

## **Better Decisions, Fewer Regrets**

### **5 Questions to Help You Determine Your Next Move**

#### **Session 4**

#### **Question #3: The Conscience Question – Is there a tension that deserves my attention?**

*“When we make decisions from the fear of being judged and/or rejected, we doom ourselves to this people-pleasing brand of decision-making.”*

- **Joshua Nash**, 3 Red Flags You’re About to Make a Decision You’ll Regret

#### **Session Overview**

More times than we would like to admit, an option we’re considering creates a little tension inside of us. Something about it is just a bit uncomfortable or doesn’t seem exactly right. It bothers us, causes us to hesitate. Or perhaps the questions of others give us pause. Experts refer to this phenomenon as a *red flag moment*, an internal sense of “I’m not sure why, but something about this doesn’t feel right.” When that happens, you owe it to yourself to pause and pay attention to the tension. Don’t ignore it. Don’t brush it off. Pause and ask yourself, “What about this bothers me?” The red flag is God’s way of turning us in another direction.

#### **Conversation Starter**

Do you tend to make more measured or emotion-driven responses? What’s an example of one of your more recent decisions in this category?

#### **Watch the video**

#### **Group Discussion**

1. Do you sometimes forget that a response is a decision? How would remembering that make a difference?
2. What’s an example of a response you’ve made or seen that reversed the natural order of things?
3. When has a red flag – whether internally or from others – caused you to pause before making a major decision? What was the outcome?
4. Do you tend to justify your responses based on what seems right in the moment? If you had been in David’s situation, how hard would it have been to let King Saul walk out of the cave knowing his goal was to kill you?
5. We often ignore other people’s advice or the voice of our consciences because we think we already know what’s going to happen. How have your attempts at predicting future outcomes led to disappointment?

#### **Making Better Decisions**

Often, what begins as an uneasy feeling is later supported with reason. In this week’s session, we saw this truth play out in the fascinating Old Testament narrative story of David and King Saul. It both illustrates and illuminates the power of our consciences. In the cave, David chose not to kill King Saul

because he was “conscience stricken.” His conscience bothered him for even considering the deed he almost carried out. This is how we know he was paying attention to the tension. David did something very few people have the self control to do. Just a few feet away from King Saul, he changes course midstream. Choosing humility over revenge. Choosing God’s wisdom over emotion.

Have you ever been “conscience-stricken” in a way that caused you to change your response mid-stream? Describe how both self-control and humility were needed in your decision.

How might this story of David and King Saul cause you to pay greater attention to your conscience in future decisions – no matter how high the stakes may seem?

### **Session Wrap Up**

We need to value the role of our consciences more. If there’s something in you, something you can’t put your finger on, or perhaps something someone else has put a finger on that bother you about an option you’re considering, pause and pay attention. That tension may very well be God’s way of protecting you. It may be his way of waving you off from a decision you’ll regret. Every time you make a decision, especially a decision that takes you by surprise, ask yourself, “Is there a tension that deserves my attention?” Don’t ignore it. Don’t brush by it. Let it bother you until you know why it bothers you.

### **Between – Session Personal Study**

#### **Do**

Pay attention to red-flag moments. See how many you sense this week – paying attention to how the tension appears and whether your inclination is to ignore it or to pause and ask yourself, “What about this bothers me?”

This week try to follow your conscience rather than the cues of the crowd. Be more aware of when you’re tempted to make a decision from a place of pressure to fit in or to please others.

#### **Reflect**

Look up 1Samuel 24:15 and write it down. Do these words from David feel like a realistic way to approach your decisions? Why or why not?

Why is it hard not to “play God” in these situations and just take matters into your own hands rather than trusting God to deliver us from the hand of our enemies – especially when the stakes are high?

#### **Decide**

Our internal hesitation/red flag is often God’s way of turning us in another direction. How might embracing this truth impact your future decision?

Yielding to God means surrendering decisions rather than trying to predict, manipulate, or force outcomes. What do you sense God asking you to do differently in this area?