

# Decision-Making

## ***Factors to Consider in Decisions:***

1. God's word (where it touches on the issue)
2. Facts (what is known, what is unknown; may need to identify additional information needed)
3. Criticality
4. Counsel from knowledgeable individuals
5. Time constraints
6. People affected
7. Feelings/gut perceptions

## ***Variables in Each of the Factors Above:***

1. Degree of accuracy in understanding and applying God's word. (Mark 12:18-27)
2. How you "read" facts. Do you infer too much? (Babe Smith Inference Test)
3. How accurately you assign criticality to decisions. Do you treat all decisions as worthy of equal time and energy? Do you devote too much time to minor decisions or too little time to major decisions?
4. Including bad counsel or excluding good counsel (or getting none) vs. getting ample, good counsel. (Prov. 11:14)
5. Processing decisions in a timely fashion or waiting until the time-crunch forces a less-than-ideal decision.
6. Including people to which you shouldn't or excluding people to which you should give consideration vs. giving appropriate consideration to those affected.
7. Recognizing the subjective nature of feelings and perceptions while giving them consideration vs. using them as though they were an objective factor to be considered.

## ***Some Decision-Making Errors:***

1. Analysis paralysis—can't make a decision because the analysis is very complex or never seems complete.
2. Seeking only counselors with a bias toward your preferences—wrong friends or closed mindedness.
3. Laissez faire (come what may) approach—no decision is still a decision.
4. Feeling-based decisions—feelings are sometimes in tension with a best decision and sometimes are NOT in tension with a best decision. Decisions *feel* simpler, more acceptable and are easier to go with when they are not in tension with feelings.
5. Conformity or "group-think"—making decisions to please someone else (Matt. 10:28)
6. Choosing what is expedient, what gives you advantage but what is not best or right (think politicians).

## ***Decision-Making Example:***

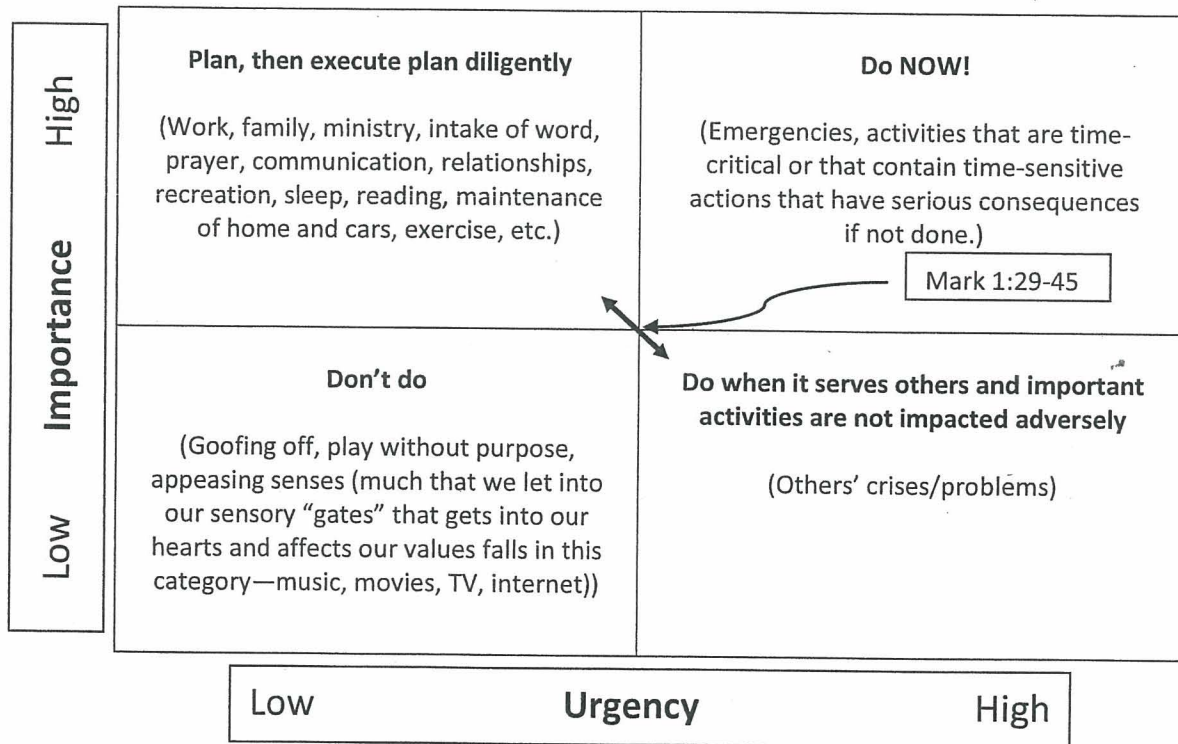
Acts 27

# Decision-Making

Much of what this material deals with concerns decisions about how to use your time, your money & possessions and where to expend your energy. There are other specialized types of decision-making that are outside the scope of what's considered here. Consider what's said about wisdom in Prov. 1:20-33.

## Decision Types:

1. Decisions whether – should I do this or should I not? Some “whether” decisions must be made before moving to the next decision type, “decisions which.” Example: Will I buy a car to replace my old one? (Yes or No)
2. Decisions which – selecting an alternative from among available options. Example: Having decided you will take the gospel to another people outside your own country, which one will you go to?
3. Contingent decisions – a decision that is put on hold until some condition is met. Example: We'll take the route through the valley if we can control the ridge and if we detect no enemy activity to the north.



## Decision Levels:

1. Strategic—long term, high-level.
2. Tactical—medium term, moderate impact.
3. Operational—day-to-day, short-term decisions. Generally made with little thought or structure.

Making decisions at each level is a good practice. Failing to make good strategic and tactical decisions pushes all decisions into the operational level and will result in reactive approach to life.

Some material adapted from “Introduction to Decision Making,” Robert Harris, Dec. 2, 2009, <http://www.virtualsalt.com/crebook5.htm>

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