

HELP FOR YOUR HARDEST DECISIONS

I am so glad you have come back again. I love doing these shows. I feel like I am talking to you and I hope you feel the same, and that we are just having a nice chat in a nice, easy place. I really want to help you. I hope that I can share the things out of my own life that God has done for me or for friends or people I have heard about. I hope that I can help you through that. I realize that you live all over the world. People watch this show in Israel, Africa, India, the Philippines, and Europe. I even had a man e-mail me from Spain. If you will e-mail me, I will e-mail you back. I like to do that; I am the e-mail queen. I live by e-mail. If you write to me, I will write you back. If I can help you I would love to. God is like that, too. Wouldn't it have been wonderful if that had been God talking to you saying those same words to you. "I love you and I want to help you.." That is the truth about God. I do not know what your concept of God is, especially if you live in a Muslim country. I want you to know that God loves you and you are so special to Him. He notices everything about you. He even has the hairs on your head numbered. That is what the Bible says. He has your name written on his palm. Whoever touches you touches the apple of His eye. That is pretty special. You are a very special person and God has a plan for your life that is better than anything you can think of. He wants to help you with your hardest decisions.

We all make decisions every day. Some of them are good, some are bad, some are right, and some are wrong. Some decisions are big and some are little. God wants to help you with all of them. You might be saying, "Well, I don't know God very well, but to me God is so busy trying to take care of hurricanes, tsunamis, earthquakes, and wars, why would he care about little old me and my little things." He cares because He loves you. If your daddy were the president of the universe, he would still care about your little things because you are his child and he loves you. If you have asked Jesus into your heart to receive forgiveness for your sins, you belong to God. You are in the family. I do not care where you live or what you are going through, you are in the family. I could look at you and say, "Hi, Cuz," because you would be my cousin, my brother, my sister. We are in the family of God together and our wonderful God wants to help us with our hardest decisions. He wants to give us advice and to make sure that you do not have that worried look. You know what it is like when you are up half the night worrying, or all day long it is always on your mind. "What if this, what if that? What about this, what about that? What if this happens? What would I do here? How do I handle that? I am not smart enough. I do not know what to do." God knows that and He wants to help you. There are even verses in the Bible where it specifically says that God wants to help you.

The book of Job is the oldest book in the Bible. Even then, people knew God and talked about Him in a personal way. Listen to Job 12:13, "But true wisdom and power are found in God. Counsel and understanding are His." You can have it. God wants to help you, even with your critical and most important decisions. Today we are talking about the decisions you need to make when it is the hardest and most important. What kind of wisdom can you get? What does God say?

In the book of James, the Bible says if you want to know what God wants you to do ask Him. God is a generous God and He will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. It also goes on to say, "But when you ask, be sure you really expect Him to tell you because you do not want to be like a wave of the sea going back and forth, doubt everywhere." Just pray for a child-like faith and trust. You might think, "I am an old man, do I need to be childish?" I did not say childish, I said child-like faith. What is child-like faith? It is faith that just trusts and accepts. It is faith that says, "Okay, I know You are bigger than I am. You can do it and I will let You." That is child-like faith and God wants us to have it. He prizes it.

Here you are with big decisions to make. What are you going to do? (There is a man who started watching this show today. You have never watched it before and did not even know it came on. Yet, you have a major decision to make. You have been up all night trying to figure out what to do. It is hard because it involves a lot of people. Listen to what God wants to tell you.)

In the things that happen to you, some of them are long term. What do I mean by that? The next five years will go by anyway, so what are you going to do? How would that apply in a person's life? Let's say you are 40 years old, and you have never been to college or only have a little bit of college, but you want

a college degree. For 20 years, you have been thinking, "I need to go to college. I should have gone to college. I didn't go to college. I am too old to go to college. I will be really old by the time I get out, I would be 45." The next five years are going to go by anyway. Let that be the peace of wisdom that you use to make that decision. Five years from now you are going to say one of two things. "I am glad I did it," or you will say, "I wish I had. I could be there." I have a friend that was a school teacher for a long time. He got tired of that and went into a business situation and he did okay. He was about 45 years old and said, "I really wanted to be a chiropractor all my life. I told myself I didn't have the time or the money to be able to get the education, and I have done all of these other things." He talked it over with his wife, they looked at their budget and figured out what they could cut back on for at least five years. He was in his 50's when he got out. In making that decision of the next five years are going to go by anyway, he had to go back and take basic chemistry at the local community college. How hard was that to do? He was ready to go on and be a chiropractor, but he had to go back to the very basics. He did that, and then he started school, and then he got into chiropractic school. Now he has been practicing for maybe 10 or 12 years. So what about those five years that went by anyway? Do you think he is glad that he made that choice and that difficult decision? Sure he is.

What is another piece of wisdom? When in doubt, don't! My mother taught me that. God puts something inside you to let you know something does not feel right about this. I have a lot of doubt about it. When you have that doubt, do not do it. You might be saying, "But I think it is God." It might be God, but the timing may be off. You might need to wait a little bit. Colossians 3:15 says, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts." Probably the greatest way to know God's will is peace. The devil cannot imitate peace. He can imitate a lot of things, but he cannot imitate the peace of God. What does it feel like on the inside when you have God's peace? It is calm, settled, no stress, just a genuine, general sense of overall wellbeing inside you. That is what God's peace feels like. It feels like everything is okay and now you can make this decision. When in doubt, don't!

Another piece of wisdom that God has for you in making your hardest decisions is to dig a hole in a new place. Have you ever stayed in the same thing over and over, wishing it would change, trying to make it change and trying to solve a problem, but it did not change. Then dig a hole in a new place. Just look at it from a different angle. How do you do that? You get tunnel vision and think "This is the only way it can be done. It can't be done another way. If it could be done another way, I have tried it or thought of it." Maybe you haven't. God is so creative. He can give you an idea where you have no idea. He can put it in your head. Allow God to do that for you. Allow God to show you how to dig a hole in a new place. Sometimes you do not want to do that because you think, "Now I have to start all over. I am tired and I have to start all over." Digging where you are is not going to solve it, so just dig a hole in a new place.

This next one sounds kind of rough and hard. Save the healthiest. So many times as Christians we have people come across our path who are very needy. You want to be kind to them plus in a Christian's heart, it is the heart of God and you want to help everyone. You do not want to look at certain people and say "I am not going to help you." At the same time, there are people who really do not want to change. They have no desire to change. Yet, they can make you think they do and they take all of your time. They call you on the phone all the time, they spend hours with you. You are telling them what you think they should do, but they do not ever change. It is because they are not ready to change. It would be better to look around and find someone who is saying, "I just wish someone would help me. I will do what they say if someone can just give me advice." Work and save the healthiest. Another way of saying this is, work with the wanters and not the wishers. A lot of people say, "I wish this and I wish that," but they are not willing to pay the price. There is a price, always, to get to a better place. You have to be willing to pay it. Not everyone is. Are you? A lot of times you can even grow to enjoy the price. You can see how you are growing and it is a great feeling. You are proud of yourself. As you can tell from watching this program, we have done some new things with how we make these shows. Can you see how we have pictures and Scriptures coming up? You have no idea how hard I had to work to learn how to do that. I had to do a whole lot of that and I was afraid. I thought, "What if I can't do it?" I tried, and it is working. The film crew that films all of this is working so hard to make this new way work.

The fifth piece of wisdom is that action breeds action. Many times people will say, "I only want to do God's will, and as soon as God tells me what it is I will do it." If you ask the person what they are doing in the meantime they say, "Nothing, just waiting on God to tell me what to do. I will do it when He tells me." Actually, doing nothing increases the possibility of nothing happening. Step out, start doing something,

and God will guide you. He will tell you, "Don't go that way. Go this way." He will open a door for you. It is a lot easier to move a car forward that is moving slightly. If it is in park, you cannot do it. No matter how hard you push, it will not budge. That is really stubbornness, and maybe even laziness. Action breeds action, so any action you take is going to cause more action to take place.

What is another good piece of wisdom for your hardest decisions? You cannot row 50 miles upstream against the current in one day. But, you could row five miles a day for ten days and still get there. What am I saying? Sometimes, you are just not able to do what has to be done as fast as it needs to be done, but if you will work slowly, steadily, and surely, it will happen. You will get there. I know people that look like they are out there blowing and going, and they are headed for the race line. Then there are other people that are like the tortoise and the hare. Do you know that old fable? They plod along, and plod along. Inch by inch, anything is a cinch. The next thing you know they are at the finish line, too. Nothing stopped them. They just kept going until they got there. Actually, when it is really hard, even going five miles a day is hard. Sometimes Christians give the impression, "I got saved and life has been great. It hasn't been hard. God helped me all of the way." Yes, He did, but it is still hard because life is hard. Sometimes you go through things that no matter how hard you try, it is still a real struggle. It is possible, but it is a struggle. There have been times in my life I have felt like "Onward through the fog. God, I know You are here and You say You want to help me. I believe Your Word. Where are You? I don't hear you and I don't see you. I will just keep putting one foot in front of the other and sooner or later I guess you will talk to me." I think He does it to stretch your faith and to say, "You keep going even if you don't hear from me. I will talk to you when you need it."

Another piece of wisdom is "What is the worst thing that can happen?" Let's say you are going into a situation that is going to be very difficult and you know it is going to be difficult and it could have a difficult ending. But, you think it needs to happen. A good question to ask yourself is, "What is the worst thing that could happen in this?" The next question to ask yourself is, "Why would that not be so bad?" Two questions, "What is the worst thing that could happen? Why would that not be so bad if it happened?" You know I am talking about your hardest decisions.

Another thing that I consider wisdom for your hardest decisions is to never let adverse facts stand in the way of a good decision. Just a few weeks ago I took a team of ten women to New Orleans for a prophetic evangelism trip to work at Mardi Gras with Hurricane Katrina victims. We were so fired up. I really had prayed about it a lot and I thought it was the Lord to go. I cannot begin to tell you how many people said, "Do you know what you are doing? There are still people getting killed down there. It is criminal down there. Mardi Gras is perverse. It is wild and wicked, it is the den of sin. You should not go." People even backed out. Those adverse facts did not stop me because I knew in my heart the Lord was saying, "I care about those people. I need people to go down there and do what I tell them to do and represent Me." So, we went. On one of the nights of Mardi Gras, we were in the middle of Royal and Bourbon Streets, with thousands of people drunk, perverted, obscene, cussing, screaming, or just having a good time. God sent us down there and said, "I want you to speak a word to these people from Me." It was amazing. People would ask, "How did you know that about me?" We answered, "The Lord told us. He loves you. He wants you to know He cares about the most intimate details of your life." I talked to one many who had been in a situation where his heart got broken. Remember this was at Mardi Gras where everyone is partying, the music is playing, and everyone is screaming and shouting. This man was heartbroken. God led me to him. What if I had listened to those telling me not to go and I had not gone? What if I had not been there to lead that man to the Lord? There were 11 of us total at Mardi Gras, all over 40, not young girls. Eleven people were saved. If we had not gone to Mardi Gras, what would have happened to those people?

I said, "Lord I want to talk to the people that are the closest to hell." I thought it would be interesting to see what the people closest to hell looked like. I thought they would all be horribly wicked, but I was surprised. Some were, some were not, and some were just normal looking. Maybe they were close to an automobile accident, maybe they were close to illness. I do not know. I only know what I prayed and which people crossed my path. It was very exciting. Never let adverse facts stand in the way of a good decision. I am not telling you to go against everyone when they are telling you not to do something. You might think "I am doing it anyway" and it might crash. You will know in your heart when God is telling you, "This is Me. Go." You will know that. Also, with adverse facts, no does not always mean no. Sometimes it just means not right now. You keep going and suddenly you end up with a yes.

Be careful what you choose. You might get it. How is that for wisdom about your hardest situations? Say you are choosing a mate or a career. A lot of you are young and you have important decisions to make. When you are young, you make the most important decisions that affect the rest of your life. You pick a place to go to college, a vocation or career, a mate, and the town you are going to live in. Those are all huge decisions. For most of us, they are hard decisions because they are so important that you do not want to miss it. You need wisdom. In James, the Bible says "If you want to know what God wants you to do, ask Him and He will gladly tell you." It is there available for you. Maybe you have never asked God for wisdom. Perhaps you have never said "Lord I have never even prayed to You before. I didn't know I could pray to You. I didn't know I could pray to You about this. Lord, help me. I don't know what to do. Tell me what to do." He will tell you if you just ask.

What is a piece of wisdom that goes with that? When you are making a hard choice and it is going to be really important, weigh what you might gain against what you will give up. You always have to give up something to get other things. That is just life. There is the Ben Franklin method of making a decision. For those of you that live around the world, Ben Franklin was an American statesman in the 1700s when America was becoming a nation and everyone admired him. This is what he would do in making a very difficult decision, which he did for our country. He got a piece of paper and drew a line across the top and a line down the middle. On one side he wrote "Pro" and on the other side he wrote "Con". Every good thing he could think of for making the decision, he wrote down under "Pro". Every bad thing he could think of for making the decision he wrote down under "Con". Then he looked at it, weighed it, what he would have to give up, what it would cost. Yet by looking at all of the pros, he would know this is the decision he needed to make.

The last one I want to talk to you about is that difficulties tend to shrink the closer you get to them. When you are trying something new, you question, "What if this happens? What if that happens? I just don't know if I could make it if that happened? Look at them, I don't know if I can work with them. What if they don't like me?" We start thinking of all of these things when we are looking at something new. We do that because it is unfamiliar territory. The fact that you have never been there before has a lot to do with it. You are trying to make a decision and trying to step that way. The more you walk toward the way you think you should go, it gets easier. In fact, have you ever gotten somewhere like that and then said, "I thought this was going to be hard. This isn't hard. This is fun. What if I had not done this." You can miss out on so much in life because you are afraid to step out. It is not bad to fail. Once Thomas Edison was asked, "Mr. Edison, we know that in trying to make the electric light bulb, you have failed 1,500 times." He said, "My dear man, I did not fail 1,500 times. I only found 1,500 ways it did not work." That is such a beautiful way to look at it. Failure is not the worst thing that can happen to you. Not trying is the worst thing. Remember, the easy choice is not always the most desirable. Sometimes it is the worst choice. Help is just a prayer away. Why don't more people do it? Perhaps they have not been taught. You can do it because God loves you.

Remember this, in Colossians 1:9 it says "We asked God to give you complete knowledge of His will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding." You can have it.

QUIET TIME QUESTIONS

1. Why does God care about our small things and the decisions we have to make?
2. List the Godly wisdom suggestions offered when making your hardest decisions?
3. Which one really speaks to you right now regarding a decision you need to make?
4. How do you deal with adverse reactions to your decisions?

To watch the video on HELP WITH YOUR HARDEST DECISIONS, Pillar Six, Leadership Skills, go to www.bettyswann.com.

Permissions: Feel free to reproduce and distribute any articles written by Betty Swann, in part or in whole, in any format, provided that you do not alter the wording in any way or charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction. It is our desire to spread this

information, not protect or restrict it. Please include the following statement on any distributed copy: by Betty Swann, Betty Swann Ministries, P.O. Box 8882, Amarillo, TX 79114-8882, Amarillo, TX 79109, phone 806-433-4649, www.bettyswann.com, betty@bettyswann.com