

Name:



Leader's Guide

Guidance for Global Mission

Updated May 2023

1. How do you make small decisions? How do you decide on a restaurant? How do you make big decisions? How did you decide what to study? Why did you join today?

This question kickstarts conversation with personal sharing. Participants may realise that decisions are often made without reflection, based on their desires and their families' expectations and finances and their gifts and the opportunities they create.

2. What are some ways Christians speak about God guiding us? How do you think Christians should make decisions?

This question moves from general decision making to ways Christians do and should decisions. Participants may speak of feelings, wise advice, prayer, God's word, freedom, calling, etc.

3. How significantly do your life plans differ from your non-Christian friends?



This question helps participants reflect on the difference Christian decision making makes. The emoji sequence moves from personal happiness/meeting someone special at university to graduation, from a good job to a nice/affordable house, from getting married to moving to a nicer location, from starting a family to living comfortable, then repeats from generation to generation. Obviously this is stereotypical, but it should offer a good basis for reflection.

4. What can we learn about guidance from just one passage: Romans 12:1-9?

This question is the heart of the study. It offers a single but central passage template for guidance: by the mercies of God, we offer all of ourselves, testing with minds renewed by the scriptures (especially concerning the will of God for all nations), thinking rightly about ourselves and our gifts in the context of God's variously gifted people for loving action. See the next page for details.

Romans 12:1-9 (ESV)

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ²Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

³For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. ⁴For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, ⁵so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. ⁶Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; ⁷if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

⁹Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.

Questions (cont. next page)

a) What should motivate our decisions?

The mercies (v1) and grace (v3) of God. Notably, this contrasts with both guilt and merit driven decisions

b) How does viewing our lives as a 'living sacrifice' change our decisions?

Much could be said, but if my body and all of life is an opportunity for worship then everything (every decision) matters and can be used to glorify God. The trick is keeping living sacrifices on the altar. Do participants see their lives as living sacrifices?

c) How is our mind renewed and how should that change our decisions?

Does Philippians 1:9—11, Colossians 1:9-10, and 2 Timothy 3:14-17 help?

This question requires participants to travel beyond the passage to see 'mind' renewal as God's spiritual answer to prayer through his word (cf. Ephesians 4:20-24). What we know about God's will (divine input) changes our decisions (output). This calls for prayer.

d) What do we learn about God's will from Genesis 12:1-4, Matthew 28:16-20, Galatians 3:7-9, Revelation 7:9-10? From Romans 12:9 and Ephesians 4:11-16? How does this help us test our decisions?

This is the first explicitly global mission minded question. Participants should see that God's plans from beginning to end and at key junctures are for the blessing of all nations. For his universal church to be built up in love by speaking the truth in love. Does this feature of God's explicit will mark participants' decision making? For, as the disciples teach us to obey what they were commanded, everyone called to Christ is commissioned for the sake of all nations. This is more than mere command, it is our opportunity to join our Father in his business of blessing the nations.

If the group has already completed studies on guidance or making-life-decisions, then this question can be expanded with a focused biblical theology of the nations or a debate on whether 'reaching the unreached is the missional priority.'

e) How should we think of the world (the situation/our context) when making decisions?

The world which God presents to us by his providence must be tested. We should 'study' the world (creation, culture, and every opportunity) through the scriptures. Are we awake to the times in which we live? Aware of the part previous generations have played so that we might act wisely into what God has been doing for many centuries and the opportunities he is providing?

f) How should we think of ourselves when making decisions?

We should think about ourselves! Neither too high nor too low, but with clarity. Note that this comes in the context of God's variously gifted people. We often need each-other's help to know ourselves, let alone the wise advice other passages promote. What gifts has God given me and how can I use them? But it's not about me, it's about love. Consider how the rest of the passage roughly concerns love of the insider (v9-13) then love of the outsider (v14-21).

g) What part might others play in my decision making?

The passage reminds us that our decisions are made in the context of God's various giftings to his people. Not only do we make decisions for others, how to love them, but we also make decisions with others (wise advice, bringing many gifts to bear on a single mission).

Notes: For further resources on general guidance, see *Guidance and the Voice of God* by Philip Jensen and Tony Payne and *The Good Life in the Last Days* by Mikey Lynch.

5. Choose and discuss two or three of the following statements:

- a. *Love God and do whatever you please.*
- b. *Play to your strengths/ gifts.*
- c. *I have freedom to make decisions in Jesus.*
- d. *The missional priority is reaching the unreached.*
- e. *Everyone called to Christ is commissioned for the sake of all nations.*
- f. *What the heart loves, the will chooses, and the mind justifies.*
- g. *If you don't have a plan for your life, that vacuum will get filled.*
- h. *I could change my plans to meet needs of people with less gospel access or resources.*
- i. *God's priorities are my priorities. I share his heart, his mind, his hands for mission.*
- j. *Mission should be the default. Why wouldn't I go!?*
- k. *I could change my plans so that more people hear about Jesus.*
- l. *We must not rob God of his glory with too small a vision.*
- m. *If you're not willing to go, you're not qualified to stay.*
- n. *I've chosen the hardest + wisest course for sustainable sacrifice.*
- o. *I don't feel called.*
- p. *I have a noble desire for global mission...*
- q. *I can't go because of (insert reason here)*
- r. *... but I'm not qualified for global mission.*
- s. *If you can't go, you must send.*
- t. *Guilt is not a good reason to make decisions.*

These statements range from false to reductionistic, from possibly true to certainly true.

The leader can select particularly useful statements or allow the group to read through and choose.

6. Decide: What needs to change about your plans? What's your next step for global mission?

This question encourages your participants to move towards action. Shared answers can be followed for accountability. Encourage each participant to form at least one SMART goal, something small and achievable.