

Decision Making & the Head of the Family

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What is decision-making?

- It is the chief act of the virtue of prudence, otherwise called command.
- If the one who has to make a decision has authority to do so, he need not ask permission to make decisions.
- Sign & cause of leadership.

What decisions is the head responsible for?

- This is same as to ask: what is the scope of his authority? He does not determine the ultimate ends of the family life, nor the ends of any given member of the family. These are provided by revelation, man's nature, and the free and reasonable choices of each member.
 - *Vision.* This means he must understand and respect them himself, leading to a proper set of priorities
 - *Communication.* He is responsible for ensuring that these ends are properly understood and treated seriously by the other members of the family
 - *Determination.* He is responsible for determining the best means to attain those ends.
- What ends in particular?
 - Everything that pertains to the common good of the family
 - Culture of home
 - Education of children
- What does not fall under his authority?
 - Family & Friends of Spouse
 - Interior lives of family members
 - Vocations of children

Elements of good Decision Making

- Foresight

- Consideration of possible outcomes
- Memory
 - Reflection on past experiences
- Circumspection
 - Patient assessment of relevant circumstances
 - Chief circumstance: character of members of the family
- Counsel
 - Seek advice often
 - Seek advice from wise people
 - Seek advice from interested people
- Follow-up
 - Father is responsible to see to it that what he commands is accomplished, especially when it comes to younger children
 - Homework – father should check that it is done, and do so regularly
 - Chores at home
 - Rules, especially prohibitions
 - E.g., no phones/screens in room
 - Punish failure to obey
 - Be gentle, but firm.
 - Make clear it is for good of
 - Recognize when your decisions are good or bad
 - Not all decisions are good - it goes with the territory. If the decision is bad - make course corrections. However, if the decision was a really important/strategic one, and it's causing strife in the family - have the determination to see it through
- Addendum
 - For large decisions that require time and many subordinate tasks, it is best to write them down, as well as to spell out in some detail what things are necessary to advance towards the goal proposed.

Delegation

- Does not mean abandoning one's authority.

- Rather, communicating to a subordinate a share in one's authority, meaning that you invest their decision with your authority.
 - But that does mean that you remain responsible for the decision (thus, if it goes wrong, you own it and not them). You can never simply say “whatever you want, honey”
- Advantages
- To whom:
 - Wife
 - Children
- Kinds
 - Informal: Assuming subordinates (wives & even children) ideas and proposals and making them one's own
 - Formal: Clear designation of spheres of responsibility

Conclusion

- Crisis in fatherhood revolves intimately around crisis in willingness/confidence of fathers to assume responsibility, which is manifested most concretely in willingness to make clear and strong decisions.

Challenges

- Do audit of your leadership/decision making. Some questions:
 - Do you understand clearly what your priorities are? Do you spend time reflecting how best to pursue them?
 - Do you take initiative or merely react?
 - Ask your wife if you give clear and certain direction to the family
 - Are you aware of what you delegate to others? Do you exercise oversight?
- Make time to speak alone with each of your children, preferably each week
 - Learn their interests, challenges, aspirations, friends
 - Communicate your own interest and personal investment in them
- Join the Reconquista, if eligible. If not, get together with friends and do something similar.
- Read *Extreme Ownership* by Jocko Willinck