

Decision Making

QUICK REFERENCE COUNSELING KEYS Excerpt

How to Make Wise Decisions . . .

“He loves me, he loves me not, he loves me, he loves me not.” . . . Have you ever picked a yellow daisy, plucking the petals one by one in hopes that the last one would reveal the answer for your life? . . . A very unreliable way to make decisions! Just as unreliable is making decisions based on feelings. Wise decisions are made by discerning the will of God, and God delights in revealing His will to those willing to do His will.

*“Be doers of the word, and not hearers only,
deceiving yourselves.”
(James 1:22)*

Q: “What decisions are pleasing to God?”

God blesses. . .

- **Decisions** that He initiates (Proverbs 4:11)
- **Decisions** that line up with His Word (Psalm 119:133)
- **Decisions** that accomplish His purpose (Philippians 2:13)
- **Decisions** that depend on His strength (Philippians 4:13)
- **Decisions** that result in giving Him glory (1 Corinthians 10:31)

*“Whether you eat or drink, or whatever
you do, do all to the glory of God.”
(1 Corinthians 10:31)*

Q: “How does God reveal His will?”

God reveals His will primarily through . . .

- **The Spirit of God** (John 16:13)
- **The Word of God** (Psalm 119:105)

*“Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path.”
(Psalm 119:105)*

Eight Tests for Decision Making

1. **Scriptural Test**—“Has God already spoken about it in His Word?” (2 Timothy 3:16)
2. **Secrecy Test**—“Would it bother me if everyone knew this was my choice?” (Proverbs 11:3)
3. **Survey Test**—“What if everyone followed my example?” (1 Timothy 4:12)
4. **Spiritual Test**—“Am I being people-pressured or Spirit-led?” (Galatians 1:10)
5. **Stumbling Test**—“Could this cause another person to stumble?” (Romans 14:21)
6. **Serenity Test**—“Have I prayed and received peace about this decision?” (Philippians 4:6–7)
7. **Sanctification Test**—“Will this keep me from growing in the character of Christ?” (2 Corinthians 3:18)
8. **Supreme Test**—“Does this glorify God?” (1 Corinthians 10:31)

“Walk as children of light. . . . and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.”
(Ephesians 5:8, 10)

Reasons for Clouds of Confusion in Discerning God’s Will

- **Not** having pure motives (James 4:3)
- **Not** surrendering my will (Matthew 26:39)
- **Not** seeking God’s will through His Word (Psalm 119:105)
- **Not** repenting of known sin in my life (Psalm 66:18)
- **Not** praying continually and earnestly (James 1:5)
- **Not** patiently waiting for God’s timing (Hebrews 6:15)
- **Not** willing to suffer for the glory of Christ (1 Peter 4:1–2)

Key Verses to Memorize

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”
(Romans 12:1–2)

Key Passage to Read and Reread

1 Thessalonians 4:1–12

Discover God’s Guidance

Gifts—Discover and use the spiritual gifts, talents, and abilities God has given you to serve others. (1 Peter 4:10)

Understanding—Take time to clearly discern what the decision is about and what is involved. (Proverbs 15:21)

Impressions—The Spirit of God often brings conviction through strong impressions of His thoughts or principles. (Psalm 16:7)

Desires—When you seek to please the Lord, His desires will become the desires of your heart. (Psalm 37:4)

Advice—God often speaks to us through others. (Proverbs 19:20)

Necessity—Evaluate your God-given responsibilities and choose your actions appropriately. (James 4:17)

Circumstances—Not all doors are opened by God, but closed doors can help determine your way at least for the present. (Proverbs 16:9)

Elimination—Even though all the choices may be permissible, some may not be the best. (1 Corinthians 10:23)

Determine the Don'ts of Decision Making

*“Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
and do not lean on your own understanding.
In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths.”
(Proverbs 3:5–6)*

Don't wait until all else fails before seeking God's will.
(1 Kings 22:5)

Don't seek the plan but rather the Person who reveals
the plan. (Proverbs 3:5–6)

Don't make decisions based on feelings. (Proverbs 4:23)

Don't assume that God's will is too difficult for you to
do. (1 John 5:3)

Don't have divided loyalty and allow money to dictate
your decision. (Matthew 6:24)

Don't test God by seeking visible signs.
(Deuteronomy 6:16)

Don't think trials and adversity indicate that you are
out of God's will. (1 Peter 4:19)

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