

# MAKE WISE CHOICES

“The Spirit will never lead in opposition to the written Word that he inspired.”  
— Richard Foster

**R**emember making a big decision as a child? What was your first Grand Conundrum? Decisions come very early in life. Before we can make sentences, we are making choices. And very early on we need guidance in making those choices.

Most of those early choices are easy, almost self-evident. Then, little by little, we acquire a decision-making grid to help us sort out what makes life work well. We catch on to what makes mommy smile and what keeps us out of the time-out corner. But as we go along, things aren't always

as clear to us. Soon we must choose between what is good and what is best. We have to discern if things are not as they seemed at first glance. We need to “play the movie forward” to figure out if the long-term result will be as welcome as the short-term gratification. **Our need for guidance grows. And we need to know which voices will give us good guidance.**

There are times we get mixed signals from sources of guidance. Cultural voices will change over time. The voices of authority can waffle depending on hidden agendas and personal benefits. Even the laws of the land can be altered. We need something that gives us enduring and reliable guidance. **As Christ followers, we believe that God has communicated his will and his way in the Scriptures. We also hear his instructions through the written and verbal counsel of people who love him and walk with him. And we have the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit with us.**

If we really want to enjoy close friendship with our loving Creator, we will take the time to sit with him, quiet our own desires and listen to the Holy Spirit. We will identify and listen to other people who are familiar with his voice. We will linger as we read the Word of God and other writings that echo that eternal truth. And we will influence the children we care for to do the same. **We need wise companionship to make wise choices. The Christian community can be extremely helpful to this process.**

If we don't acquaint the children with ways to identify godly wisdom and guidance, we rob them of life-giving wisdom — the Word of God; the unity of understanding with other wise Christians; and the loving promptings of the Spirit of God.



# MAKE WISE CHOICES

## INVITATIONS TO ENGAGE

### Start the conversation with your child!

Come and sit with me and we'll talk about how you can know which voice to listen to as you make wise choices.

#### EARLY CHILDHOOD (2-6 years old)

Pretend that you are a mouse and say, "God made me strong." Now use your kitty voice and say, "God made me strong." Now use your lion voice and say, "God made me strong." Which voice do you believe?

Different voices tell us different things. If daddy says, "Here is some bread for you to eat," what would you do? If a stranger says, "Here is some bread for you to eat," what would you do? We don't believe every voice, do we? (Stories from Elementary age can be used here, too.)

We need to listen carefully to know who is talking to us. **Whatever God tells us, we can always trust.** What does God say to you that you can really believe? Let's make up a song with those words.

#### ELEMENTARY AGE (5-10 years old)

When we hear people telling us what to do, how do we decide if it's a good idea? Several places in the Bible we hear people saying the same thing, "Take some bread." But the responses are very different.

As we read these stories, tell me who is talking, who they are talking to and what happened. John 6:5-11, little boy with 5 loaves; Matthew 4:2-4, Satan tempts Jesus to make stones into bread; Matthew 26:20 and 26, Jesus at the Last Supper.

(After each story, ask the child to consider the following questions) Where do you see yourself in that story? Would you have taken the bread? What helps you know what is a wise decision? **Let's ask God to help us listen to his voice and be wise today.**

#### PRETEEN/EARLY ADOLESCENT (10-14 years old)

When you want to know whether a course of action is wise or unwise, read James 3:14-17. Let's put those descriptive words in random places on a page in your journal (jealousy, selfish ambition, disorder, vile practice, pure, peaceable, gentle, reasonable, mercy, etc.).

Now I'll say a word and you write it — and the opposite — on your page (peace, clarity, joy, quietness, rest, apathy, condemnation, chaos, hope, love). Take a red pen and make an X over the things that are not heavenly wisdom. Cross out the things that do not sound like God. **All the things that are left are words to help you make decisions.**

Are there people who speak godly words into your life? Let's talk about a decision you need to make right now and see how those words might help.

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCE

*Pursuing God's Will Together: A Discernment Practice for Leadership Groups*  
by Ruth Haley Barton