



# MINISTERS FORUM NEWSLETTER

**\*\*\*INFORMATION MINISTERS CAN USE\*\*\***

## TREATING SYMPTOMS & NEGLECTING PROBLEMS?

Ps.119:105; Ezekiel 12:25; James 4:15; Matthew 12:34–36; Genesis 13

*Greetings! Pastors and Ministers of the Most High God – our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ of Nazareth. In this Month's Newsletter I would like to share two (2) main thoughts with you for consideration. –*

*The first will be to look at how often we focus on the 'symptoms' and how situations were treated and not on the actual 'problem' resulting in making decisions that at the end of the day does not address the problem leaving us with experiences which become more damaging than it should be which is not God's Intentional Will. These decisions often become God's Permissive Will because He had the power to stop it yet allowed it – causing one to wonder why? The response may be "It's God's business, just leave it alone".*

*The second is to present a strategy for the identification of "Problems as against "Symptoms" and making decision in the will of God. You might say but none of God's servants make decision without talking to Him but it does happen as the state of mind with its hidden agenda or sub-conscious thoughts can affect the process.*

*Making Decision will be affected by your state of mind - Decision made out of the will of God have consequences, not only for you the decision-maker but those around who are most times lacking in knowledge and innocent but nevertheless affected by the consequences of your action/decision. Jonah went into the ship running away from the will of God –the sea became turbulent (ship is being destroyed and innocent people affected who knew nothing about Jonah's life.*

*According to Manager of a large operation, no matter how good a problem solver one is one will end up in trouble if time is spent solving symptoms, resulting in he nearly lost his investment trying to solve symptoms that he thought were problems. He related further that when a similar failure happened a few months later, we did the same thing but should have looked past the immediate cause of the system failure and asked why that cause existed to begin with. If we had asked that second why, we would have realized that the computer systems department was understaffed, poorly organized and poorly led.*

*Had we asked the third why, we would have realized that the senior management team was not doing its job – they had not changed the management style to effectively deal with the real reason the computer system was failing and change. The same is true for*



### What's inside?

*Making decisions  
in the will of  
God- decision-  
making process  
Pg.1*

*How should you  
select/decide  
Pg.2*

*Impact of 'state of  
mind' on decision-  
making  
Pg.3.*

*Consequences of  
poor decision-  
making-outside  
the will of the  
Lord  
Pg.3*

*Inspired at how  
strategic  
Abraham was. ....  
Pg. 4*

#### Remember:

**"One Lord, One  
Faith, One Baptism"**



*how churches operate in identifying and making the distinction between symptoms and problems. So how do we make decisions as leaders of churches?*

### **MAKING DECISIONS IN THE WILL OF GOD**

**Direction from God-** As Christians, our overall direction in life is determined by our commitment to God, and we must remember to ask Him to direct our lives “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6). How does God direct us?

### **THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS:**

- 1. Define the problem and relevant information around it.** When our problem seems fuzzy, it can be very difficult to clearly define it. What caused the problem to erupt at this time and in this way? Who is affected by it? If other people are involved in causing the problem, why? What do they get out of it? If your decision is an opportunity, what exactly do you get by choosing it? What do you lose if you don't choose it?

#### **How Should You Select/Decide?**

**i) Using the WORD of God** Ps.119:105 (lamp to feet): Ezekiel 12:25 -the Lord will speak directly (ii). Ps.119:66 - God gives good judgement and knowledge to move in the right direction -

- **Godly Advice:** Through the wisdom He gives us in the Bible and through wise biblical counsel from His servants. (Godly people) Prov.12:15; Exodus 18:17 Jethro to Moses. \* Be humble enough to listen\*be careful who you listen to \* get the facts \*listen carefully\* be careful who you listen to and\*answer slowly. The Bible advises, “Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety” (Proverbs 11:14). Different people will likely have different information and different perspectives that can give you a broader understanding of the situation. With all the facts in hand, you can begin brainstorming various options that could solve the problem “It is not always easy to see the hidden assumptions that you are making when solving difficult problems. For this reason, it is helpful to engage other people to help you during problem solving
- **Inner Prompting of the Holy Ghost:** Philippians 2:13 [God directs our steps through prayerful connection with him; Jude v3 Admonished us to contend for the faith
- **Confront your fears and take the step of Faith** -Isa.42:16 [along unfamiliar paths I will guide you.

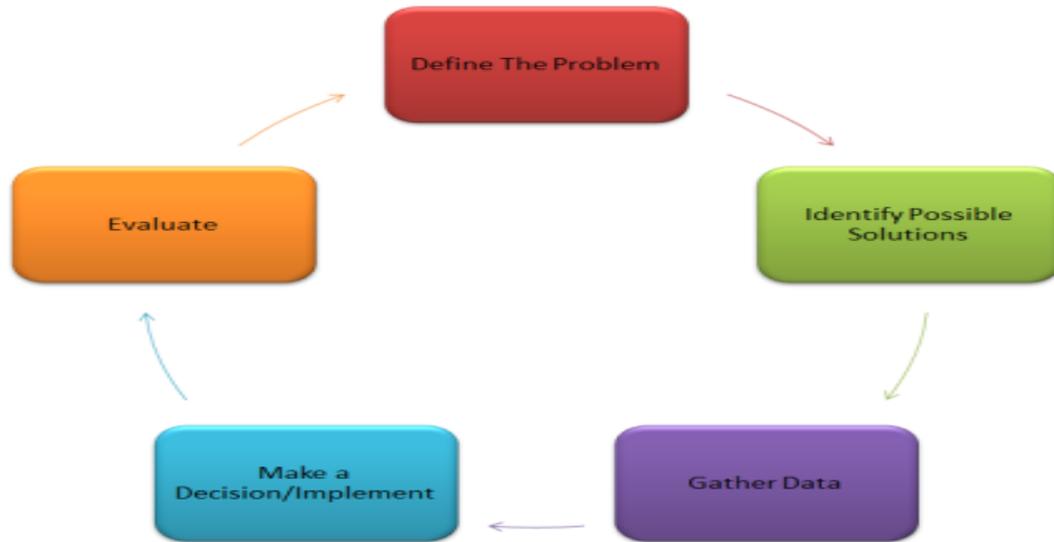
**2. Determine the alternatives:** With all the facts in hand, you can begin brainstorming various options that could solve the problem. Depending on the situation, it can be valuable to explore some outside-the-box solutions. This is especially true when none of the obvious options seem that good. Making The Best Decision Will Be Affected By The State Of Your Mind -Are you discouraged? Do you trust others? Are you battling with different thoughts, feelings and emotion (feeling buried alive never die).....

**3. Make a Decision/Implement:** Select the Alternative: that will provide optimum results

**4. Evaluation:** Has the alternative implemented solves the problem? If problem is not solved it is



highly likely that whatever was determined to be the problem was not the problem but the symptom of the problem.



#### **IMPACT OF 'STATE OF MIND' ON DECISION-MAKING:**

While it is agreed that there are strategies and principles for decision-making, for the Christian there is always the consciousness of the 'Will' of the Lord and the fact that the Lord moves in His own mysterious ways to perform His wonders. If your mind is occupied with other things especially emotional issues your logical and clear thinking will be affected resulting in poor decisions being made. What is necessary is a renewed mind, that is so shaped and governed by the revealed will of God (in the Bible) that we see and assess all relevant factors with the mind of Christ, and discern what God is calling us to do. This is very different from constantly trying to hear God's voice saying do this and do that.

If we reflect on the Israelites decision-making style where they gathered data (vv. 7-14) it must be realized that a crucial step in the process was missing because "The men of Israel...did not inquire of the Lord" (v. 14). It must also be noticed that many years later, James spoke to this very same issue when he wrote, "You ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that'" (James 4:15). *God's will is that there must be conscious reflection before action.* That is, most of your thoughts, attitudes, and actions must not be spontaneous. The good person brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil self brings forth evil. In the end people will have to give account for every careless word they speak" (Matthew 12:34-36) making it very important that ourselves are immersed in the written word of God and that our minds are also saturated so that— the will of God will be actualized.

#### **CONSEQUENCES OF POOR DECISION-MAKING - OUTSIDE OF THE 'WILL'**

While the **case of Jonah** is already over-stated it must be remembered in the context of how powerful the consequence of poor decision-making is. **Abraham and Sarah** are other examples of those who were *unwilling* to wait for God's timing; instead of trusting God for the impossible



(a child in old age); they took matters into their own hands by having a son through Hagar, Sarah's handmaid (Genesis 16). The consequences of this act is said to continue today in the conflict in the Middle East between the Jews and the Arabs – the seeds of Isaac (Sarah's son) and Ishmael (Hagar's son).

The **story of Lot's choice** (Gen. 13:5-18) is another which teaches an important lesson about life's choices since these choices often result in eternally significant consequences. The herdsmen of Lot and of Abram were quarreling because there wasn't adequate land to support all their flocks. So Abram gave Lot his choice of where to settle. Lot surveyed the land and decided to move down into the lush Jordan valley. That choice was the beginning of Lot's gradual but steady spiritual decline.

First he *looked* toward Sodom (13:10). Then he *moved his tents* near Sodom (13:12). Next we find him *living* in Sodom (14:12). Finally he is *sitting in the gate* of Sodom (19:1)--he was a city official. He lost his wife, barely escaped with his own life and his two daughters, and goes off the Old Testament page hiding in a cave where his daughters make him drunk and commit incest with him. The offspring of those disgraceful nights were the Moabites and the Ammonites, two of Israel's perennial enemies. It all began with Lot's choice to live near Sodom.

Once again we ***understand that choices often result in eternally significant consequences***. The clear progression in the story of Abraham and Lot brings both increased wealth (13:2, 5-6); their *increased wealth* led to *increased strife* because there simply wasn't enough land for each of them, plus the Canaanites and the Perizzites (13:7). They didn't have that problem before, the increased strife led to *increased responsibility* for choices. Lot wasn't just deciding for himself. His family and many servants and their families would be affected by his decision. The increased responsibility for choices led to either *increased wickedness* (in Lot's case, choosing Sodom) or *increased blessing* (in Abram's case, choosing Canaan).

**Inspired by how strategic Abram was**  
I am inspired by how strategic Abram was in his decision-making, in that, he had the right to choose whatever land he wanted and let Lot take the leftovers but he decided against that. Note must be taken that he was the older and chief among them and it was he that God had promised the land and not to Lot. Abram graciously gave up his rights and trusted God to give him his portion. This is something that must be emulated by Ministers and by extension 'people of God'. Recent incident in the church could also have been avoided allowing the Lord to guide decisions as against proceeding to address 'symptoms' of problems and making un-informed decisions.

The phrase, '*If it is the Lord's will,*' ought to infect our thinking and be a standard part of our vocabulary, thereby ensuring that at all times we focus on solving "the problem" and not the "symptoms" of the problem.

*Pastors and Ministers! Please endeavour to spend time carefully understanding what the Lord would want you to do –carefully identify His Will and seek to go after what he wants done –Forget the side orders, choose your battles and fight the good fight.*

**Blessings to you all**