

Divine Guidance

Biblical Principles for Making Big Decisions

- 1. Begin by remembering that you serve a wise, powerful, and loving God who promises to guide, protect, and care for his people. This fact should give you great comfort and courage in the midst of challenging decisions.**

Key scriptures: Psalm 23; Psalm 121; Isaiah 58:11; Matthew 28:20; 2 Timothy 4:18; Jude 24-25

- 2. Regularly spend time meditating on the gospel and worshipping Jesus so your mind and heart are healthy before God. A Jesus-focused, Spirit-filled person generally makes good decisions!**

Key scriptures: Romans 12:1-2; Colossians 2:6-10

- 3. Pray for God to give you wisdom and a heart that is completely yielded to his will.**

Key scriptures: James 1:5; James 4:7

- 4. Resolve to obey God's commandments and act in accordance with your core moral and spiritual convictions.**

Key scriptures: Proverbs 2:6-8; Proverbs 11:3; John 14:15

- 5. Make sure your priorities are aligned with the priorities of God. Then let these priorities shape the questions you consider about your decision.**

Key scriptures: Matthew 6:33; Luke 16:15; John 7:24

a. Jesus and his kingdom come first.

Consider questions like: Which choice will bring most glory to God? Which has the most potential to advance God's kingdom and help people to know the love of Jesus? Which will aid me in my pursuit of intimate fellowship with Jesus? Which has the most opportunity to bring blessing to vulnerable people such as widows, the fatherless, immigrants, the poor, and the disabled?

b. Family, church, core relationships, and ministry opportunities are important factors in major decisions.

Consider questions like: How will this decision affect the people around me? How will it impact my relationships with close friends and family members? What impact will it have on my local church? How will it increase or diminish my long-term effectiveness in exercising my spiritual gifts for the benefit of others?

c. It is important to think about the unique ways God has designed you as an individual.

Consider questions like: How does this decision work with (or against) my personality, natural strengths, and spiritual gifts? Would this decision help me to move deeper into my life purpose? Or would it distract me from my life purpose?

d. Your spiritual, physical, and emotional health are also important to keep in mind.

Consider questions like: How will this decision encourage or discourage my pursuit of personal holiness and spiritual maturity? How will it help or hinder my physical health over the long term? How will it impact me psychologically?

e. Though we must be ready to lay aside our comfort and preferences to obey God and serve others, it is also true that our deepest yearnings come from God. So you should certainly take into account your feelings and preferences. Ask God to help you discern which feelings are most healthy or unhealthy.

Consider questions like: What feels exciting about each of these options? What would I enjoy about each of these options? What feels scary or uncomfortable about each of these options?

- f. *Your career success and financial prosperity should not be the major drivers of all your life decisions, but they can be taken into account as an exercise of Christian stewardship for the glory of God.*

Consider questions like: How will this decision affect my ability to do good work with excellence on a daily basis? What opportunities will this give me to exercise my gifts in a way that has a positive impact in the world? How will this decision affect my ability to provide for my own material needs (and those of my family, if I have one)? How will this decision affect my ability to give generously to support my local church, fund global missions, and provide help for the poor?

- 6. Don't rush into the decision. Take time to gather the information that will help you discern the best course of action. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you see what information is most relevant and important.**

Key scriptures: Proverbs 14:15; Proverbs 19:2

- 7. Spend some time searching the scriptures for any guidance that applies specifically to your situation. For example, if you are considering marriage, study what the Bible teaches about the qualities of godly wives and husbands. If you are considering a career path, study what the Bible teaches about doing good work for the glory of God. You might want to ask a pastor or mentor to point you to some relevant scriptures. Pray for God's Spirit to help you understand his word and apply it wisely to your situation.**

Key scriptures: Psalm 119:105; Proverbs 6:23; 2 Timothy 3:16-17

- 8. Ask several wise people for advice about your situation. Especially listen to people who know you well and who care enough about God's purposes for your life that they will tell you the truth even if it's not what you want to hear. For some decisions, also seek input from those who have extensive experience or specialized knowledge related to the issue you are facing.**

Key scriptures: Proverbs 11:14; Proverbs 15:22; Proverbs 15:32; Colossians 3:16

- 9. After you have carefully ordered your priorities, asked good questions, gathered relevant information, and listened to advice, spend some more time praying for God to help you. You may sense the Holy Spirit prompting you to make a particular decision, or you may not. Either way, you can trust that God is keeping his promise to help you. Sometimes this involves a strong, subjective sense of divine guidance. But often God simply works through the ordinary processes described above to help you evaluate what is most important so that you can make a wise decision with confidence. Remember that the Holy Spirit will never lead you in a way that contradicts what He has written in the scriptures.**

Key scriptures: Proverbs 30:5-6; Acts 15:28; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; James 3:13-18; 1 John 4:1

- 10. Once you have done your best to make a decision that aligns with the priorities and principles of God's word, commit your choice to the Lord for his glory. Ask Him to bless and protect you. Then move forward with confidence. You don't know what the future will hold, and you will never know what might have been if you had chosen differently. But you can know with absolute confidence that God will be with you every step of the way. He will make your path straight and lead you to glory!**

Key scriptures: Psalm 37:5; Proverbs 3:5-6; Proverbs 16:1-3; Proverbs 27:1; Isaiah 41:10; 2 Timothy 4:18; Hebrews 13:5; James 4:13-15