

WHAT IS GOD'S HEART ON
**DECISION
MAKING?**



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DECISION MAKING

Discerning the Will of God

What Is God's Heart on Decision Making?

We make decisions every day. Many are of little significance, but some will change our lives forever. Do you make decisions by “doing what comes naturally,” or do you struggle with delay because of a paralysis of analysis? We too often make bad or unhealthy choices because we do not take the time to discover God's perfect will for our lives.

Be assured, God doesn't play “hide and seek” as you try to discover His will. He reveals His will in His Word. The more intimately you draw close to the heart of God and His Word, the more clearly you will know the will of God.

Consider what an indescribably awesome privilege it is that the God of the universe cares about the decisions concerning your life—your health, your job, your marriage, your children—all of it. None of us knows what the future holds, and at times we truly don't know which way to turn. But when we seek the Lord, He never fails to direct us—for our good and for His glory.

God wants to help us with our decisions. We can come to Him at any time to ask for guidance, and He will graciously help us in our time of need.

*“Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence,
so that we may receive mercy and find grace
to help us in our time of need.”*

(HEBREWS 4:16)

God is the ultimate source for true wisdom and guidance.

“For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding” (PROVERBS 2:6).

God is faithful to lovingly guide you.

“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you” (PSALM 32:8).

God wants you to seek His will.

“I desire to do your will, my God; your law is within my heart” (PSALM 40:8).

God wants you to look to His Word for guidance.

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

God can use wise counselors to help you make decisions.

“Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed” (PROVERBS 15:22).

*“God wants to
help us with
our decisions.”*

God wants you to desire His will above your own.

“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done” (LUKE 22:42).

God wants your decisions to please Him above pleasing people.

“We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts” (1 THESSALONIANS 2:4).

God wants you to wait patiently for Him.

“I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope” (PSALM 130:5).

7 Don'ts of Decision Making

“Doing what comes naturally” or “what feels right” is not a good barometer for determining God’s will for your life. What comes naturally to us can be our sinful nature or the “flesh,” which operates apart from the Spirit of God. The following “7 Don'ts of Decision Making” can help you determine whether your decision reflects God’s will or your own natural desires.

*“For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit,
and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh.
They are in conflict with each other,
so that you are not to do whatever you want.”*
(GALATIANS 5:17)

1. Don't wait until all else fails before seeking God’s will.

“First seek the counsel of the LORD” (1 KINGS 22:5).

2. Don't just seek the plan but rather seek the Lord who reveals the plan.

“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” (PROVERBS 3:5–6).

3. Don't ask for permission regarding something God has forbidden.

“I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws” (PSALM 119:106).

4. Don't make decisions based on feelings.

“Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it” (PROVERBS 4:23).

5. Don't assume that God’s will is too difficult for you to do.

“This is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome” (1 JOHN 5:3).

6. Don't test God by seeking visible signs.

“Jesus answered ... ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” (MATTHEW 4:7).

7. Don't think trials and adversity indicate you are out of God’s will.

“Those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good” (1 PETER 4:19).

8 Tests of Decision Making

From God's perspective, decisions are not to be determined by random selection, supernatural events, people's opinions, delay tactics, or our feelings. God wants you to measure your decisions by His Word. Rather than testing God, test your decisions against the following eight Scriptures. This will help you to make choices that are pleasing to the Lord.

"We make it our goal to please him"
(2 CORINTHIANS 5:9)

1. Scriptural Test: "Has God already spoken about it in His Word?"

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness"
(2 TIMOTHY 3:16).

2. Secrecy Test: "Would it bother me if everyone knew this was my choice?"

"The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity" (PROVERBS 11:3).

3. Survey Test: "What if everyone followed my example?"

"Set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity" (1 TIMOTHY 4:12).

4. Spirit Test: "Am I being people-pressured or Spirit-led?"

"Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ" (GALATIANS 1:10).

5. Stumbling Test: "Could this cause another person to stumble?"

"It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall"
(ROMANS 14:21).

6. Serenity Test: "Have I prayed and received peace about this decision?"

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7).

7. Sanctification Test: "Will this keep me from growing in the character of Christ?"

"We all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (2 CORINTHIANS 3:18).

8. Supreme Test: "Does this glorify God?"

"Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 CORINTHIANS 10:31).

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4 POINTS OF GOD'S PLAN

Whether you're trying to make sense of your past, trying to overcome something in the present, or trying to make changes for a better future, the Lord cares about you. He loves you. No matter what challenges you or your loved ones are facing, no matter the pain or difficult feelings you may be experiencing, no matter what you've done or what's been done to you, *there is hope*. And that hope is found in Jesus Christ.

God has a plan for your life, and it begins with a personal relationship with Jesus. The most important decision you can ever make is whether you will accept His invitation. If you have never made that decision, these four simple truths can help you start your journey together with Him.

*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD,
‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you,
plans to give you hope and a future.’”*
(JEREMIAH 29:11)

God's Purpose for You: *Salvation*

What was God's motivation in sending Jesus Christ to earth? To express His love for you by saving you! The Bible says, *“God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him”* (John 3:16–17).

What was Jesus' purpose in coming to earth? To forgive your sins, to empower you to have victory over sin, and to enable you to live a fulfilled life! Jesus said, *“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full”* (John 10:10).

The Problem: *Sin*

What exactly is sin? Sin is living independently of God's standard—knowing what is wrong and doing it anyway—also knowing what is right and choosing not to do it. The apostle Paul said, *“I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway”* (Romans 7:18–19 NLT).

What is the major consequence of sin? Spiritual death, eternal separation from God. The Bible says, *“Your iniquities [sins] have separated you from your God”* (Isaiah 59:2). Scripture also says, *“The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Romans 6:23).

God's Provision for You: *The Savior*

Can anything remove the penalty for sin? Yes! Jesus died on the cross to personally pay the penalty for your sins. The Bible says, *“God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8).

What is the solution to being separated from God? Belief in (entrusting your life to) Jesus Christ as the only way to God the Father. Jesus said, *“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me”* (John 14:6). The Bible says, *“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved . . .”* (Acts 16:31).

Your Part: *Surrender*

Give Christ control of your life, entrusting yourself to Him. Jesus said, *“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?”* (Matthew 16:24–26).

Place your faith in (rely on) Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior and reject your “good works” as a means of earning God’s approval. The Bible says, *“It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast”* (Ephesians 2:8–9).

Has there been a time in your life when you know you’ve humbled your heart and received Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior—giving Him control of your life? You can tell God that you want to surrender your life to Christ in a simple, heartfelt prayer like this:

*“God, I want a real relationship with you.
I admit that many times I’ve chosen to go my own way instead of your way.
Please forgive me for my sins.
Jesus, thank you for dying on the cross to pay the penalty for my sins.
Come into my life to be my Lord and my Savior.
Change me from the inside out and make me
the person you created me to be.
In your holy name I pray. Amen.”*

What Can You Now Expect?

When you surrender your life to Christ, you receive the Holy Spirit who empowers you to live a life pleasing to God. The Bible says, *“His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life . . .”* (2 Peter 1:3). Jesus assures those who believe with these words:

*“Truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me
has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.”*
(JOHN 5:24)

The information in this resource is intended as guidelines for healthy living. Please consult qualified medical, legal, pastoral, and psychological professionals regarding individual concerns.

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QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

God gives us His Word not just for information but for transformation. The Lord wants you to “*be transformed by the renewing of your mind*” (Romans 12:2). This isn’t something you do alone, but something God does in you by His Spirit.

The following questions are designed to help you reflect on the biblical truths in this resource. Take a moment to pray and ask God to settle your mind and quiet your spirit as you reflect on His truth.

“Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.”
(2 TIMOTHY 2:7)

What are two key truths, Bible verses, or “takeaways” from this resource that you found helpful—or that you simply needed to be reminded of?

In relation to this topic, what behavior(s) do you need to *begin, change, or stop* in order to help you grow into the person God created you to be?

In relation to this topic, what is the biggest obstacle you need to overcome in order to move forward?

What might your life look like a few years from now if you do *not* make changes regarding this issue? How might your life be different if you *do* make changes?

Is there anyone in your life who needs help with this topic/issue? How can you pray for them, and what is one thing you can do to encourage them?

What can you give thanks to God for today?

*“Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself
and God our Father, who loved us
and by his grace gave us eternal comfort
and a wonderful hope,
comfort you and strengthen you
in every good thing you do and say.”
(2 THESSALONIANS 2:16–17 NLT)*

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