

Making Decisions



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GAP

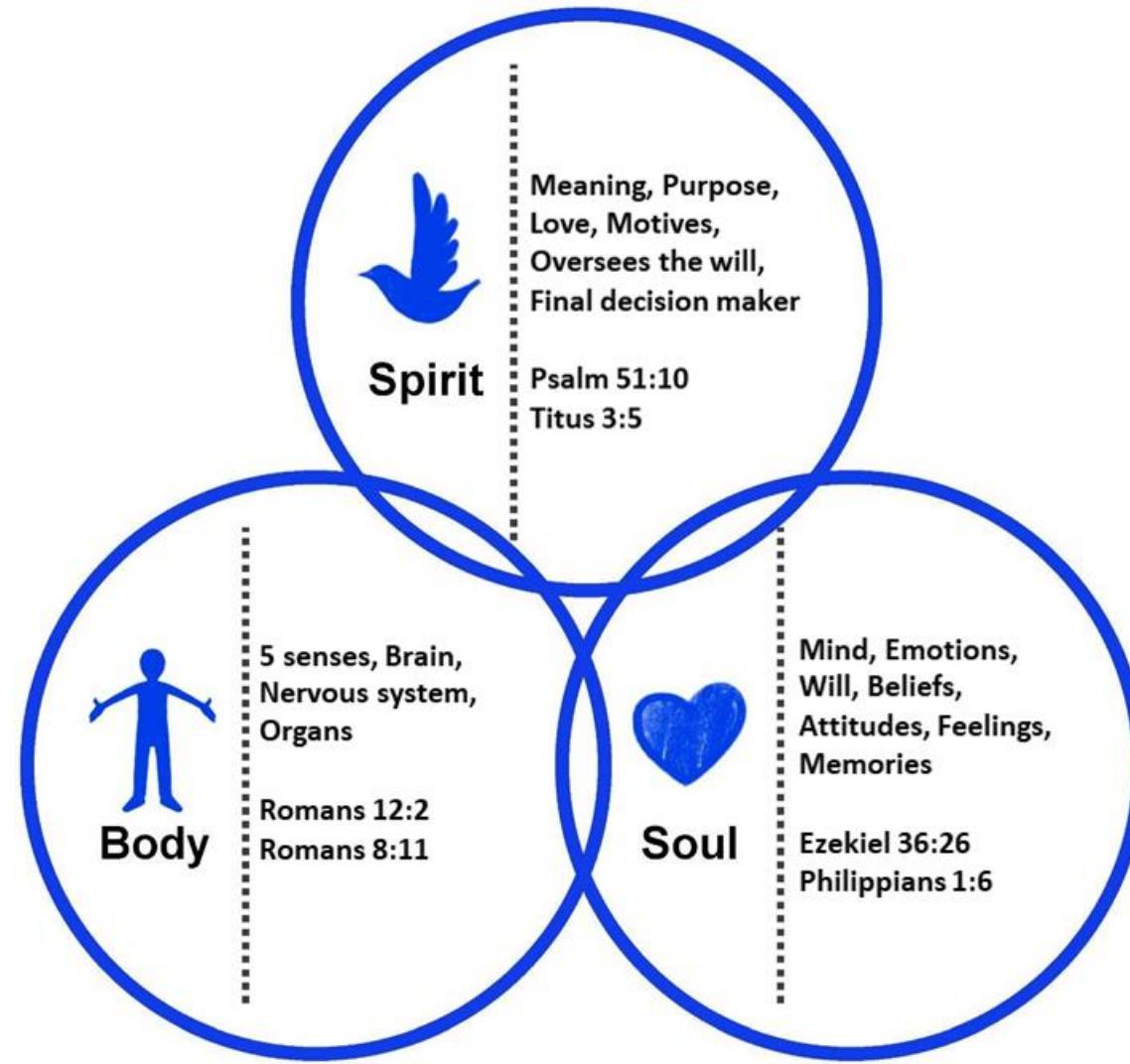
Introduction

In this third session, we are going to explore two key ideas:

1. *The way we make decisions.*
2. *The importance of the Holy Spirit in the process of decision-making as a believer.*

To discuss these ideas, we need to think practically and Biblically.





Things I Have Learned from Experience

1. As a follower of Christ, my whole person is involved in making decisions – body, soul, and spirit. (1 Thess.5:23)
2. My body has many desires that are God-given such as food, sleep, activity, rest, sex, etc. From my earliest days, I have developed certain normal expectations about how these “needs” should be met.
3. Meeting these “needs” can sometimes become an obsession that drives me to inappropriate choices/actions – a form of idolatry.



Things I Have Learned from Experience

4. My soul has three dimensions – mind, emotions, and will.
5. My mind is what receives and processes information. It is stimulated by events I experience. The main sources of information are the five senses. It sends signals to the emotions and will.
6. My emotions allow me to “feel” a range of responses to what my mind is processing – happiness, sadness, anger, frustration, etc.
7. My will is the “chooser” in the process. It decides a response from a range of options it has based on the mind and emotions.

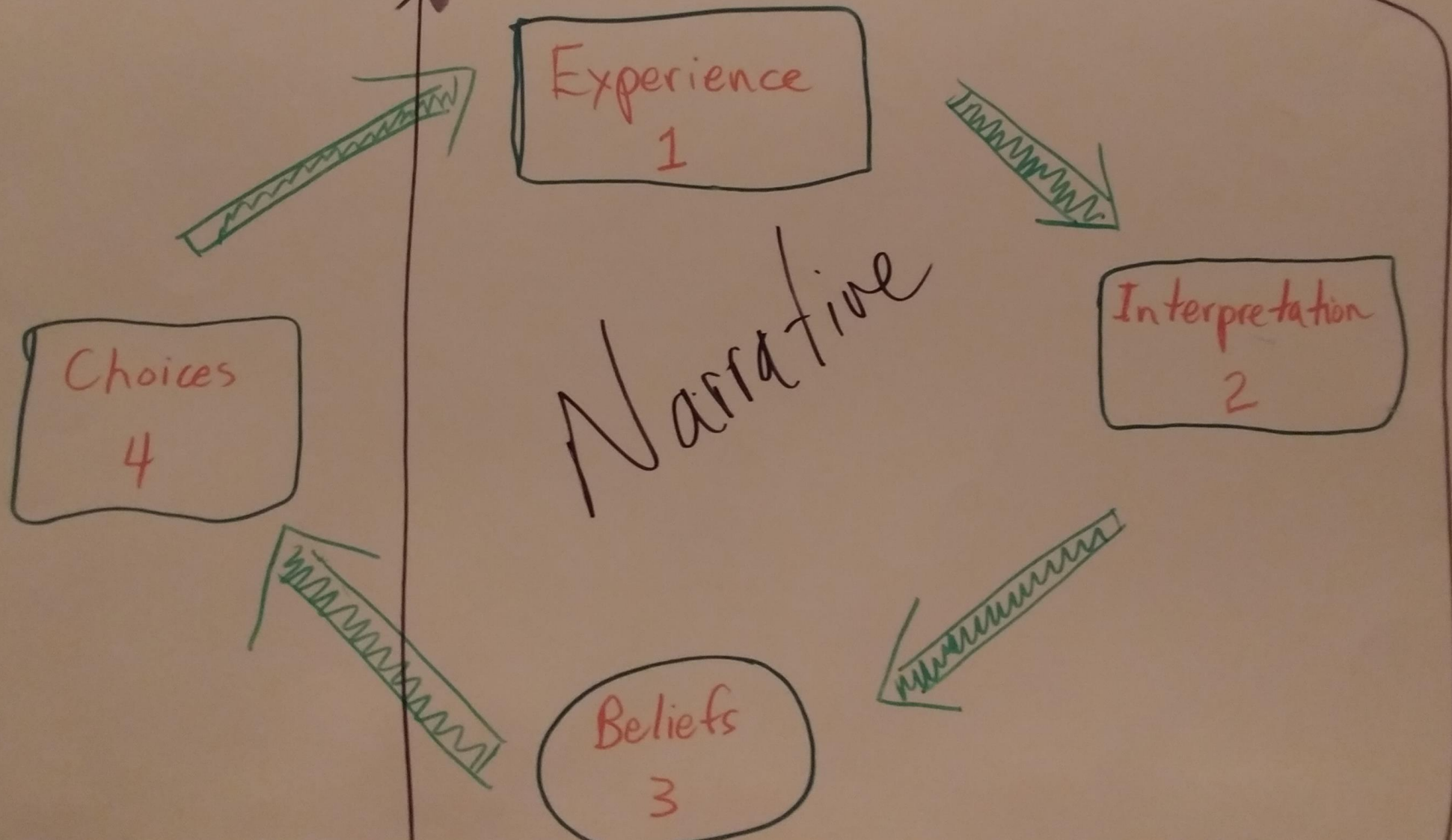


Things I Have Learned from Experience

8. What I choose to say or do is the result of my “soul’s” decision. I can never say with complete honesty, “I don’t know why I said that or did that...”
9. What I choose to say and/or do flows from a decision which was made based on deeply held beliefs and values.
10. My beliefs and values are developed from my interpretation of events that happen in my life – most time repeated events. The key is how I INTERPRET them.



How Experience Shapes Us



Things I Have Learned From Scripture

1. Before I was saved and became a follower of Jesus, my life was controlled by three “enemies” of God and His Kingdom:
 - The world system
 - The flesh – my old nature from my parents
 - The Devil – the arch-enemy of God
2. Before my salvation, my decisions were made for various reasons – all related to my “self” (the flesh/fallen nature)
3. These decisions developed strong behavior patterns in my life. They became my “narrative.”



Things I Have Learned From Scripture

4. I was missing an important aspect of how God made me; my spirit was dead. I had no access to God, nor did I pursue it.

5. The Father drew me to salvation (John 6:44, 65)

6. When I repented toward God and trusted Jesus' finished work on the cross, I became a new person (2 Cor.5:17), received eternal spiritual life, and I was indwelt by the Holy Spirit. (Col.1:13)

7. The Holy Spirit enters and give life to my spirit. This allows me to have fellowship with God.



Things I Have Learned From Scripture

8. I now experience the “internal war” between the flesh and its historic patterns of behavior (the law of sin) and the new desires/actions of the spirit (new life of the Spirit) Rom.7:4-6

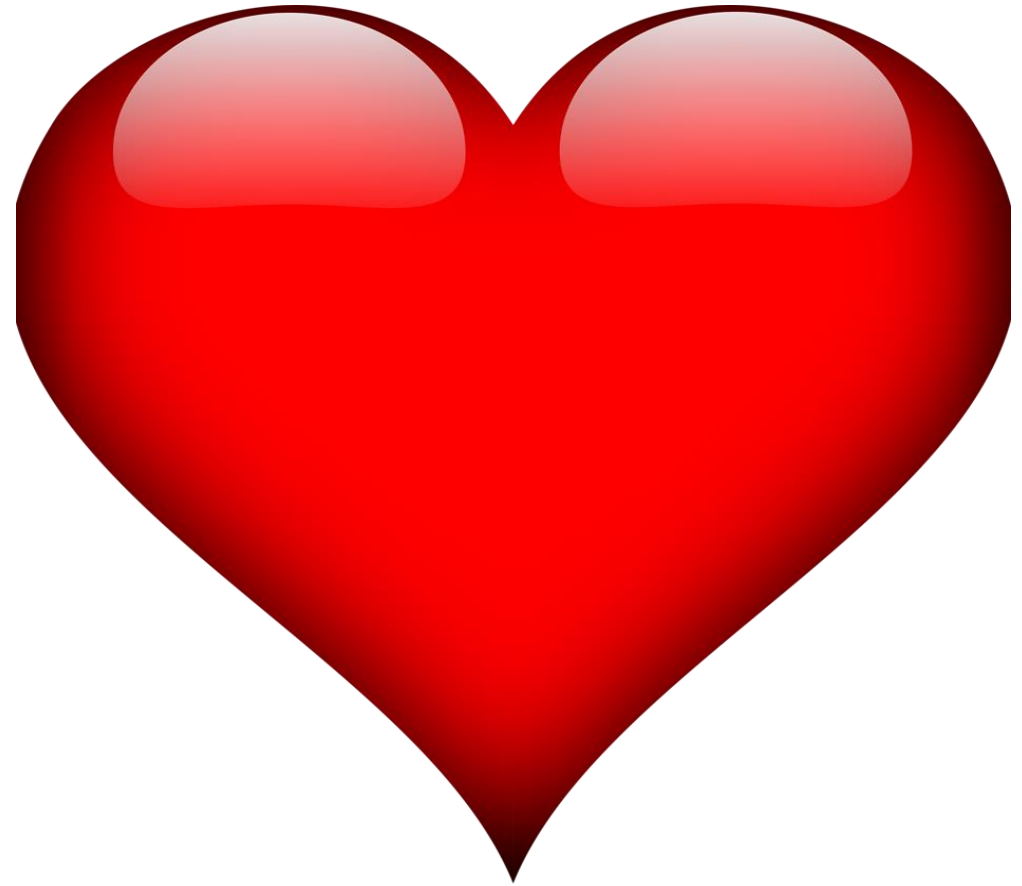
9. The Spirit takes the Word of God and speaks to my “soul” (my mind, emotions, and will) through my spirit which is now alive to counter the patterns of the flesh. (James 1:19-25)

10. To make good decisions that please the Father, I must allow the Spirit to control me (Eph.5:18) and not grieve the Spirit by my actions. (Eph.4: 30)



Final Thoughts

1. I need to memorize and mediate on Scripture which the Spirit uses to speak into my life so I am "outfitted for the journey of life." (Psalm 1:2-3; 119: 11, 105; 2 Timothy 3:16-17)
2. I need to "guard my heart." (Prov.4:23)



Questions

1. What are some of the patterns in your life that are driven by the flesh, not by the Spirit?

- What do you normally do?
- What does the Spirit say you should do?

2. What is your practice of memorizing and meditating on Scripture?

