

MONDAY MANNA

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DECISIONS OF THE HEAD – AND THE HEART

By Jim Langley

Early in my insurance career, I learned an important lesson for closing the sale. Decisions can be made either from the head or from the heart. Personally, I consider buying life insurance to be a decision of the heart, but financial considerations must come into play. I often advise clients to choose lower monthly premiums to ensure their policies will remain in force. My approach to initially recommend limiting their commitment to not more than 50 percent of what they feel they can comfortably afford. I believe this approach can be valuable for many life decisions.

It is easy to let the heart take over – or to let the mind do the same. In my experience, the best decisions come from a balanced perspective. In marriages, the husband and wife need to discuss and hopefully pray about important family decisions. In business, there can be great value from getting counsel from others who bring experience and wisdom to the table.

Years ago, I watched two leaders of a medium-sized manufacturing firm eliminate two-thirds of the company's jobs by reducing costs and outsourcing much of the work done for many years by faithful employees. The numbers might have supported their decisions, but the lives and livelihoods of many devoted people were drastically affected. Seeing two executives decimate the founders' successful business philosophy caused me to eventually leave corporate life, after seeking wise counsel.

In Proverbs 19:20-23 we are told, *"Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise. Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails. What a man desires is unfailing love; better to be poor than a liar. The fear of the Lord leads to life: Then one rests content, untouched by trouble."*

Some translations of this passage use the word "mind" instead of "heart," since those two terms are often considered interchangeable in the Scriptures. As God's most wonderful creation, we have been given the ability to think through pertinent information and feel emotions to help in the decision-making process. As we seek to align both our hearts and minds with the Lord, we can better discern His will for our lives.

When our emotions and thoughts are in tune with His Spirit, we find ourselves in a powerful position for making critical decisions. In Romans 8:6-8 Paul explains about the new nature we receive through Jesus Christ. He concludes, *"The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God."*

In other words, if the heart and mind are not controlled by Christ, the outcome will not be pleasing to God, since we have centered on selfish wants and desires rather than His plans and purposes.

For more than 30 years, I have strived to be guided by the heart and mind of Christ. And because of that, I believe God has faithfully led me down the right path. In Proverbs 3:5-6 we are instructed, *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight."*

As you consider the decisions of your heart and your mind, consider placing your total trust in God, our Heavenly Father, seeking His wisdom and perfect will.

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© 2019 Jim Langley has been writing for more than 30 years while working as a life and health insurance agent. In recent years, his passion has turned to writing about his relationship with God. His goal is to encourage others to draw near to Him as well. A long-time member of CBMC, he started writing "Fourth Quarter Strategies" in 2014.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

How do you typically make your decisions, from the heart or from your mind? Explain your answer.

What can be the impact of decision-making solely from the mind, based on information you have, or solely from the heart, responding to emotions and feelings? Do you agree that a balanced approach is necessary? If so, what are ways for ensuring that is the case when making critical decisions?

When you are confronting crucial decisions, do you usually seek out advice and wise counsel from others? Why or why not?

As we consider making decisions from a balanced approach of involving both the mind and the heart, where in your view does faith fit into the process, if at all? Explain how you have reached this conclusion.

NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, read the following passages:

Psalm 13:1-3, 37:4-5, 51:10-12
Jeremiah 31:33-34
Ezekiel 11:19-20
Luke 6:45