

# The Beginnings of a Rubric for Decision Making

Five basic principles for moving forward:

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## 1. Obedience.

We want to be obedient, first to God, then to human authorities. When they conflict, we obey God rather than man (Act 5:29). Sometimes this means getting creative about how to keep God's commands in a given circumstance. Sometimes it means figuring out what is ideal, and then, what is less than ideal, but still obedient. Sometimes it means figuring out when and where to disobey men in order to obey God. It is rarely completely straightforward, not because God's commands are not clear, but because our circumstances are rarely simple, textbook cases.

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## 2. Love.

We want to love those in our midst (and inasmuch as our actions impact them, those not in our midst as well!). This especially means loving the most vulnerable in our midst, the proverbial "widow and orphan" (Jas 1:27). And it means loving both the proverbial "weak" and "strong" (see Ro 14), and both *at the same time*. Again, this is not always simple or straightforward either, because of competing concerns, relative good, and dealing with what is possible, what is probable, and what is actual.

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## 3. Wisdom.

We know that we don't know a lot. We need to seek wisdom: first, from God, in prayer; second from those who know more than us, authorities in areas where we are not authorities, in the case of Coronavirus, scientific and medical authorities. We don't want to presume that we know better than the experts either way. We do not have special knowledge that allows us to say that the medical experts are being too strict at one moment, or too loose the next. So, we have to take the advice of places like the CDC seriously, because we know what we don't know. Wisdom dictates that we defer to the wisdom of those who are experts where we have no specialized knowledge.

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## 4. Practical Matters.

There are many practical matters that follow. We cannot move forward if we cannot move forward (tautologies can be so helpful, can't they?). Do we have an actual place to meet? Can we follow the advice of medical professionals in that space? And so on. This is fairly straightforward, and yet no less of a consideration. Regardless of what the first three principles dictate, in the end, we need to be able to work that out in time and space.

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## 5. Ignorance.

This is the most important principle of leadership (and teaching) that I've learned over the past few years. I will always lead out of ignorance. There's always another book, another article, another study, another podcast I could have listed to. No matter how much I read, there's always more to read. This is not an excuse, but it is a reality. Everyone always leads out of ignorance ...except, of course, God, who is omniscient. What that means is, as leaders, we need to do our homework, and then make a decision with the knowledge we have at the moment. Our decisions are, of course, not infallible, and open to readjustment. Especially in our present circumstances, we are fully open to the possibility that we will move in one direction, circumstances will change, and we will have to move in another. We need that flexibility, and we hope you will give it to us as we seek to move forward as God leads us.