

MONDAY MANNA
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MAKING DECISIONS ACCORDING TO THE 24-HOUR RULE
By Rick Boxx

Terry Looper, author of Sacred Pace, was speaking at our organization's Summit conference. He admitted that early in his business career his desire to please people caused him sometimes to make poor decisions. In his attempt to make others happy, he occasionally would arrive at rash decisions that he would later regret.

After experiencing the consequences of this a number of times, Looper eventually implemented a simple rule that would enable him to avoid such bad, poorly reasoned decisions. He said he refused to decide on any important matters until he had waited 24 hours.

Looper said he learned that by withholding a decision for 24 hours, it gave him a means for stepping away from the pressure of the situation. It also gave him time to carefully consider the request.

We could apply this principle to practically any situation in which a decision is necessary. These could include such things as major purchases, signing contracts, important hiring decisions, changing jobs, extending a loan to someone, becoming deeply involved in a project, and countless other circumstances that could have a long-term impact on you and those close to you.

Very few decisions are so urgent that they cannot be postponed for 24 hours. This can remove emotions and impulses from the equation. Sometimes an opportunity seems too good to pass up, but after waiting we might realize that it was not as good as it seemed. Delaying a decision also gives needed time to consider factors we might not have initially taken into account, or to reconsider important details from a variety of perspectives. Making decisions on the spur of the moment rarely provides that luxury.

The Bible, in many ways the best book on business ever written, has much to say about the importance of making careful, well-considered decisions. Here are just a few examples:

Avoiding the hasty decision trap. As Looper observed, there is often a temptation to quickly arrive at decisions to please others. But over the long-term, making decisions you will later regret is pleasing for no one. "It is a trap to dedicate something rashly and only later to consider one's vows" (Proverbs 20:25).

Avoiding the embarrassment of a reversed decision. We might not want to disappoint people by making a decision contrary to their wishes, but it is even more disappointing to have to go back to them and admit you cannot hold to your original decision. Jesus taught, "But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.'" For whatever is more than these is from the evil one" (Matthew 5:37).

Avoiding the disgrace of being unable to complete the commitment. Often our decisions are well-intended; we initially believe we can fulfill obligations that we make. Unfortunately, if made in haste they may too late prove to have been unwise. “Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won’t you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?” (Luke 14:28).

Decision-making can be a difficult process, especially when there is a lot at stake. Decisions should be made with careful deliberation to avoid future regrets or other repercussions. This also provides time to pray and seek God’s wisdom before proceeding. If you tend to make rash decisions, try Terry Looper’s 24-hour rule.

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. What is your decision-making process like, typically speaking?
2. Think of a significant decision you made that you later regretted. Do you think you spent a sufficient amount of time before arriving at the decision? Why or why not?
3. Do you consider yourself to be a people-pleaser? What are some advantages – and disadvantages – of always trying to please people with our decisions?
4. Have you ever tried anything like the “24-hour rule” to govern your decision-making? If so, explain what that has been like for you. If not, what difference could it make in the decisions you make and how you arrive at them?

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages:
Genesis 11:4-9; Psalm 37:3-7; Proverbs 3:5-6, 16:3,9, 20:24, 21:2, 24:27, 27:12