

LESSONS IN LIVING

DARING DECISIONS

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Dare to decide! If we don't, that old thief, "procrastination" will steal our lives away. What use is the free agency our Creator has given us if we don't have the courage to decide? We won't be alone in making decisions: God will help us; our family and loved ones will help us; experienced experts will help us. Then, as we gain experience in making decisions we will find the courage to be more daring. The first thing we know, the day will come when others will seek our opinion. Few skills contribute to success like the ability to make wise decisions. Honors and large salaries are paid to trusted decision-makers.

VALUES: A strong value system is the basis for making wise decisions. Values can be found in scriptures, writings of modern-day prophets, and great men such as Benjamin Franklin. They stand the test of time. Prayer keeps us in tune with the Holy Ghost and when we listen to the Spirit we will remember our values and make wiser decisions. A premiere value system will provide us with an eternal perspective and celestial laws.

GOALS: After we have values, we can set productive goals. Goals are God's answer to the distractions of latter-days. They help us focus. They prevent "**fluttering in all directions and flying in none.**" Goals that are not written are mere wishes and lack power. Not only should they be written but they should be referred to on a regular basis, preferably daily. As we do so, we should **envision** them as being a reality. We need to think positively and expect success: "**Success is the progressive realization of a worthy ideal.**" If any of us have not yet taken advantage of goals setting, we should try it, we'll like it! At the end of a year we will have accomplished more with goals than we would have without them, promise! **SURVEY:** Skilled decision-makers always survey facts and counsel with experts before they act. When they do so, they may uncover data that will put an end to the matter.

Major decisions can be easier than minor ones. We can always depend on God's word, so how about consulting our patriarchal blessing? Scriptures and Church conference addresses will never lead us astray. Once we are able to discern the promptings of the Spirit, we can relax and trust our decisions. We will "feel" when it is "right."

Minor decisions may be more elusive, especially when deciding between two right choices such as: "**Shall I go to my son's scouting event or to my daughter's music recital?**" We want the decision to be fair; it may even require a family council.

DECIDE: Decide who? what? why? and how? where? when? Oftentimes, elaborate plans bog down on the last question (when?). Once an event is scheduled, write plans down, post action to be taken and by whom. Notify all parties concerned and then follow through by "**Inspecting what we are expecting.**"

ACT: Remember, no matter how important our **value** system, no matter how strong

our **goals**, no matter what facts we **surveyed**, no matter what we **decided**, it will all be in vain if we do not take **action** and do it!

NOTE FROM ELMA: At times, I have added fasting to my prayers, and when I do, the Lord always answers my prayers, and the answer is always perfect. I can then relax and trust my decision, for truly, "His yoke is easy and His burden is light" (Matt 11:30).

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QUESTIONS FOR MAJOR DECISIONS

Pertaining to my values/goals

Have I humbly sought God's will? what would Jesus Christ do?

How will I feel afterwards?

100 years from now who will know the difference?

What will do the most good for the most people for the most time?

What did my loved ones advise me? respected leaders?

Does it suit my values? goals?

Pertaining to mate/marriage/family

Do we have the same values and eternal goal?

Do we agree on major matters? make a good team?

Do we lift each other up? make us want to improve?

Do we want children? would we make good parents?

Will we both work hard and contribute to the union?

Pertaining to where we live

Is the neighborhood safe? environment desirable?

Is it accessible to church? school? transportation? hospital? shopping?

Can we afford the house payments? utilities? taxes? upkeep?

Is it functional? practical? heavenly?

Pertaining to our vehicle

Is it affordable? good mileage? low maintenance? will it hold its value?

Is the color right? the upholstery OK? is it functional? safe? comfortable?

QUESTIONS FOR MINOR DECISIONS

Pertaining to my apparel

Are the colors/size/textures/fit right for me?

Is it affordable? will it wear well?

Does it suit my values? enhance my appearance?

Pertaining to what I consume

Do I refrain from alcohol? tobacco? coffee? tea? drugs?

Is my food wholesome? in-season? natural?

Do I feel good after I consume it?

Pertaining to where I shop

Is it primarily one-stop? does it carry most of my needs?

Is it close to home?

Are the prices in line with competitors?

Is it functional? safe? convenient?

DARE TO DECIDE! SHAKE OFF THE SHACKLES OF PROCRASTINATION!