling and Family Services

Helping the hurting. Nurturing hope. Encouraging growth.

Phone: (309) 263-5536 | www.accounseling.org

Biblical Decision Making

Lesson 1 - Faith and Godly Wisdom

Recommended Age/Class: **High School** (9th-12th grade)

Lesson Objectives:

1. The student will understand that faith is trusting God through uncertainty.
2. The student will understand that godly wisdom is applying the mind of Christ to discern how to walk through life.
3. The student will understand that godly wisdom differs from worldly wisdom.
4. The student will understand that faith and godly wisdom should both be used when making decisions.

Scripture:

2 Corinthians 5:7, "For we walk by faith, not by sight."

Hebrews 11:1, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Hebrews 11:6, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for him that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Proverbs 9:10, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding."

James, 1:5-6, "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. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven by the wind and tossed."

1 Corinthians 2:12-14, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

Content:

- Faith is trusting God when facing uncertainty, when we are not sure about something, or do not have a guarantee how something will turn out in life.
- God desires us to have faith in order that we learn to cling to Him, and learn of His nature and character.
- Godly wisdom is learning to apply the mind of Christ in discerning how to walk through life.
- Godly wisdom is godly knowledge that grows as one matures in their Christian walk.
- Godly wisdom begins with viewing God through reverential fear.
- Godly wisdom is built on the foundation of the Scriptures, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- We seek to grow in godly wisdom, while also knowing we will not achieve perfect wisdom or full understanding in this life.
- God willingly and freely gives wisdom to those who ask for it in faith.
- Godly wisdom does not mean complete certainty of a situation or full understanding of the outcome of a decision.
- Godly wisdom can differ from worldly wisdom, as godly wisdom may go against human nature.
- Differentiating between godly wisdom and worldly wisdom can be done through knowing God in prayer, listening to His Word, and following the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Biblical Decision Making

- Faith and wisdom are distinct in some ways, but should work together as we seek to make decisions based upon God’s plan for our lives. Someone who is strong in faith will walk in godly wisdom, and someone who is strong in godly wisdom will walk in faith.
- God wants us to walk in wisdom and He will lead our paths. Faith allows us to trust Him to lead us.
- We must live in a balance of godly wisdom and faith, in which we do not over-spiritualize by looking for divine signs or rely too heavily on facts and logic.

Discussion Questions:

1. How would you describe faith in your own words? What does it mean to live by faith?
2. How is blind faith different than the faith God requires of us? What evidence has God given that we can trust Him and have faith in Him? (See *Romans 10:17*; *John 20:31*; *Hebrews 11:1*.)
3. How would you describe godly wisdom in your own words? What does it mean to walk in wisdom?
4. Why does God want us to have faith, rather than certain knowledge of the future?
5. How can we grow in wisdom? What are practical, daily activities that will grow our godly wisdom?
6. Why might it be important to grow daily in wisdom, rather than going to God for wisdom only at the moment when a decision must be made?
7. How are faith and wisdom different from each other? How do they complement and work together?
8. What are times in your life when you have had to make decisions? What aspects of faith or godly wisdom did you/ could you have applied to help make these decisions?

Activity:

1. Activity 1: Examples of Faith

- a. Review Hebrews 11 and the various heroes of faith.
- b. For each hero of faith, have students describe actions they displayed that demonstrated their faith.
- c. Create a two-column chart such as the following during this discussion:

Hero of Faith	Actions
Noah	Feared God, Listened and obeyed to God’s warning to build the ark and protect his family

- d. For each character, discuss the faith required to make decisions during times of uncertainty.

2. Activity 2: Faith Statements

- a. Have students read *Hebrews 11* and notice the phrase that repeats for each person’s narrative: “*By faith...*”
- b. Discuss that each of these characters took a step of faith to do something or believe God’s promises would be fulfilled when it looked uncertain or they were unsure of an outcome.
- c. Have students write their own faith statements for something they are facing right now in their life. Have them start this with the phrase “*By faith I...*” and include what they trust God with and what they will do to demonstrate their faith. For example, if they will soon be graduating and going to college, they could write a faith statement beginning like this: “*By faith I trust God to lead me and guide me as I graduate from high school and will soon begin college. I know that He will be with me every step of the way and that I can trust Him as I choose my career path in ...*”

Biblical Decision Making

3. **Activity 3:** Growing in Wisdom

- a. Discuss how to grow in God's wisdom means to have His Word hidden in our hearts.
- b. Challenge students to think of Bible verses they want to memorize that could apply to particular situations they are currently facing. Use a website like the following to help choose possible verses:
<https://www.whatchristianswanttoknow.com/bible-verses-by-topic-inspirational-scriptures-by-subject/>
- c. Review their memorized verses the following week to see how they are working on hiding God's word in their hearts to grow in godly wisdom.

4. **Object Lesson:** Faith is Not Being Able to See, But Trusting the One Who Can

(materials needed: blindfold, chair)

- a. Put the blindfold on a willing student volunteer so they cannot see.
- b. Give them directions of how to get across the room to the chair and be ready to sit down.
- c. Once the student can safely sit down, tell them to sit. The student should just sit down, without testing it out first.
- d. Discuss how sitting down required faith that the person who could see knew it was safe for them to sit. Compare this to faith in God – we must trust His leading in life, even when we cannot see the whole picture or when we don't know what the outcome of the action/decision will be. We must trust God knows what is best and will take care of us.

Biblical Decision Making

Lesson 2 - God's Word as the Foundation for Making Decisions

Recommended Age/Class: **High School** (9th-12th grade)

Lesson Objectives:

1. The student will understand that the Bible gives all the guidance we need to find salvation and live a life that is pleasing to God.
2. The student will understand that the whole Word of God should be used in making decisions.
3. The student will understand that the Bible has supreme authority and the meaning never changes.
4. The student will understand that in order to use the Bible to make decisions, one must read it, meditate upon it, and apply its teachings.

Scripture:

2 Timothy 2:15, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

Psalms 119:105, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

John 14:15, "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

2 Timothy 3:16-17, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Hebrews 4:12, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Content:

- God's Word gives all the guidance that is needed to find salvation and live a life pleasing to God.
- God's Word is complete and holds ultimate authority.
- Reading, meditating upon, and following the Word of God provides assurance of following God's plan for our life.
- The Word of God must be used exactly as it is written, not haphazardly or to prove a point.
- Sometimes walking away from a situation is the best option for avoiding peer pressure.
- Caution should be taken in seeking guidance from the Bible, rather than inserting our own ideas into what we read.
- When reading the Bible, helpful questions to ask to discern its meaning include:
 - Who was this text written for?
 - Who was the author and what purpose did he have for writing it?
 - What does the text say?
 - What words do I need to look up, so I know the actual meaning of the words in this passage?
 - How does this text fit with what I am facing in life right now?
- One should be careful when using the Bible to make decisions, in order not to fall into the following possible misapplications:
 - Putting specific meanings onto Scriptures (e.g. seeing the word "go" as an answer for when deciding if one should go to college or not).
 - Finding verses that support a pre-conceived idea.

Biblical Decision Making

- o Relying on using the Bible in a mystical way, such as repeatedly flipping it open to find a specific answer.
 - o Believing God must provide a sign.
 - o Making decisions based on only one thing that opens in the Bible.
 - o Taking verses out of context.
 - o Not using godly wisdom or seeking wise counsel from parents and other believers.
- If we believe we have been given a “sign” from God in making a decision, we should use the Bible to test this sign. God will never give signs that contradict His Word.
 - God’s Word never changes, but it may speak to us in different ways at different points in our lives. As we gain experience in life, we may see different aspects or meaning that we didn’t see before. For example, we may read a particular verse as encouragement, but then, later in our lives it could be seen as admonishment.

Discussion Questions:

1. With what authority should we view the Word of God when making decisions?
2. How can God’s Word help us, even if it may not contain the specific answer to a decision we might need to make?
3. How would someone be misapplying the Word of God to make decisions, if viewing it like a “cookbook” or a “vending machine?”
4. What are some temptations you might have had to use the Word of God to find answers to support a decision you already made?
5. What is an example of a verse you have used in the Bible to make a decision in your life? Discuss how others might view this same verse in another light, depending on their current life situation or life experience.
6. Why would it be important to daily read God’s Word and reflect on God and who He is, rather than only turning to the Bible when we need to make decisions?
7. What should we do if a possible option conflicts with God’s Word?
8. How should we test a “sign” we think we may have been given from God?

Activity:

1. **Activity 1:** Inspired Scripture
 - a. Read *1 Timothy 3:16-17*. Have students list out the four purposes of the Word of God in verse 16: (doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness). Have them think of possible verses that would go along with each of these four purposes. Discuss how the verses could speak to different people in different ways depending on their life experience and the current situations they are facing.
2. **Object Lesson 1:** Life as a Puzzle
(materials: puzzle with at least 100-500 pieces)
 - a. Do not let the students see the front of the puzzle box with the picture of the puzzle.
 - b. Lay out the puzzle pieces on a tray or table. Have students attempt to put the puzzle together without telling them what the picture is.
 - c. After an appropriate length of time, or when several students ask to see the picture of the puzzle, next show them the picture of the puzzle. Have them work on the puzzle a little longer.
 - d. Ask them which was easier – putting the puzzle together with the picture or without and why. Discuss how life is like a puzzle. We can attempt to make decisions and make our own way in life, like they attempted to put the pieces of the puzzle together without knowing what it should look like. Or, we can use the Bible as our guide to determine what life should be like and use it to guide us in putting together the pieces of our life as we make decisions that affect the direction our life takes.

Biblical Decision Making

3. **Object Lesson 2:** The Bible is better than GPS

(materials needed: Bible, GPS on phone or navigation unit)

- a. Have students choose a place they are familiar with to type into the GPS. Have them look at the map and directions it provides.
- b. Compare the GPS to the Word of God – we know our destination is Heaven. The Bible gives us the directions and navigates us as we make each turn along the way to get to Heaven.
- c. Type “Heaven” into the GPS and notice that it says the location cannot be found (or something similar). But, the Bible is given to us, so we can go to this location someday.

Biblical Decision Making

Lesson 3 - Walking with God in Prayer and Seeking Wise Counsel

Recommended Age/Class: **High School** (9th-12th grade)

Lesson Objectives:

1. The student will understand that God cares about us and is aware of all of our needs and desires.
2. The student will understand that in times of decision making the best place to be is walking with God through obedience and spending time in the Word.
3. The student will understand that prayer is the key to requesting wisdom and submitting our will to His.
4. The student will understand that seeking wise counsel (parents, elder, experienced believers) is directed by the Bible and supports sound decision making.

Scripture:

Matthew 10:29-31, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows."

Matthew 6:8, "Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him."

John 14:18, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you."

Jeremiah 29:11-13, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."

James 1:5-6, "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. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed."

Matthew 7:7-8, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

Romans 8:26, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

Proverbs 15:22, "Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established."

Proverbs 1:5, "A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:"

Proverbs 12:15, "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise."

Proverbs 19:20-21, "Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end. There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand."

Content:

- God cares about us and is always present in our lives, whether we feel it or not.
- God knows our needs and desires, even before we ask him in prayer.
- During times of decision making, the safest place to be is walking with the Lord through submitting to Him, obeying the Holy Spirit, praying without ceasing, and reading the Word.
- Jesus will be with us, no matter if we are in moments of rejoicing or in moments of sorrow and trial.
- We can trust and depend on God, believing He will guide us as we seek His will.
- Praying fervently is the key to requesting God's wisdom and submitting our will to His.
- Our Heavenly Father loves us and wants the best for us. His plans and purposes for us are for our good and for furthering His kingdom.

Biblical Decision Making

- We should fervently and earnestly bring our requests to God in prayer, while also entrusting God to answer as He sees best.
- Prayer should be done with humility and thanksgiving, knowing that we don't always know what is best for living out God's plan in our lives.
- Making time for adequate prayer can be a challenge, but it must be a priority.
- The Bible directs us to seek wise counsel when making decisions.
- Teenagers should begin with seeking wise counsel from their parents, and then others as appropriate (elder, experienced believers, mentors).
- Wise counselors help us to see all sides of an issue, including the pros/cons and strengths/weaknesses of our decisions.
- We should be intentional in seeking wise counselors who give godly advice, instead of telling us only what we want to hear or criticize.
- Characteristics of wise counselors include: those who genuinely care about you, are spiritually mature, listen well and ask good questions, provide honest answers and correction, and use discretion in confidentiality.

Discussion Questions:

1. What do verses such as *Jeremiah 29:11-13* and *John 10:27* tell us about God's care for us in times of decisions and uncertainty?
2. How can we know that God is present in our lives when it seems He is silent to our prayers?
3. What are daily actions and steps one takes to walk with God?
4. Describe the type of prayer one should exercise when making decisions.
5. How is prayer different than a "vending machine?"
6. How can you be more intentional in your prayer life?
7. Why is seeking wise counsel important in times of decision making?
8. Why are peers not often the best people to turn to for wise counsel?
9. Who are wise counselors for teens?
10. What types of qualities should a wise counselor possess?

Activity:

1. **Activity 1: Prayer and Decision Making**
 - a. Discuss the following prayer sayings with students for how they relate to making decisions:
 - i. FROG – Fully Rely On God
 - ii. PUSH – Pray Until Something Happens
 - b. Have students see if they can come up with another prayer saying that they will use to help them in times of decision making.
2. **Activity 2: Choosing Counselors**
 - a. Have students make a list of 3-5 people they often go to for advice.
 - b. For each of these people, have them determine if they are a wise counselor based upon the characteristics below:
 - i. genuinely care about you
 - ii. are spiritually mature
 - iii. listen well and ask good questions

Biblical Decision Making

- iv. provide honest answers and correction
 - v. use discretion in confidentiality
 - c. Have students determine if they have people on their list they should turn to more often for advice or others they have been counseling with that are not a wise counselor.
 - d. Talk about the importance of parents as wise counselors and going to them first for advice. Choosing additional people to counsel with should be done as needed to draw upon people's expertise or life experience.
3. **Object Lesson 1: Praying in Faith**
(materials needed: light switch)
- a. Show students a light switch and ask them how many of them used one of these this morning and what happened when they flipped the switch.
 - b. Review *James 5:15* with students and talk about what is required when we pray – Faith. Talk about how God wants us to have faith when we pray that He will answer our prayers.
 - c. Discuss how we believe when we use the light switch that the light will turn on. This is how God wants us to believe when we pray – to have faith He will answer our prayer. We don't stand in front of the switch wondering if it will turn on, nor do we stand in front of the light switch saying to it, "I hope you will turn on." Rather, we have to actually flip the switch to make it turn on. Just like we have to actually pray to God with our requests, rather than hoping they will work out.
 - d. Talk about the connection between the light switch and the electricity that makes the light turn on. We go to the source of power to make the light come on. Just like when we pray, we go to the source of all power, God, and give Him our requests. The power comes not from the act of praying – but from God.
 - e. Discuss *Mark 11:22-24* with students in relation to this object lesson and how we must pray with faith for God's will.
4. **Object Lesson 2: Wise Counsel**
(materials needed: 2 small candy bars of 3 different types [total 4-6 candy bars], 2 paper plates)
- a. Have one student choose a candy bar they would like to eat.
 - b. Have this student choose someone in the room they believe will give them wise counsel. Have them agree that they will do whatever their "counselor" tells them to do.
 - c. Have the student who chose the candy bar step out of the room.
 - d. Unwrap the two candy bars of the type the student chose.
 - e. Put each candy bar on one of the paper plates.
 - f. Tell the "counselor" to watch carefully so they can give the student good counsel.
 - g. Lick one of the candy bars and set it back on the paper plate.
 - h. Have the student come back in the room. Tell them to ask their counselor which candy bar would be good to eat.
 - i. The "counselor" should tell them to eat the candy bar that was not licked, but not tell them why. The student should eat the candy bar.
 - j. Afterwards, have the "counselor" tell the student why they chose that candy bar for him/her to eat.
 - k. Discuss how the "counselor" had to be mindful of all aspects of the situation to give good advice. The student who ate the candy bar had to trust the "counselor" was giving advice they could rely upon. This shows the importance of choosing counselors carefully.

Biblical Decision Making

Lesson 4 - Accepting Answers Other Than Yes

Recommended Age/Class: **High School** (9th-12th grade)

Lesson Objectives:

1. The student will understand that God knows what is best for us and sometimes this is different than fulfilling our prayers as we requested.
2. The student will understand that a surrendered heart accepts God's will may be different for us than we desire.
3. The student will understand that it can be difficult to surrender to God's will when it doesn't not match ours, but that He will grant us grace to trust and meet any challenge.
4. The student will understand that waiting on God's time is part of the decision-making process.
5. The student will understand the difference between waiting on God and doing nothing.

Scripture:

Psalms 62:8, "Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us."

Jeremiah 17:7-8, "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit."

Luke 22:42b, "Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done."

James 4:15, "For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that."

1 John 5:14-15, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."

Matthew 7:9-11, "Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

Psalms 27:14, "Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD."

James 1:2-4, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations [trials]; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

Psalms 130:5, "I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope."

Isaiah 40:31, "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

Content:

- Sometimes in life we experience a wholesome desire that is not met and we wonder why God would choose not to fulfill our request.
- At these moments of struggle and wondering why God has chosen not to fulfill a request, we must trust by leaning on Him and maintaining our faith.
- We can be assured in these moments of trial that God will give us grace to sustain us and help us through any challenges in life.
- Having a surrendered heart means accepting that God's will might be different from our will.

Biblical Decision Making

- Having desires different than God's will does not mean they are wrong, it just means we should continually submit our hopes, plans, and dreams to Him.
- Submitting to God's will, although not always easy, can bring us lasting joy and peace.
- We should continue to make our requests known to Him in prayer, but also pray that His will be done.
- Waiting on God's timing is part of the decision-making process. Oftentimes we need to wait as circumstances develop or things change over time.
- God can see the beginning to the end of time, when we only see the past and the present.
- God is working even when we cannot see or understand that He is.
- Waiting on the Lord is not the same as doing nothing. When we reach a point that we must wait in the decision-making process, we can do the things that we know to be His will, including caring for others who are in need.
- God might ask us to wait so that we learn to rearrange our priorities, to grow our faith, to purify our motives, to make us more thankful, or to remind us He is God and we are not.

Discussion Questions:

1. What areas of life are easiest for you to trust God with? What areas are more difficult to turn over to God?
2. Tell about a time when you had a wholesome desire that was not met. What did you learn from this experience?
3. What does it mean to have a surrendered heart?
4. How does God help us through challenges, even when He does not fulfill our desires?
5. What is an area of your life where your preferred timing has differed from God's timing?
6. Why might God ask us to wait before fulfilling our desires?
7. Tell about a time when God asked you to wait in answering a prayer request and what you learned from this experience.
8. How can we wait on the Lord? What can we do during times of waiting?

Activity:

1. **Activity 1: Attributes of Waiting**
 - a. Have students look up the following verses and make a list of what it means to wait on the Lord:
 - i. *Psalm 25:4-5* – willing to learn and be led
 - ii. *Psalm 27:14* – with strength and courage
 - iii. *Psalm 33:20-22* – rejoicing and trusting in Him
 - iv. *Psalm 39:7* – with hope
 - v. *Psalm 37:7, Psalm 40:1, Romans 8:25* – patiently
 - vi. *Psalm 37:34* – obediently
 - vii. *Isaiah 26:8-9* – desiring God
 - viii. *Psalm 62:5* – single-mindedly
 - ix. *Psalm 123:2, Micah 7:7* – expectantly
 - x. *Psalm 130:5* – believing in His Word
 - xi. *Lamentations 3:26* – quietly
 - xii. *Hosea 12:6* – always

Biblical Decision Making

2. **Activity 2:** Faith Statements for Waiting

- a. Talk with students about how God keeps His promises and He answers our prayers, even when we cannot see Him working.
- b. Read the story of Abraham and Sarah: *Genesis 15:1-6, Genesis 16, Genesis 17:15-22, Genesis 18:1-15, Genesis 21:1-7, Hebrews 11:8-12*
- c. Talk about the faith and waiting upon God that Abraham and Sarah had to demonstrate.
- d. Have students write their own waiting by faith statements for something in their life at present: "Because God is Faithful, I will _____."

3. **Object Lesson 1:** Waiting on God

(materials needed: 2 empty soda cans, electric hot/camp stove, bowl of ice water, tongs)

- a. Have a volunteer crush the empty soda can.
- b. Next, have a volunteer pray for God to crush the other empty soda can. Ask if they see anything happening to the soda can. Talk about how they could wait a long time, possibly, before they see God answer this prayer. Compare this to how God may be working in our lives, but we just can't see it.
- c. Tell them though that God does not expect us to sit idly while we are waiting. Put a tablespoon of water in the empty soda can and warm it up on the electric hot/camp stove. Once the water is boiling, wait a minute and then, using the tongs, dip it upside down in the ice water. (The vacuum will cause the can to be crushed).
- d. Talk about how God was working through the principles of physics as the can was heated and the air he created crushed the can. We didn't see it working right away, but the can was crushed eventually. Compare this to our prayers that may not be answered right away, but we must trust that God is working, even when we can't see He is working.

4. **Object Lesson 2:** God Has a Reason for Saying No

(materials needed: 2-3 fun-size candy bars, 1 king-size candy bar, 2-3 slips of paper with "yes" written on them and one slip of paper with "no")

- a. Tell students you will pretend to be God and answer some of their prayers.
- b. Have 3-4 students volunteer by thinking of a prayer request they might have at present. Pass out the slips of papers with "God's answers" on them to the students. Give the "yes" answers to the first 2-3 students and no to the last student.
- c. Have the students with "yes" reveal their answers. Celebrate their requests are granted and give them a fun-size candy bar.
- d. Have the student with the "no" reveal his/her answer. Share in the disappointment and how it was too bad that the prayer was not answered as desired. Then, pull out the king size candy bar for him/her. Talk about how sometimes God gives us something different instead because He knows of something better than we could even think to ask for (*Ephesians 3:20*). Therefore, we should trust Him with all our decisions and requests, big and small!

Biblical Decision Making

Lesson 5 - Trusting God Through Marriage Decision Making

Recommended Age/Class: **High School** (9th-12th grade)

Lesson Objectives:

1. The student will understand that God has a perfect design for marriage including between one man and one woman who are both Christians.
2. The student will understand that God designed marriage to reflect Christ's union with the Church.
3. The student will understand that the marriage decision should not be taken lightly as the marriage covenant is a life-long commitment.
4. The student will understand that choosing whether to marry and whom to marry should be approached through seeking God's will in reading His Word, walking with God in a close relationship, praying for guidance, and seeking wise counsel.
5. The student will understand that a surrendered heart is willing to wait on the Lord and perhaps even accept an unmet desire.

Scripture:

Genesis 2:18, "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him."

Genesis 2:24, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Mark 10:9, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

2 Corinthians 6:14, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"

Ephesians 5:31-32, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

Proverbs 12:15, "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise."

Romans 8:28-29, "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. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."

Psalms 27:14, "Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD."

2 Corinthians 12:8-10, "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."

Psalms 84:11-12, "For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee."

Content:

- God ordained marriage in the Garden of Eden before sin entered into the world.
- God intends marriage to be between one man and one woman who are both Christians.
- The man is supposed to leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife.
- A marital union creates a foundation for companionship, procreation, healthy sexual fulfillment, and an opportunity for help.

Biblical Decision Making

- God desires the marriage covenant to be a lifelong commitment.
- God designed marriage to reflect the union of Christ with the Church, in which the husband reflects Christ and the wife the Church.
- Each person should be whole and content in Christ before seeking to marry. We should have a healthy relationship with God and be living an overcoming life through grace.
- God blesses those who are single or those who are married, and wants us to be devoted to serving Him in whatever state we are in.
- The marriage decision is not trivial and should be done carefully and prayerfully to seek God's guidance and direction.
- Not everyone goes through the same experiences in coming to know God's will for marriage or the person they choose to marry.
- Considering the goals or direction of a potential spouse and how it aligns with God's will for one's own life is more important than relying on the compatibility of personality types.
- Choosing someone to marry should not be purely out of emotional passion or a sense of commitment, but rather a healthy balance of emotional intimacy, passion, and commitment as one learns to love another.
- Walking with God in a close relationship is vital to seeking His will in our lives with the marriage decision.
- Prayer should be earnest and humble with the willingness to surrender to His will.
- Wise counsel should be sought from one's parents, experienced believers, and elder.
- God might ask us to take a step of faith in the marriage decision process or to wait on His timing.
- Some may experience unfulfilled desires within the marriage decision-making process and need to submit these desires and purposes to the Lord, knowing He can use all things for good in our lives.

Discussion Questions:

1. What aspects make for a godly marriage that conform to God's design?
2. How does God show that marriage should be for life?
3. Why does God say to leave father and mother in marriage?
4. What should be present in one's life before seeking to marry?
5. What are important considerations when deciding if one should seek marriage?
6. What are important considerations when deciding who one should marry?
7. How can we overemphasize the emotional aspect of love in choosing someone to marry?
8. Why might the American way of dating contradict with making a decision in faith or through prayer?
9. What are steps that should be taken during the marriage-decision making process?
10. How can God use an answer of "wait" or "no" for good in one's life?

Biblical Decision Making

Activity:

1. **Activity 1:** More than Passion

- a. Talk with students about how making a decision of who to marry should be made out of more than physical attraction or an emotional feeling of passion for someone.
- b. Have students list at least five reasons that go beyond physical attraction or passions for choosing a spouse. Possible answers could include: similar life goals or life direction, desire for companionship, respect for one's walk of faith or spiritual depth, desire to provide protection or edification to another person's walk of faith in an intimate way, respect for the friendship a person brings into their life, respect for one's character, trust in how one will treat them with kindness and respect, etc.
- c. Discuss how many of these other aspects will create life-lasting marriages, rather than physical attraction or emotional passion which can fade or change over time.

2. **Object Lesson:** A Strong Foundation for Marriage

(materials needed: cement block, 6 eggs, towel, 6 bottle caps)

- a. Discuss with students that all relationships need to be built upon the foundation of God in order for them to withstand the pressures of life.
- b. Lay a towel on the table. Put three eggs on the towel. Refer to the eggs as one's relationship with another, such as marriage.
- c. Hold up the cement block and talk about how it represents the pressures and stresses in life. Put it on top of the eggs and show how it crushes the eggs.
- d. Discuss how these eggs were crushed because they did not have a foundation that protected them when they were under pressure. Compare this to a marriage that lacks a foundation in God and how it can not withstand the challenges or difficulties that life can bring.
- e. Put three bottle caps face up on the table and compare these to the Trinity – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Talk about how this is the foundation any relationship, including marriage, must have in order to withstand life's difficulties. Stand up the eggs in the bottle caps. Put the other three bottle caps on top of the eggs so they are "protected."
- f. Carefully place the cement block back on top of the eggs and it should not crush the eggs. Talk about why the eggs are not crushed is due to having the right foundation that helped protect them when they were under pressure. Compare this to marriage and how no matter what happens in life, a marriage can withstand the challenges or difficulties that come, if it is built on the right foundation. Discuss why first having a personal relationship with God is so important in making a decision on whether to marry and who to marry.