Luke Stenson is driving his daily 40 minute commute to work. As his mind wanders, he starts to think about the memo that came out from his company’s headquarters three weeks ago. The company has initiated a program that permits employees who have been with the company for a minimum of 15 years to take a phased retirement option. This would permit the employee to cut back to half time. At 54, Luke qualifies for the option.

As he reflects on the notion of an early retirement, Luke realizes he has been truly blessed. Sure, life has thrown its shares of curves his way, but, as he looks back on his adult years, he has little to complain about. However, listening to the Christian band MercyMe in his car gets him to thinking. In one song the band sings, “Is this all there is to life?” and later, “Here am I, send me.” Even though Luke assumes the lyrics were intended to speak to non-believers, he wonders if the question could apply to his life.

Professionally, Luke has done well. After graduating from a local community college, he started with the company in its informational technology department when it was in its infancy. He has benefited from the growth of computer usage and integrated information systems within the company. However, his career path has also required a large commitment of time and energy. His job came first, and Luke’s priorities cost him his first marriage. He simply had not been present enough, both physically and emotionally. Luke remarried 10 years ago and now has two children, who are seven and 13. He is very happy and has pledged to avoid the mistakes of his first marriage.

At issue with the company’s phased retirement option is that Luke has already identified two drastically different career paths he could commit himself to with the increased time availability afforded to him by taking early retirement. On one hand, he has for a long time, wanted to consult with a regional venture capital fund. During his career, Luke has developed a software package that assists small business owners with running their businesses, with an emphasis on managing their information systems. There is little doubt that such a consulting position, with the benefit of his unique software, would be successful and fulfilling to Luke, both personally and financially. Furthermore, he has concentrated much of his spare time working on the software and fears he would regret not developing the consulting option. On the other hand, Luke has long felt the urge to involve himself more in his church and its ministries. In particular, one ministry that has caught Luke’s attention is a new rural retreat center the church is developing to facilitate/host various church group meetings and conferences. The church is looking for someone to manage the center. There is no compensation for the position, but the integration of managing the facility with marketing it to Christians and churches in the area...
appeals to Luke. It would also appease his concern that, while a long-time believer, he has not fully committed his talents to the Lord.

The main problem, as Luke sees it, is that either of these option, in addition to the half-time work he would continue to do his current employer would require as much of a commitment as he currently faces. He feels the need to take the decision to God in prayer but isn’t sure what to pray for. Prayer is an integral part of his personal life but has rarely extended to his professional life. Yet, he fully subscribes to the understanding that you cannot follow both God and money. Money is not the major factor in this decision. While they are not wealthy, Luke and his family live comfortably and have set aside adequate investments for the family’s future. He has discussed the options with his wife, Mary, who understands the difficult decision Luke is facing. She has told him that she doesn’t know what to say, other than that she will support him regardless of what he chooses.

As he arrives at work, Luke decides that he must act. First, should he take the phased retirement option that would free up time but would also preclude him from advancing further in the firm? Second, if he takes the option, to which of the alternative paths should he commit?

The feeling that he should invest more time with his family weighs heavily on his mind, as well. Luke decides to consult with a couple of his friends from church. Both are committed believers and seem capable of balancing work with church and family. They agree to meet for lunch in three days. His biggest problem is what to ask of his friends. Therefore, before meeting them, Luke decides to dedicate the next several days to prayer and a search of the Bible for guidance. As he enters his office, he remembers once more the song’s verses.

**ASSIGNMENT**

Using scriptural insight, provide help for Luke in the phases of his career decision.