

wives (v.31). He was correct. Laban did pursue after him (v.23). It took Laban 7 days to catch up. In all this, Jacob trusted God without wavering.

- 2) Though God does not tell us, I believe Jacob did a lot of praying as they travelled. God heard and sent Laban a fearful dream warning him to speak appropriately to Jacob (v.24). Though Laban is not a very godly man, he fearfully obeyed God's warning (v.29).
- 3) Keep praying that God will lead you step-by-step. Ask him to strengthen you and defend you. (Psalms 56:3) "*What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.*" (Psalms 25:4-5) "*Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.*"
- 4) If the devil cannot stop you from doing God's will, he will seek to hinder you or lead you astray. Resist the devil. (James 4:7) "*Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*" Wear God's armour. (Ephesians 6:11) "*Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*"

#### **b. Present the facts courageously**

- 1) Jacob firmly stood up to Laban and told him the facts (v.36-42). That took courage, but God helped him.
- 2) If someone tries to discourage you from following through with your decision for God or to lead you astray, with God's help, state the facts courageously. Tell them that God has directed you through His Word, by His Spirit, and through godly counsel, and you intend to obey.
- 3) The fear of man will bring a snare. Without wavering, keep your eye on the path God has for you.

**Conclusion:** If you are not making a decision right now, you will be before long. It is part of life. When you do, remember the three actions that Jacob took when he made his decision to return to Canaan. **Listen to God Carefully. Obey God Completely. Trust God Unwaveringly.** The closer you are to God, the easier it will be to hear Him speak.

**Song:** Teach Me Thy Way, O Lord - 337

# Decision Making

10 October 2021 PM – Genesis 31 – Gen2021 – Scott Childs

**Introduction:** Joseph decided to remain pure rather than yield to lust (Gen 39). Joshua decided to serve the LORD instead of false gods (Jos 24:15). Ruth decided to leave Moab and become a Jew. Daniel decided to pray rather than to fear the lion's den (Dan 6:10). The apostles decided to preach rather than to keep quiet (Act 4:20).

As a Christian, you will face many decisions including your service for God, your occupation, your choice of a spouse, your purchase of a home, the training of your children, your separation standards, your entertainment, and your giving.

In our text, Jacob too had to make a decision.

**Transition:** When making a decision in life, there are three actions we must take if we are going to follow the Lord.

## **1. Listen to God Carefully**

### **a. Commune with God about your decision**

- 1) Jacob heard from God (v.3, 11-13). God, through His Word, made it clear that Jacob was to return home. Jacob talked to God, heard God's words, and listened carefully.
- 2) When we need to make a decision, God is not going to talk to us in a dream about it. We have 31,102 verses in the Bible from which God can give us direction. We need to spend quality time in God's Word seeking direction.
  - a) (Psalms 119:24) "*Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors.*"
  - b) (Psalms 119:105) "*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*"
  - c) (Psalms 119:130) "*The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.*"
  - d) (Proverbs 6:23) "*For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life.*"
- 3) We also must spend quality time on our knees seeking God's clear leading and claiming His promises.
  - a) (Joshua 9:14) "*And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD.*"

- b) (Psalms 32:8) "*I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.*"
- c) (James 1:5) "*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.*"
- 4) To guide you, God may use a **Scripture**, the **Holy Spirit's still small voice** in the heart, or something from a **sermon**. In my youth, God used a verse in Proverbs to direct me to a summer ministry, missionary sermons to direct me to the mission field, the Scriptures and peaceful guidance of the Holy Spirit to direct me to my wife. Many other times God has guided Mel and me through the Word, the Holy Spirit, or preaching. He can do the same for you.

#### b. Seek counsel

- 1) As soon as Jacob heard from God, he called his wives and asked counsel of them (v.14-16).
- 2) Seeking counsel from wise, godly people is a prudent thing to do.
  - a) (Proverbs 11:14) "*Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.*"
  - b) (Proverbs 12:15) "*The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.*" We must not reject wise counsel and do what we think is right. That is foolish.
  - c) (Proverbs 19:20) "*Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end.*"
  - d) (Proverbs 20:5) "*Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out.*" Be a person of understanding who will take the time and effort to draw counsel from deep within a wise person.
- 3) The **most important part** of making a decision is being **confident** that you know the mind of God on the matter. When asking God for wisdom He says, (James 1:6-7) "*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. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.*" Sometimes finding God's mind is as simple as obeying a clear scripture. Other times it will require hours in the Word, on your knees in prayer, and in seeking wise counsel. (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.*"

## 2. Obey God Completely

### a. Step out by faith

- 1) Once certain of God's will, Jacob stepped out by faith (v.17). He did not know all that would take place, but he knew what God wanted him to do. He anticipated that Laban would be upset with his leaving, but he obeyed God anyway and left quietly.
- 2) When God reveals His will, we too must step out by faith and obey God completely. It does not really matter what others think as long as we **know** that we are following God's direction. If you are still wavering about God's leading, you are not walking by faith. **In in doubt, don't.**
- 3) Stepping out by faith may be exciting or it may be fearful, but either way, we must lean on God not on our own understanding.

### b. Follow God's leading

- 1) He headed for the land of Canaan (v.18). One of his first major challenges was to cross the Euphrates River (v.21). He then proceeded southwest to the east of Galilee just above the river Jabbok. With all his family, servants, flocks and herds, this was no small task.
- 2) As we seek to obey God's leading, we must continue to stay close to Him. We must stay on God's "highway". (Proverbs 16:17) "*The highway of the upright is to depart from evil: he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul.*"

## 3. Trust God Unwaveringly

### a. Prepare for opposition

- 1) Jacob anticipated that Laban would be upset and follow him. He feared that Laban would try to take away his