Decision Making Essay, Research Paper

Any decision affecting people has ethical ramifications and virtually all important decisions reflect the decision-

maker?s mindfulness and resolution to ethical behavior. This is why it is important to know for yourself how you go

about making ethical decisions, or decisions of any kind. Finding out how one goes about making decisions can be a

rather hard task as I found out while I was researching my mind to ?decide? exactly how I do go about making the

decisions I make. The first thing I decided was that most of the decisions I make in my life are made with much

thought about anything that might be affected by the decision. The most important thing, to me, is to make a

decision and have reasons. I have to know why one choice is better than another. I feel compelled to look at every

angle to assess what will be the outcome. I, personally, have a hard time making ?spur-of-the-moment? decisions

especially if it involves something rather important to me. Many things!

go through my mind and trust in my practical intuition (notice I didn?t say ?blind? intuition) also plays an important

part. I make decisions based on different things depending on what kind of decision I am having to make, but there

is always one ultimate source for my decision making that supersedes all other ?sub-categories? that influence my

decision making, and that does not change, regardless of the situation ? and that is God.

To me, God is the supreme ethical teacher and giver of wisdom, and if this is true then when searching for wisdom,

why shouldn?t I look to the originator of wisdom. God is my number one influence in any decision that I make. My

love for Him and faith in His power causes me to adhere to His will and actively search out the text of the Bible in

order to learn more about the way He wants me to live and the things He wants me to have in my heart and in my

mind as a guide for myself when making decisions. It is through this searching that I have discovered which ethical

principles are important to me and how to adopt them as my own.

One does not have to be a Christian to have ?values?. Everyone has a primary source from which they draw to make

decisions and it is often their values. The important thing is how or where you obtained your values. Are they yours

or did someone else just pass them down to you. I have values, but the values I hold in my heart are not merely of

tradition passed down to me, but spring from a diligent study of the Bible, which again comes from my love of the

Father (which by-the-way, exists because of His great love for me). So, in this light, for me as a Christian or a non-

Christian, values provide the very motivation for decision-making in the first place. I therefore decide to make

decisions for myself because I want my life to adhere to the values that encompass my heart. I want to live my life

constantly aware of the presence of God, and therefore, train my thoughts to become value-focused, and since the

values in my heart are an extension of the Father, then I ough!

t always to ask myself ?What have I done that is as God wills and what have I left undone of that which He does not

will??.

Another word that has a similar connotation as the values that I am discussing is virtues. Virtues are ideal character

traits that people should incorporate into their lives such as: honesty, loyalty, respect, etc. For myself, this also is

primarily obtained from my study of the Bible. I need to address the fact that in growing up in a family that held

strongly to the values or virtues it was taught by their parents, that it is, in fact, nearly impossible not to be

influenced by these things that were taught in the family, whether they were bad or good, and say that all values and

virtues are entirely my own and have originated within me. That just is not valid, because a person does hold on to

some of the things that were taught no matter how he or she feels about it, but if the virtues can stand next to God

then there is no reason why a person shouldn?t keep in his heart that which was taught to him merely for the sake of

?coming up with your own values?. The impo!

rtant thing is not ?coming up with your own? values/virtues, etc., it is the weeding out, picking and choosing, those

values and virtues you will keep for your own life, accepting some and discarding others, all in an effort to make

them your own, and weighing all against the ultimate source, the Bible.

How does a person do this? Good question. First, you must ask yourself many questions, two of which I found to be

the most important in my own opinion: 1) What does the scripture obviously teach about the subject? What does it

blatantly come right out and say? 2) What does the Bible suggest about the subject? Through stories and examples

of Jesus and the disciples, etc., what can you correctly decipher? (Correctly is the key word here). Once you have

answered these two questions there are others you may want to ask yourself to get more specific. Generally,

questions about yourself would be good, such as: 1) Does it violate my conscience? Because of your belief in God

you seek to have your conscience framed by Him. (Obviously the conscience question is no good if you have not

been careful how your conscience was formed or if your conscience has been ?seared?.) 2) Is there an obvious

primary duty, and if so, what is it? 3) How will it affect me/other!

s? There are many more good questions, it is just a matter of finding out what is important to you and checking your

actions to make sure that they coincide with these things. For example, if Jesus is an important figure in your life,

ask yourself, ?What would Jesus do??.

So, as a result of all this, what are the virtues/values I have adopted? The first is love of God, which I already

discussed. It is the first and greatest commandment given in the Bible and therefore is my first and greatest virtue.

The next is love or compassion, and devotion to others. Why? Because God gave us the commandment to love our

neighbor as ourselves as the second greatest commandment and as a foundation in order to win others. This love for

others is the place we have to begin if we are to be true Christians because all commandments of Christ depend on

this one. Not only are we commanded to love others, but we are given the example of Christ in the New Testament,

who healed and fed and offered living water to those who were “thirsty”. He was/is the greatest example of love for

others that there is because He died, having never met us, for us while we were so sinful. If He is to be our example,

then, literally, we are to do what He does. If we have a genuine love for others, then all decisions will take into

account, and be sincerely responsive about, the well-being of all people involved. But this isn?t a hard concept, it?s

simply the golden rule. “Do unto others as you would hav!

e them do unto you.”

As for my opinion, if a person possesses these two qualities, love of God and love of others, all other virtues/values

which are the foundation for making ethical decisions will follow. They will not have to be learned abstractly and

within no context because they will be actions that arise as cause and effect: Because you love God and others, the

effect is that you will develop the characteristics that reflect love.

There are certain characteristics that are more important to me than others such as: trustworthiness. If there is no

trust in a relationship there is nothing. Furthermore, if a non-Christian has no trust in you, how do you ever expect to

convert him, which is the very essence of our Christianity. I have always liked the song “Standing On The Promises”

because of that statement?standing on the promises. The words “standing on” emphasize the majesty of what we

really are doing. When I think of standing on something I think of something that holds me up as in this past year

when we went to Guyana, SA, and I stood on the very edge of the Kaiture Falls, five times higher than Niagara, and

NOTHING was holding me up but that ledge I was on. To think that we are standing on the PROMISES of God is a

very amazing thing to me to be standing on when there?s nothing below me. Can you think another?s promises you?d

rather be standing on? That?s a sobering thought. It is a valuab!

le thing to be able to trust in God?s promises.

Jesus was trustworthy in that He came to earth to do a mission and as much as He wished the cup to pass, He still

carried out that mission. (Good thing for us.) He is also trustworthy in that He said He loved us, and we have to be

able to trust that because our salvation depends on it. His love for us is our only connection to God. Yes, trust is a

gravely important thing indeed.

I have many other virtues/values I consider important, most of which stem from all else discussed. Honesty,

faithfulness, respect, loyalty, a forgiving heart, and many others. But the important thing, to reiterate, is that love

should always be at the heart, and if it is these other attributes will surge from it, and making the right ethical

decisions will not be so grievous.