



## What Is Decision Making?

Decision making is a process that includes making a choice or judgment about an attitude or action. **Decisions** are an act of the will, and they are always influenced by either the mind or the emotions.

- **Your decisions** receive God's blessing when you are willing to obey God. (Isaiah 1:19)
- **Your decisions** should be based on God's revealed will. (Acts 21:25)
- **Your decisions** reveal the desires of your heart. (Psalm 119:30)
- **Your decisions** are ultimately determined by what you desire the most. (Joshua 24:15)

## What Decisions Are Pleasing to God?

God blesses ...

- **Decisions** that He initiates (Proverbs 4:11)
- **Decisions** that line up with His Word (Psalm 119:33)
- **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)
- **Decisions** that promote justice, kindness, and humility (Micah 6:8)
- **Decisions** that reflect His character (1 Timothy 4:12)
- **Decisions** that come from faith (Hebrews 11:6)
- **Decisions** that consider the interests of others (Philippians 2:4)
- **Decisions** that are bathed in prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

## 6 Methods of Decision Making

1. **Dramatic Method:** Some people misuse Scripture by flipping open the Bible and pointing to some random Scripture for guidance without considering the context. Others expect God to come through with a spectacular, supernatural sign that will give proof of His will in a given situation. (John 14:26)

2. **Defaulting Method:** We can be so pressured by the opinions of others that it becomes easier just to let others make decisions for us ... even when we think they are wrong. (Isaiah 7:15)
3. **Delaying Method:** Many people choose to procrastinate when a decision is due, hoping that "it will all come out well in the end." They allow circumstances to determine the outcome. However, not to decide is actually a decision. (Hebrews 3:10)
4. **Deductive Method:** The Christian life is to be a life of balance between human deduction and spiritual insight. If we become solely analytical in thinking through a situation and choose to rely completely on logic, we will miss God's way. (Isaiah 55:8)
5. **Desirous Method:** Too many people allow feelings to determine their behavior. God gave us emotions, but He never intended emotions to be our "decision makers." Many of us don't even realize that we often have an "if it feels good, it must be good" mentality. (Proverbs 28:26)
6. **Discerning Method** (the best method): Spiritual discernment is wisdom to determine what is true, appropriate, and superior in the eyes of God, regardless of how things may seem. (1 Corinthians 2:14)

*"There is a way that appears to be right,  
but in the end it leads to death."  
(Proverbs 14:12)*

## 8 Tests of 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. **Spirit 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)

## What Causes Clouds of Confusion?

- Not having pure motives (James 4:3)
- Not surrendering your 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 expecting God to answer (James 1:6–7)
- Not patiently waiting for God’s timing (Hebrews 6:15)
- Not willing to suffer for the glory of Christ (1 Peter 4:1–2)

*“He guides the humble in what is right  
and teaches them his way.”*

(Psalm 25:9)

## The Don’ts of Decision Making

- **Don’t** wait until all else fails before seeking God’s will. (1 Kings 22:5)
- **Don’t** pray for permission regarding something God has forbidden. (Psalm 119:106)
- **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)

## Anxiety over Decisions

- **Wrong Belief:** “I can’t trust God with all of my decisions in life. I need to rely on my own abilities to influence an outcome that I desire.”

**Right Belief:** “God will come through for me when I step out in faith and trust Him to guide me in all decisions.”

*“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil” (Proverbs 3:5–7).*

## Key Verses to Memorize

*“I urge you, brothers and sisters,  
in view of God’s mercy,  
to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice,  
holy and pleasing to God—  
this is your true and proper worship.  
Do not conform to the pattern of this world,  
but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.  
Then you will be able to test  
and approve what God’s will is—  
his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*  
(Romans 12:1–2)

## Key Passage to Read

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 or establishes truth in your heart through strong impressions of His thoughts or principles regarding a matter. (Psalm 16:7)

**Desires**—When you seek to please the Lord in all areas of your life, His desires will become the desires of your heart. As this occurs, His will in each situation becomes increasingly easier to recognize. (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)

*“Let the wise listen and add to their learning,  
and let the discerning get guidance.”*  
(Proverbs 1:5)

## God's Promises for Guidance

- Psalm 32:8—*"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you."*
- Isaiah 42:16—*"I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. ... I will not forsake them."*
- Psalm 37:23—*"The LORD makes firm the steps of the one who delights in him."*
- Proverbs 16:9—*"In their hearts humans plan their course, but the LORD establishes their steps."*
- Proverbs 3:5–6—*"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."*
- Isaiah 58:11—*"The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail."*
- Psalm 37:5–6—*"Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn, your vindication like the noonday sun."*
- Psalm 139:9–10—*"If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast."*
- Psalm 73:24—*"You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory."*
- Psalm 48:14—*"He will be our guide even to the end."*
- John 16:13—*"He, the Spirit of truth ... will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come."*
- John 8:12—*"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

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