

DECISION MAKING

Who makes the decisions in the marital relationship? Perhaps the best question to ask is not who does or who should, but who is the best qualified. Who in your marriage exerts the most influence upon the other or carries more weight in deciding?

Answer the following three questions and after you have finished, share your answer with each other.

1. Will each of us be able to make decisions in the areas where we feel we are most gifted?

2. Will each of us have sufficient opportunity to give what we feel we have to offer in any and all areas?

3. How will we choose who has the final say in any decision? _____

Take a few minutes and fill in what percentage you feel you will have and what percentage your future spouse will have in making the following decisions. (the total for each decision must be 100 percent.)

	Her Vote	His Vote
Choice of a new car.....	_____	_____
Choice of a home.....	_____	_____
Choice of furniture.....	_____	_____
Choice of you own wardrobe.....	_____	_____
Choice of vacation spots.....	_____	_____
Choice of home decorations.....	_____	_____
Choice of mutual friends.....	_____	_____
Choice of entertainment.....	_____	_____
Choice of what church to attend.....	_____	_____
Choice of TV shows to watch.....	_____	_____
Choice of child-rearing practices.....	_____	_____
Choice in planning meals.....	_____	_____
Choice of how many children to have.....	_____	_____
Choice of where we are to live.....	_____	_____
Choice of husband's vocation.....	_____	_____
Choice of wife's vocation.....	_____	_____
Choice of determining for what and how the money is spent.....	_____	_____

Every couple creates a pattern for reaching marital decisions. Many of these patterns are ineffective or self-defeating. Some bring about feelings of resentment. The majority of couples have not considered how they arrive at decisions.

This next exercise is just for you to fill out and after doing so go back and look over what you wrote and see if you have considered the decision making process or have just decided to do things your way and not take into consideration your future spouse. You may share your answers when you are finished.

1. Who made most of the decisions in your family? _____
2. Who made most of the decisions in your future spouses family? _____
3. Have you established guidelines to distinguish between major and minor decisions? If so, what are the guidelines you have chosen? _____

4. What procedure will you follow when there is an impasse and a decision must be made? _____

5. How will you decide upon responsibilities for household chores? _____

6. In what areas will you have the right to make decisions without consulting your spouse? Who decided this policy and how did you arrive at this decision? _____

7. Will you make the decisions that you want to make or just the ones that your spouse does not want to make? _____

8. Will you have any "veto power" over your spouse's decisions? If so, what is the basis for it and how did you arrive at this decision? _____

Consider these thoughts about the roles of the husband and the wife and decision making.

"The principle of mutuality of submissiveness in marriage is similar to the pattern of submissiveness between the members of the Body of Christ. There are times in the Body when it is appropriate for one member to exercise leadership over the other members as a function of his or her spiritual gift. No single spiritual gift automatically qualifies a member to be the leader or ultimate decision maker all of the time. That position belongs to the head, Jesus Himself. Likewise in a marriage, in which there is mutuality of submissiveness, the role of leadership is assigned not according to some decree from God, or on the basis of 'maleness' or 'femaleness,' but on the basis of the leadership role the partner has been assigned by the mutual decision of the marriage. The skill of a Christian marriage lies in the negotiation and assignment of these leadership roles on the basis of the abilities of the partners."

"In the marriage the husband has the office of head. That simply means he has the responsibility and authority to call the marriage - his wife as well as himself - to obey the norm of truth. If he faithfully exercises his office, both he and his wife will be freed to be themselves. As the head, the husband is called to take the lead in mutually examining the marriage to see if it is developing according to its long-range goals."

"Clearly, leadership has nothing to do with being boss. The husband can only command the wife to live up to what the two of them mutually pledged when they were married. Likewise, if the husband neglects his office, the wife ought to call the husband back to their mutual vows."

"Neither does leadership imply inferiority or superiority. Rather, headship is a special office of service so that the marriage may thrive and grow. Headship does not mean that the husband leads or decides in every detail. Once a man and woman have decided which vision of life is going to norm their activities in their marriage, they can leave the decisions in day-to-day affairs to the partner with the appropriate talents, temperaments, and situations. The husband's role is to be on guard continually so that the 'little' things do not develop into the kinds of patterns that undermine the entire marriage."

How will the presence of Jesus Christ in your life help you in the process of decision making and discovering your gifts in marriage
