

Decisions Case Studies

Paul and his group of friends spent a lot of time travelling around ancient Middle East and Europe helping people understand the Good News and begin following Jesus. In the following passages we read accounts of Paul making decisions about what to do next. What do you notice about how he went about this? What factors did he consider as he made his decisions? What influenced him? What can you learn from the way he talks about the decision making process?

Passages	My observations
<p>1Co 16:3- 9</p> <p>When I come, I will write letters of recommendation for the messengers you choose to deliver your gift to Jerusalem. And if it seems appropriate for me to go along, they can travel with me. I am coming to visit you after I have been to Macedonia, for I am planning to travel through Macedonia. Perhaps I will stay awhile with you, possibly all winter, and then you can send me on my way to my next destination. This time I don't want to make just a short visit and then go right on. I want to come and stay awhile, if the Lord will let me. In the meantime, I will be staying here at Ephesus until the Festival of Pentecost. There is a wide-open door for a great work here, although many oppose me.</p>	
<p>Acts 16:4-15</p> <p>Then they went from town to town, instructing the believers to follow the decisions made by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in their faith and grew larger every day. Next Paul and Silas travelled through the area of Phrygia and Galatia, because the Holy Spirit had prevented them from preaching the word in the province of Asia at that time. Then coming to the borders of Mysia, they headed north for the province of Bithynia, but again the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them to go there. So instead, they went on through Mysia to the seaport of Troas. That night Paul had a vision: A man from Macedonia in northern Greece was standing there, pleading with him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us!" So we decided to leave for Macedonia at once, having concluded that God was calling us to preach the Good News there. We boarded a boat at Troas and sailed straight across to the island of Samothrace, and the next day we landed at Neapolis.</p>	
<p>Rom 14:20-29</p> <p>My ambition has always been to preach the Good News where the name of Christ has never been heard, rather than where a church has already been started by someone else. I have been following the plan spoken of in the Scriptures, where it says, "Those who have never been told about Him will see, and those who have never heard of Him will understand." In fact, my visit to you has been delayed so long because I have been preaching in these places. But now I have finished my work in these regions, and after all these long years of waiting, I am eager to visit you. I am planning to go to Spain, and when I do, I will stop off in Rome. And after I have enjoyed your fellowship for a little while, you can provide for my journey. But before I come, I must go to Jerusalem to take a gift to the believers there. For you see, the believers in Macedonia and Achaia have eagerly taken up an offering for the poor among the believers in Jerusalem. They were glad to do this because they feel they owe a real debt to them. Since the Gentiles received the spiritual blessings of the Good News from the believers in Jerusalem, they feel the least they can do in return is to help them financially. As soon as I have delivered this money and completed this good deed of theirs, I will come to see you on my way to Spain. And I am sure that when I come, Christ will richly bless our time together.</p>	

What particularly challenges you from Paul's approach?

How can you apply it to the decision you are making?