



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

BIBLE FOUNDATIONS

Biblical Decision-Making

Following God Faithfully When the Choice Is Not Clear

The Short Answer

Biblical decision-making begins with what God has already revealed. When Scripture commands, obey. When Scripture gives principles, apply wisdom. When Scripture gives freedom, choose faithfully. When the outcome remains unknown, trust God.

Proverbs 3:5-7 · Psalm 119:105 · Romans 12:1-2 · James 1:5 · Ephesians 5:15-17 · James 4:13-17

Opening Memory Anchor

God does not require His people to know everything before they can faithfully obey what they do know.



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WELCOME

This guide is meant to send you back to Scripture

This Companion is designed for guided self-study or small-group use. Part One introduces a simple biblical framework for decisions: command, wisdom, freedom, and trust. Part Two moves into harder interpretive questions involving guidance, impressions, dreams, signs, conscience, authority, corporate discernment, and providence.

Foundational truth

Biblical decision-making begins with Scripture. God gives wisdom and freedom without requiring perfect certainty about everything He has not revealed.

How to use this study

- Open and read the cited passages rather than relying only on the summaries.
- Distinguish what Scripture explicitly teaches from theological inference and modern application.
- Use the Memory Anchors to retain the central ideas.
- Where Christians disagree, note the disagreement without pretending Scripture says more than it does.



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

PART ONE

BEGINNER GUIDE

Scripture, wisdom, freedom, and trust

Memory Anchor

God does not require His people to know everything before they can faithfully obey what they do know.

Part One focuses on the core framework in accessible language: begin with Scripture, seek wisdom, receive counsel, walk in freedom where God gives it, and trust Him with the outcome.



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1. DOES GOD CARE ABOUT THE DECISIONS PEOPLE MAKE?

Yes. Read **Ephesians 5:15–17**. Paul tells believers to live carefully—not foolishly, but wisely. Decisions can affect:

- faith,
- relationships,
- family,
- finances,
- work,
- health,
- church,
- ministry,
- and other people.

Some decisions involve direct obedience or disobedience. Others involve wisdom. Still others involve several acceptable choices. God cares about all of life. But that does not mean He has revealed one specific answer for every decision.

2. WHERE SHOULD CHRISTIANS BEGIN?

Begin with what God has already said. Read **Psalms 119:105**. Before asking: “**What do I feel God wants me to do?**” ask: “**Has God already spoken about this?**” If Scripture clearly commands something, another sign is not necessary before obeying. If Scripture clearly forbids something, an open door does not make it right. A profitable opportunity does not make dishonesty acceptable. Strong feelings do not make sin righteous. Advice from a respected person cannot overrule Scripture.

MEMORY ANCHOR

Never search for special permission to disobey something God has already made clear.

3. WHAT KIND OF DECISION IS THIS?

It helps to place decisions into three broad categories.

COMMAND

Scripture gives clear moral direction. Examples include:

- tell the truth,
- love others,
- forgive,
- flee sexual immorality,
- avoid greed,
- care for legitimate responsibilities,
- and pursue holiness.

Here, the central question is obedience.

WISDOM

Scripture may not directly choose between the options, but biblical principles help evaluate them. Examples may include:

- choosing a job,
- moving,
- spending money,
- taking on debt,
- setting boundaries,
- or choosing among opportunities.

FREEDOM

Sometimes several choices may all be morally acceptable. Scripture does not necessarily identify one as the single spiritually correct option. In those cases, Christians may prayerfully use wisdom and choose faithfully.

MEMORY ANCHOR

Some decisions require obedience. Some require wisdom. Some allow freedom.



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4. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO KNOW GOD'S WILL?

Christians often use the phrase **"God's will"** in several ways.

WHAT GOD HAS REVEALED

Scripture clearly reveals many things God desires. Read:

- 1 Thessalonians 4:3
- 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18
- 1 Peter 2:15

God's will includes holiness, gratitude, prayer, and doing good. These things are not hidden.

WHAT GOD SOVEREIGNLY DOES

Scripture also teaches that God sovereignly works through history and circumstances. Read **Ephesians 1:11**. Much of what God is sovereignly doing is not known beforehand.

DECISIONS PEOPLE MUST MAKE

Questions such as: **Which job? Which house? Which city? Which school?** may not have a direct biblical command. In these areas, Christians seek wisdom while trusting God's sovereignty.

5. DOES GOD HAVE ONE SECRET PERFECT CHOICE I MUST DISCOVER?

Scripture does not present the Christian life as a constant search for one hidden choice that must be discovered before someone can move forward. That idea can create unnecessary fear. A person may think: **"What if I take the wrong job and ruin God's plan?" "What if I move to the wrong place?" "What if I misunderstand a sign?"** Read **Romans 12:1–2**. Paul connects discernment with a renewed mind and transformed life. The Bible places more emphasis on becoming wise and faithful than on decoding a hidden blueprint. When several options are biblically permissible, Christians may prayerfully evaluate them and choose.

MEMORY ANCHOR

God's will is not a hidden maze in which one wrong turn places a faithful believer beyond His reach.

6. SHOULD CHRISTIANS PRAY ABOUT DECISIONS?

Absolutely. Read **James 1:5**. God invites those who lack wisdom to ask Him. Read **Philippians 4:6–7**. Prayer brings concerns before God. Prayer may include: **"Give me wisdom."** **"Correct my motives."** **"Help me see what I am missing."** **"Give me courage to obey."** **"Help me accept an answer I do not prefer."** **"Teach me to trust You with the outcome."** Prayer is not merely a request for information. It is dependence upon God.

7. HOW DOES SCRIPTURE HELP WHEN IT DOES NOT DIRECTLY ANSWER THE QUESTION?

Scripture does more than provide commands. It forms wisdom. Read **2 Timothy 3:16–17**. Suppose someone asks: **"Should I take this job?"** The Bible probably does not name the company. But Scripture may help ask:

- Is the work honest?
- Will it require wrongdoing?
- Can existing responsibilities still be honored?
- What motives are driving the decision?
- Is money becoming the only consideration?
- What effect might this have on family, faith, and health?

The Bible may not choose the job. It can shape the person choosing.

8. WHAT IS BIBLICAL WISDOM?

Read **Proverbs 2:1–11**. Wisdom is skill in living faithfully within God's world. Wisdom asks more than: **"Can I do this?"** It also asks: **"Should I?"** Read **1 Corinthians 10:23**. Not everything permissible is beneficial. Wisdom considers:

- consequences,
- responsibilities,
- timing,
- motives,
- risks,
- relationships,



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- and the good of others.

MEMORY ANCHOR

Biblical freedom asks, “May I?” Biblical wisdom also asks, “Should I?”

9. SHOULD CHRISTIANS SEEK ADVICE?

Yes. Read:

- Proverbs 11:14
- Proverbs 12:15
- Proverbs 15:22

Wise counsel can reveal blind spots. Someone else may notice:

- fear,
- pride,
- unrealistic expectations,
- risk,
- or consequences that have been overlooked.

But advice does not replace personal responsibility. A mature adviser helps someone think. That person should not become a substitute for Scripture, prayer, wisdom, conscience, or responsible choice.

10. WHO MAKES A GOOD COUNSELOR?

Look for someone who demonstrates:

- biblical maturity,
- honesty,
- humility,
- wisdom,
- relevant knowledge,
- willingness to ask difficult questions,
- and freedom from obvious personal agendas.

Different decisions may require different kinds of counsel. A pastor may help with spiritual questions. A physician may help explain medical choices. A financial professional may clarify financial consequences. A legal professional may clarify legal obligations. Seeking expertise is not a lack of faith.

11. AM I SEEKING WISDOM OR JUST PERMISSION?

Read **1 Kings 12:1–19**. Rehoboam received counsel from experienced elders and younger companions. He chose the advice he preferred. Sometimes people ask many people for advice until someone finally agrees with what they already wanted. Wise counsel requires a teachable heart. Ask: **“If wise counsel contradicts what I want, am I willing to listen?”**

12. WHY DO MOTIVES MATTER?

Read **Proverbs 16:2** and **James 4:1–3**. Desires influence decisions. Useful questions include: **Am I motivated by faith or fear? Wisdom or impatience? Love or resentment? Contentment or comparison? Service or recognition? Responsibility or escape?** Mixed motives are common. The goal is not endless self-analysis. It is honest openness before God.

13. SHOULD CHRISTIANS TRUST THEIR FEELINGS?

Feelings matter. But they are not infallible. Read **Proverbs 14:12**. Something can seem right while leading in the wrong direction. Feelings may reveal:

- fear,
- desire,
- grief,
- excitement,
- caution,
- exhaustion,
- or concern.



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They are worth noticing. But they should be interpreted rather than automatically obeyed. A helpful question is: **“What is this feeling telling me—and is what it is telling me true?”**

14. WHAT ABOUT “FOLLOW YOUR HEART”?

Christian discipleship does not say: **“Whatever I deeply desire must be right.”** Jesus calls people to follow **Him**. Read **Luke 9:23**. Sometimes faithfulness agrees with what someone wants. Sometimes it requires surrendering what someone wants. A better prayer is: **“Lord, shape my desires so that I increasingly want what honors You.”**

15. CAN GOD USE CIRCUMSTANCES?

Yes. God is sovereign over circumstances. But circumstances must be interpreted. An opportunity appearing does not automatically mean: **“God wants me to take it.”** A difficulty appearing does not automatically mean: **“God wants me to stop.”** Read **1 Corinthians 16:8–9**. Paul describes both a wide-open opportunity and significant opposition. Circumstances matter. They simply do not interpret themselves.

MEMORY ANCHOR

Opportunity is information. Opposition is information. Neither automatically decides the question.

16. WHAT ROLE CAN PEACE PLAY?

Peace can be a meaningful part of prayerful discernment. Read **Philippians 4:6–7**. As believers pray, think carefully, and entrust outcomes to God, they may experience growing settledness. That should not be dismissed. At the same time, feeling peaceful is not by itself an infallible confirmation that a particular decision is God's will. People can feel calm about an unwise choice. They can also feel anxious while doing something faithful. Read **Colossians 3:12–15**. Paul's immediate emphasis includes peace within the body of Christ. This does not make personal peace unimportant. It simply means the verse should not be turned into a formula: **“If I feel peaceful, God has confirmed my choice.”** Receive peace gratefully. Consider settled conviction seriously. And continue testing the decision through Scripture, wisdom, prayer, counsel, motives, and responsibility.

MEMORY ANCHOR

Peace can accompany wise discernment without becoming the only test of God's guidance.

17. WHAT IF I DON'T FEEL PEACE?

Lack of peace may be worth exploring. Perhaps there is:

- an overlooked danger,
- a moral concern,
- wise caution,
- relational tension,
- or a responsibility being ignored.

But anxiety can also arise from:

- fear of change,
- uncertainty,
- past hurt,
- pressure,
- exhaustion,
- or lack of control.

Anxiety does not automatically mean: **“God is saying no.”** And calmness does not automatically mean: **“God is saying yes.”** Explore the concern rather than treating the feeling as a verdict.

18. WHAT IF I BELIEVE GOD IS LEADING ME?

Christians differ in how they understand personal promptings or impressions from the Holy Spirit. That disagreement should be handled respectfully. But Scripture gives a clear boundary: **No personal impression carries the authority of Scripture.** Read **1 Thessalonians 5:19–22**. Believers are told to test. A humble statement such as: **“I believe God may be leading me this way”** leaves room for prayer and discernment. Greater caution is appropriate with: **“God told me, so there is nothing to discuss.”** The stronger the claim of divine authority, the greater the responsibility to test it carefully.



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19. CAN “GOD TOLD ME” BECOME MANIPULATIVE?

Yes. Statements such as: “**God told me you should marry me.**” “**God told me you need to give me money.**” “**God told me you must stay in this relationship.**” “**God told me you must join this ministry.**” can place enormous spiritual pressure upon another person's conscience. No one should use a private impression to claim God's authority over another person's decision. Healthy guidance points people toward:

- Scripture,
- truth,
- wisdom,
- prayer,
- responsible counsel,
- and Christ.

20. WHAT IF I HAVE TO DECIDE WITHOUT COMPLETE CERTAINTY?

That is normal. Read **James 4:13–17**. James describes people making plans about where they will go and what they will do. His correction is not: “**Never plan until God reveals the future.**” His correction is humility. People do not know tomorrow. Christians make real plans while recognizing: “**If the Lord wills.**” Biblical planning combines: **real responsibility with real humility.**

MEMORY ANCHOR

Faith does not require knowing the future. Faith trusts the God who does.

21. WHEN IS WAITING WISE?

Waiting may be wise when:

- important information is missing,
- emotions are unusually intense,
- motives are unclear,
- counsel is needed,
- another person's legitimate interests must be considered,
- or there is no reason to rush.

Read **Proverbs 19:2** and **Proverbs 21:5**. Haste can create unnecessary harm. Waiting can create room for wisdom.

22. CAN WAITING BECOME AVOIDANCE?

Yes. Sometimes: “**I'm waiting on God**” really means: “**I'm afraid to choose without certainty.**” If Scripture permits the options, adequate information is available, counsel has been considered, and there is no good reason to delay, endless waiting may no longer be wisdom. Sometimes faithful decision-making means: **pray, think, seek wisdom, choose, and trust God.**

23. WHAT IF TWO OPTIONS BOTH SEEM GOOD?

Then there may actually be two good options. If both choices are:

- biblically permissible,
- reasonably wise,
- compatible with existing responsibilities,
- and made with honorable motives,

a believer may have freedom to choose. Different choices can lead to different lives without one necessarily being sinful. Christian freedom is real.

24. CAN CHRISTIANS MAKE DIFFERENT CHOICES AND BOTH BE FAITHFUL?

Yes. Read **Romans 14:1–12**. Early Christians sometimes reached different conclusions about disputable matters. Paul emphasizes:

- honoring the Lord,
- acting from faith,
- avoiding contempt,
- and remembering that each person answers to God.

A personal conviction can be deeply meaningful without becoming a universal rule.



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MEMORY ANCHOR

A personal conviction may be important without becoming a command God gave to every Christian.

25. WHAT IF I AM AFRAID OF MAKING THE WRONG DECISION?

Fear of making a mistake can become paralyzing. Read **Proverbs 3:5–7**. Trusting God does not mean refusing to think. It means refusing to place ultimate confidence in one's own ability to control the outcome. You may misjudge something. You may later wish you had chosen differently. That does not make God less sovereign.

MEMORY ANCHOR

Your security rests in God's faithfulness, not your ability to make every decision perfectly.

26. WHAT IF I MAKE A BAD DECISION?

First determine what kind of bad decision it was.

IF IT WAS SINFUL

Repent. Confess what was wrong. Repair harm where appropriate. Receive God's forgiveness in Christ.

IF IT WAS FOOLISH

Learn. Ask what was overlooked and what wisdom should change next time.

IF IT SIMPLY TURNED OUT BADLY

Do not automatically assume the decision was sinful or foolish. A wise decision can still lead through difficulty.

IF NEW INFORMATION APPEARED LATER

Remember: You were responsible for acting faithfully with what you reasonably knew then—not for knowing what had not yet been revealed.

27. CAN MY MISTAKES RUIN GOD'S PLAN?

Human choices have real consequences. But human failure does not overthrow God's sovereignty. Read **Genesis 50:20**. Joseph's brothers intended evil. God worked through their evil actions for good without calling the evil good. Read **Romans 8:28**. Paul does not say every event is good. He says God works through all things for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. The Christian's confidence is not: **"I will never make a mistake."** It is: **"My mistakes are not more powerful than my God."**

28. WHAT IF I MUST MAKE A DECISION DURING GRIEF, TRAUMA, OR CRISIS?

Severe stress can affect:

- concentration,
- memory,
- sleep,
- emotions,
- judgment,
- and the ability to process complex information.

That does not mean a grieving or overwhelmed person is spiritually failing. When possible, avoid unnecessary major decisions during the immediate aftermath of severe crisis. When a decision cannot wait:

- simplify the question,
- gather the most important facts,
- seek trustworthy help,
- avoid unnecessary pressure,
- and focus on the next faithful step rather than solving the entire future at once.

Someone in crisis may need support more than another demand to "discern perfectly." Read **1 Kings 19:1–18**. Before God addresses Elijah's next assignment, Elijah receives rest and food. That does not create a universal decision formula. It does remind readers that human beings have real limits.

PASTORAL SAFEGUARD



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Reduced capacity during grief, shock, trauma, or exhaustion is not evidence of weak faith.

PART ONE REVIEW

29. WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT TRUTHS TO REMEMBER?

Fill in the blanks:

1. Biblical decision-making begins with what God has already revealed in _____.
2. Some decisions involve command, some require _____, and some allow freedom.
3. Christians may ask God for _____.
4. Circumstances matter, but they do not _____ themselves.
5. An open door is an opportunity, not automatically an _____.
6. Peace may be meaningful without becoming an infallible _____.
7. Christians should seek wise _____.
8. Faith does not require knowing the _____.
9. Personal convictions should not automatically become universal _____.
10. Security rests in God's faithfulness, not the ability to make every decision _____.

Answers: Scripture; wisdom; wisdom; interpret; obligation; confirmation; counsel; future; commands; perfectly.

PART ONE SUMMARY

Biblical decision-making begins with Scripture.

Where Scripture commands, obey. Where Scripture provides principles, seek wisdom. Where Scripture permits freedom, choose faithfully. Prayer, counsel, circumstances, motives, conscience, and peace may all contribute to discernment, but none should be used to contradict Scripture or claim certainty God has not given. Christians can make thoughtful plans without controlling the future because their confidence rests in God.



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PART TWO

WANT TO GO DEEPER?

INTERMEDIATE

Guidance, providence, conscience, authority, and discernment

Interpretive posture

Where Scripture speaks clearly, believe it. Where Christians draw inferences, identify them as inferences. Where Scripture leaves mystery, trust God's character and obey what He has made clear.



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30. DOES PROVERBS 3:5–6 PROMISE GOD WILL TELL ME WHICH OPTION TO CHOOSE?

Read **Proverbs 3:1–12**. The passage teaches God's guidance. But it appears within a larger call to:

- trust God,
- remember His teaching,
- pursue wisdom,
- reject evil,
- honor God,
- and receive correction.

The promise is not necessarily: “**God will provide a supernatural signal identifying which acceptable option to choose.**” The emphasis is a life directed by trust in God rather than self-sufficient understanding.

31. DOES “DO NOT LEAN ON YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING” MEAN CHRISTIANS SHOULD NOT THINK?

No. Proverbs repeatedly tells people to pursue:

- knowledge,
- discernment,
- understanding,
- planning,
- and wisdom.

The contrast is: **self-reliance versus God-reliance**, not: **thinking versus faith**. Christians should think carefully without treating their reasoning as infallible.

32. HOW DOES ROMANS 12:2 CONNECT DISCERNMENT WITH SPIRITUAL GROWTH?

Read **Romans 12:1–2**. Paul connects discernment with transformation. Believers are not to be conformed to the world. Their minds are to be renewed. This means discernment is not merely a technique. It involves becoming a different kind of person. As Scripture reshapes:

- priorities,
- desires,
- thinking,
- character,
- and worship,

believers become increasingly able to recognize what honors God. Decision-making is connected to discipleship.

33. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GOD'S REVEALED WILL AND HIS SOVEREIGN WILL?

This distinction is helpful.

GOD'S REVEALED WILL

What God has made known for people to believe and obey. Read **Deuteronomy 29:29**. Examples include:

- holiness,
- truthfulness,
- love,
- justice,
- generosity,
- forgiveness,
- and faith in Christ.

GOD'S SOVEREIGN WILL

God also governs creation and history. Read **Ephesians 1:11**. Much of what God sovereignly intends is not revealed beforehand. God asks His people to obey what He has revealed. He does not require them to know everything He has kept hidden.

MEMORY ANCHOR

God holds His people responsible for what He has revealed—not for correctly guessing what He has kept hidden.



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34. DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT GUIDE CHRISTIANS?

Yes. Read:

- Romans 8:9–14
- Galatians 5:16–25
- John 16:13–15

The Spirit:

- glorifies Christ,
- produces holiness,
- helps believers put sin to death,
- produces spiritual fruit,
- teaches,
- and transforms God's people.

Christians differ about how the Spirit may give specific personal guidance today. That disagreement should be handled charitably. What all Christians can affirm is: **The Holy Spirit will never lead someone contrary to the Word He inspired.**

35. HOW SHOULD PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS, DREAMS, OR PROPHETIC WORDS BE HANDLED?

Scripture clearly contains:

- dreams,
- visions,
- prophecy,
- and particular acts of divine guidance.

Christians differ over whether and how prophetic gifts operate today. Those differences should not be hidden. But several safeguards remain important regardless of tradition. Read **1 Thessalonians 5:19–22** and **1 John 4:1**. Spiritual claims should be tested. A dream, impression, or claimed prophetic message should never:

- contradict Scripture,
- add new doctrine,
- override biblical morality,
- excuse sin,
- control another person's conscience,
- or become unquestionable merely because someone says it came from God.

Even a sincere spiritual experience must remain subordinate to Scripture. A wise posture combines: **openness without gullibility and testing without contempt.**

36. DOES JOHN 10:27 — “MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE” — MEAN CHRISTIANS SHOULD EXPECT PRIVATE INSTRUCTIONS?

Read **John 10:1–30**. The passage centers on Jesus as the Good Shepherd. His sheep:

- belong to Him,
- recognize Him,
- follow Him,
- and receive eternal life from Him.

The passage should not automatically be reduced to: “**Every Christian should regularly receive specific internal instructions about personal decisions.**” Its central assurance is deeper: **Jesus knows His sheep, and His sheep belong to Him.**

37. WHAT ABOUT THE “STILL SMALL VOICE,” FLEECES, SIGNS, OPEN DOORS, AND CASTING LOTS?

These practices are often grouped together as ways of discovering God's will. Scripture records all of them in particular contexts. But biblical narratives should not automatically become universal decision-making formulas.

THE “STILL SMALL VOICE”

Read **1 Kings 19:9–18**. God meets Elijah in a unique prophetic moment. The passage does not command Christians to listen for an internal whisper before every decision.

GIDEON'S FLEECE

Read **Judges 6:11–40**. God had already clearly told Gideon what to do. The fleece was not primarily a method for discovering an unknown command. God graciously responded to Gideon's weakness.



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SIGNS

Scripture contains signs. It also warns against demanding them. Read **Matthew 12:38–40**. Christians should be cautious about designing arbitrary tests such as: “**If this happens by Friday, God wants me to do it.**”

OPEN DOORS

Read **1 Corinthians 16:8–9** and **2 Corinthians 2:12–13**. An open opportunity can matter. But an opportunity is not always an obligation.

CASTING LOTS

Read **Acts 1:15–26**. The apostles cast lots before Pentecost. After Acts 2, the New Testament does not establish casting lots as the ordinary Christian decision-making method.

CENTRAL PRINCIPLE

God is sovereign over circumstances. But Scripture does not teach Christians to turn circumstances into a secret code.

MEMORY ANCHOR

Biblical events may reveal God's providence without becoming formulas God commanded everyone to repeat.

38. CAN SUCCESS OR FAILURE PROVE WHETHER A DECISION WAS GOD'S WILL?

No. If success always proved God's approval, then many wicked actions would have to be considered righteous simply because they succeeded temporarily. Likewise, difficulty does not prove disobedience. Jesus obeyed perfectly and suffered. Paul obeyed and was imprisoned. The apostles faithfully preached and faced persecution. Results matter. But results alone cannot determine whether a choice was faithful.

39. HOW SHOULD COLOSSIANS 3:15 BE UNDERSTOOD?

Read **Colossians 3:12–17**. The surrounding passage emphasizes:

- compassion,
- humility,
- forgiveness,
- love,
- unity,
- gratitude,
- and the body of Christ.

Paul's instruction to let Christ's peace rule is closely connected to believers being called together in **one body**. The verse should therefore first be understood relationally and corporately. That does not mean God's peace has nothing to do with personal discernment. Philippians 4 connects prayer with God's peace guarding hearts and minds. A growing settledness may be received gratefully. The caution is simply: **Peace can be part of discernment without becoming a private oracle.**

40. HOW SHOULD CONSCIENCE FUNCTION IN DECISIONS?

Read **Romans 14:22–23**. Paul treats conscience seriously. A person should not knowingly act against a conscience that believes something is wrong. But conscience is not identical to Scripture. Conscience can be:

- well-informed,
- poorly informed,
- overly sensitive,
- or gradually corrected.

Therefore Christians should both: **respect conscience and educate conscience through Scripture.**

41. HOW DOES CHRISTIAN FREEDOM AFFECT DECISIONS?

Read **Romans 14** and **1 Corinthians 8–10**. Christian freedom is not merely: “**I can do whatever Scripture does not forbid.**” Love also matters. Paul asks believers to consider:

- conscience,
- the good of others,
- spiritual impact,
- and God's glory.

Read **1 Corinthians 10:31**. Freedom is not freedom from responsibility. It is freedom to obey God without inventing rules He did not give.



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42. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN HUMAN AUTHORITY AND OBEDIENCE TO GOD SEEM TO CONFLICT?

Scripture teaches respect for legitimate authority. Read **Romans 13:1–7**. Other passages address authority within:

- family,
- work,
- church,
- and society.

But human authority is never ultimate. Read **Acts 5:27–29**. When authorities command the apostles to stop proclaiming what God has clearly commanded them to proclaim, Peter responds: **God must be obeyed rather than human beings**. This principle must be used carefully. Disagreement, inconvenience, or dislike of a rule does not automatically create a biblical right to disobey authority. The key question is: “**Is this authority actually requiring what God forbids or forbidding what God clearly requires?**” Where Scripture gives no such conflict, ordinary respect for legitimate authority remains important. Where genuine conflict exists, God’s authority is higher.

43. WHAT IF THE DECISION AFFECTS OTHER PEOPLE?

Read **Philippians 2:3–4**. Christian decision-making is not purely individual. A choice may affect:

- a spouse,
- children,
- aging parents,
- business partners,
- employees,
- ministry teams,
- or others who depend upon us.

Love considers their legitimate interests. That does not mean everyone receives veto power. It does mean responsible decision-making refuses to pretend other people do not exist.

44. HOW SHOULD MARRIED COUPLES MAKE MAJOR DECISIONS?

Marriage involves shared life. Major decisions involving:

- housing,
- finances,
- children,
- relocation,
- employment,
- caregiving,
- or significant commitments

should not normally be approached as though one spouse’s desires are the only ones that matter. Read **Ephesians 5:21–33**. Christians differ over aspects of marital roles and authority. But no faithful interpretation permits:

- manipulation,
- intimidation,
- deception,
- financial coercion,
- or disregard for a spouse’s wellbeing.

Wise marital decision-making includes prayer, honesty, listening, patience, and love shaped by Christ.

45. HOW SHOULD CHURCHES OR MINISTRY TEAMS MAKE DECISIONS TOGETHER?

Read **Acts 15**. The Jerusalem Council provides an important example of communal discernment. The church faces a serious theological and practical dispute. The process includes:

- disagreement,
- testimony,
- discussion,
- apostolic leadership,
- attention to what God had done,
- Scripture,
- and a communicated corporate judgment.



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Acts 15 is not a rigid modern meeting procedure. But it provides valuable principles. Healthy group discernment should not become: **“Whoever claims God spoke most confidently wins.”** Church and ministry decisions may appropriately include:

- Scripture,
- prayer,
- qualified leadership,
- careful listening,
- relevant facts,
- wise discussion,
- theological clarity,
- accountability,
- and consideration of how the decision affects people.

Corporate discernment should aim at faithfulness rather than power.

46. HOW SHOULD SOMEONE APPROACH A DECISION ABOUT MARRIAGE?

Scripture gives boundaries and principles but does not normally identify one future spouse by name. Questions may include:

- Is there shared allegiance to Christ?
- What is the person's character?
- Is there honesty?
- Is there maturity?
- How is conflict handled?
- How are other people treated?
- What expectations exist around family, faith, finances, and commitment?
- What does wise counsel reveal?

Strong feelings matter. They are simply not the only consideration. And: **“God told me you are supposed to marry me”** does not create a divine obligation for the other person. Marriage requires willing commitment from both people.

47. HOW SHOULD SOMEONE APPROACH A JOB OR CAREER DECISION?

Scripture does not teach that every Christian has one hidden occupation that must be discovered. Questions may include:

- Is the work morally legitimate?
- Can it be done honestly?
- What responsibilities already exist?
- What abilities has God provided?
- What opportunities are realistically available?
- What are the financial implications?
- How will the work affect family, health, and faithfulness?
- Is ambition becoming an idol?
- Is fear preventing a reasonable opportunity?

A higher salary does not automatically mean “God's will.” A ministry position is not automatically more spiritual than honest secular work. Faithfulness can occur in many kinds of work.

48. HOW SHOULD SOMEONE APPROACH A MAJOR PURCHASE?

Ask:

- Can it reasonably be afforded?
- What debt or obligation will it create?
- What responsibilities already exist?
- What is motivating the purchase?
- Is comparison influencing the decision?
- What opportunity cost does it create?
- Will the resource genuinely serve something valuable?

Scripture does not provide a universal maximum price for:

- a home,
- vehicle,



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- vacation,
- hobby,
- or possession.

The goal is not inventing rules. It is wise stewardship.

49. HOW SHOULD SOMEONE APPROACH MEDICAL DECISIONS?

Medical decisions may involve:

- risks,
- benefits,
- treatment options,
- quality of life,
- cost,
- caregiving,
- and conscience.

Seeking qualified medical information is not a failure of faith. Prayer and medical wisdom are not enemies. Faithful decision-making may include:

- prayer,
- Scripture,
- qualified medical counsel,
- family discussion,
- and thoughtful evaluation of risks and benefits.

PASTORAL SAFEGUARD

Christians should be cautious about telling someone:

“If you had enough faith, you would choose—or refuse—this treatment.” Complex medical situations should not be reduced to simplistic spiritual formulas.

50. HOW SHOULD SOMEONE DECIDE WHETHER TO LEAVE A CHURCH?

No church is perfect. Leaving every time disappointment occurs can hinder maturity. But remaining in every situation regardless of what is happening can also be harmful. Ask:

- Is the Gospel faithfully taught?
- Is Scripture handled responsibly?
- Is there serious abuse or corruption?
- Is leadership accountable?
- Is the concern theological, relational, preferential, or safety-related?
- Have appropriate conversations occurred where possible?
- Is reconciliation possible?
- Is staying spiritually or physically harmful?
- Is leaving simply avoiding normal conflict?

PASTORAL SAFEGUARD

No one should be pressured to remain in an abusive or dangerous environment merely because someone labels leaving “unfaithful.”

51. WHAT IF SCRIPTURE DOES NOT DIRECTLY ADDRESS THE ISSUE?

Then identify the biblical principles that actually apply. Scripture does not directly address:

- social media platforms,
- artificial intelligence,
- modern retirement accounts,
- automobiles,
- online dating,



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- college selection,
- remote work,
- or many modern medical technologies.

Christians should distinguish: **WHAT SCRIPTURE SAYS** from: **WHAT WISDOM INFERS** from: **WHAT SOMEONE PERSONALLY PREFERS**. Confusing those categories can turn personal judgment into false biblical authority.

52. CAN WISE CHRISTIANS DISAGREE ABOUT THE WISEST CHOICE?

Yes. Wisdom often involves judgment. Two faithful Christians may agree on biblical truth while reaching different conclusions about:

- schooling,
- careers,
- spending,
- relocation,
- medical choices,
- parenting,
- technology,
- or ministry opportunities.

Sometimes one conclusion is wiser. Sometimes both are reasonable. Humility matters because: **our application of Scripture is not always as infallible as Scripture itself.**

53. CAN GOD REDIRECT PEOPLE AFTER THEY MAKE A DECISION?

Yes. Read **Proverbs 16:9**. People plan their course while God directs their steps. A changed circumstance does not necessarily mean the original decision was sinful. Sometimes God redirects. A job ends. An opportunity disappears. Health changes. A relationship changes. A new responsibility emerges. Faithfulness means responding to what God has placed before us now rather than endlessly trying to recreate yesterday's plan.

54. WHAT ABOUT REGRET OVER A DECISION THAT CANNOT BE UNDONE?

Some choices carry lasting consequences. A person may think: **"If only I had known."** **"If only I had listened."** If sin occurred, repent. If repair is possible, pursue it. But endless self-punishment is not repentance. Read **Philippians 3:12–14**. Christians can learn from the past without making the past their master. Christ's grace is sufficient even in a life containing decisions that cannot be reversed.

55. CAN GOD REDEEM A FOOLISH DECISION WITHOUT CALLING IT WISE?

Yes. God may bring:

- humility,
- wisdom,
- compassion,
- changed priorities,
- restored relationships,
- or unexpected ministry

from painful circumstances. That does not mean: **"God wanted me to make the mistake."** Nor does it make the original choice wise. It means God's ability to redeem is greater than human failure. Read **Acts 2:22–24**. The cross itself shows God's sovereign ability to accomplish His saving purpose through sinful human actions without calling those actions good.

A BIBLICAL DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK

56. HOW CAN I WORK THROUGH A DIFFICULT DECISION?

Use these questions as a framework rather than a formula.

1. SCRIPTURE

Has God clearly commanded or forbidden anything relevant?

2. CATEGORY

Is this a matter of command, wisdom, or freedom?

3. WISDOM

Which option best reflects biblical wisdom?



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4. MOTIVES

What is driving me? Fear? Pride? Greed? Comparison? Love? Faith? Responsibility?

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

What has God already entrusted to me?

6. COUNSEL

What do wise and appropriately knowledgeable people see?

7. CIRCUMSTANCES

What facts, opportunities, limitations, and obstacles actually exist?

8. CONSCIENCE AND PEACE

Is there a moral concern or growing settledness that deserves attention?

9. LOVE

How will this affect other people?

10. FREEDOM

Could more than one option actually be faithful?

11. TRUST

Can I make this decision while entrusting the outcome to God?

A SIMPLE DECISION PATH

57. COMMAND → WISDOM → FREEDOM → TRUST

HAS GOD CLEARLY SPOKEN?

Yes → Obey.

HAS GOD GIVEN RELEVANT PRINCIPLES?

Yes → Apply wisdom. Pray. Think. Seek counsel. Consider responsibilities and consequences.

DO MULTIPLE FAITHFUL OPTIONS REMAIN?

Yes → Walk in Christian freedom. Choose without inventing revelation God has not given.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?

No → Trust God. You were never promised control of the outcome.

MEMORY ANCHOR

Obey what is clear. Use wisdom where judgment is needed. Walk freely where God gives freedom. Trust Him with what you cannot know.

WORKED EXAMPLE

58. "SHOULD I TAKE THIS JOB?"

Suppose a Christian receives an offer for a new job. The salary is significantly better. The work appears interesting. But it would require more travel and longer hours. How might the biblical framework help?

SCRIPTURE

Is the work itself morally legitimate? Would the job require dishonesty, exploitation, or another clear violation of Scripture? If yes, the decision may already be settled. If not, continue.

CATEGORY

There is probably no biblical command saying: "**Take Job A rather than Job B.**" This is primarily a wisdom-and-freedom decision.

WISDOM

Consider:

- salary,
- benefits,



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- schedule,
- job stability,
- travel,
- health,
- long-term opportunities,
- work environment,
- and likely stress.

MOTIVES

Ask: **“Why do I want this?”** Maybe the higher salary would genuinely help the family. Maybe the primary motivation is status. Maybe the current job is unhealthy. Maybe the desire is simply to escape a difficult coworker. Motives do not automatically decide the question, but they matter.

RESPONSIBILITIES

How will the new schedule affect:

- spouse,
- children,
- caregiving,
- church involvement,
- health,
- or existing commitments?

A new opportunity does not automatically erase old responsibilities.

COUNSEL

Talk with:

- a spouse where applicable,
- trusted mature believers,
- someone who understands the industry,
- and perhaps someone who knows the employer.

CIRCUMSTANCES

Gather actual information. Do not assume. Ask about:

- hours,
- travel,
- expectations,
- benefits,
- culture,
- and advancement.

CONSCIENCE AND PEACE

As the decision is prayed through and considered carefully, is there an unresolved moral concern? Is there growing settledness? Do not make a feeling the entire case. But do not ignore the inner response either.

LOVE

How will this affect people who legitimately depend upon the decision-maker?

FREEDOM

After all of this, perhaps both jobs remain morally acceptable and reasonably wise. If so, there may not be one hidden “correct” job. A faithful believer may choose.

TRUST

The decision-maker cannot know:

- whether the company will prosper,
- whether a manager will change,
- whether health will change,
- or what opportunities will exist five years later.

So the final step is not certainty. It is trust. **Make the wisest decision possible with what is known—and entrust what is not known to God.**



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WHERE DOES JESUS FIT INTO ALL OF THIS?

59. JESUS IS NOT MERELY A GUIDE TO BETTER DECISIONS

Christianity is not primarily a system for producing successful choices. Jesus did not come merely to make people:

- better planners,
- wiser investors,
- stronger leaders,
- or more confident decision-makers.

He came to save sinners. Read **Mark 1:14–15**. Read **Mark 8:34–36**. Following Jesus sometimes involves costly obedience. Read **Luke 22:39–46**. In Gethsemane, Jesus submits perfectly to the Father's will even when obedience leads through suffering. Read **Philippians 2:5–11**. Jesus humbles Himself and becomes obedient to death. Christian decision-making therefore begins deeper than: **“Which choice will give me the best life?”** The deeper question is: **“How can I faithfully follow Jesus?”**

60. THE GOSPEL FREES CHRISTIANS FROM PERFECT-DECISION ANXIETY

Many people approach decisions as though God's acceptance depends upon getting everything right. But read **Romans 5:1** and **Romans 8:1**. Believers are justified through faith. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. God's love is not earned by:

- choosing the perfect career,
- buying the perfect house,
- interpreting every circumstance correctly,
- finding the perfect church,
- or never regretting a decision.

Christ has accomplished what sinners could never accomplish for themselves. Christians can therefore take decisions seriously without treating every choice as a test of whether God will continue loving them.

MEMORY ANCHOR

The Gospel frees believers to make careful decisions without believing their salvation depends upon perfect decisions.

61. JESUS IS OUR WISDOM

Read **1 Corinthians 1:18–31**. Paul connects Christ with God's wisdom. Biblical wisdom ultimately points beyond techniques to a Person. Jesus perfectly:

- trusted the Father,
- obeyed,
- loved,
- served,
- spoke truth,
- resisted temptation,
- and fulfilled His mission.

Christians do not merely receive principles from Jesus. They belong to Jesus. The goal of discernment is therefore not merely: **“Make fewer mistakes.”** It is: **“Become increasingly faithful to Christ.”**

PRACTICAL RESPONSE

62. A PERSONAL DECISION INVENTORY

Think about a decision currently before you.

THE DECISION

What exactly am I deciding? Can it be stated clearly in one sentence?

SCRIPTURE

Does Scripture directly command or forbid anything involved? What biblical principles clearly apply?



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FACTS

What do I actually know? What am I assuming? What information is missing?

MOTIVES

What do I want? Why? What am I afraid of?

RESPONSIBILITIES

Who or what has God already entrusted to my care?

COUNSEL

Who is mature and knowledgeable enough to help? Have I listened to anyone who might disagree?

CIRCUMSTANCES

What doors are genuinely available? What obstacles are real? Am I treating circumstances as information or secret messages?

CONSCIENCE

Is there a moral concern I am trying to ignore?

PEACE

Is there growing settledness or an unresolved concern worth exploring?

FREEDOM

Could more than one option actually be faithful?

TRUST

Can I choose faithfully and entrust the outcome to God?

63. WHAT DOES BIBLICAL DECISION-MAKING LOOK LIKE IN ORDINARY LIFE?

It may look less dramatic than expected. Sometimes it looks like:

- reading Scripture,
- gathering information,
- praying,
- asking a wise person,
- making a budget,
- sleeping on a decision,
- having an honest conversation,
- saying no to temptation,
- declining an opportunity,
- accepting an opportunity,
- admitting mixed motives,
- waiting,
- making the doctor's appointment,
- reviewing the contract,
- asking another question,
- refusing manipulation,
- accepting uncertainty,
- choosing,
- and moving forward without a supernatural sign.

Sometimes the most spiritual thing a person can do is obey what God has already made clear. Sometimes the wisest thing is to wait. Sometimes the faithful thing is simply to choose.



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FINAL REVIEW

TEN TRUTHS TO REMEMBER

1. GOD HAS ALREADY REVEALED MUCH OF HIS WILL IN SCRIPTURE. Psalm 119:105; 1 Thessalonians 4:3 **2. SOME DECISIONS INVOLVE COMMAND, SOME WISDOM, AND SOME CHRISTIAN FREEDOM.** Romans 14; 1 Corinthians 10:23 **3. PRAYER SEEKS WISDOM, SURRENDER, AND TRUST.** James 1:5; Philippians 4:6–7 **4. WISE COUNSEL CAN EXPOSE BLIND SPOTS.** Proverbs 15:22 **5. CIRCUMSTANCES MATTER WITHOUT BECOMING A SECRET CODE.** 1 Corinthians 16:8–9; Acts 16:6–10 **6. PEACE CAN ACCOMPANY DISCERNMENT WITHOUT BECOMING AN INFALLIBLE TEST.** Philippians 4:6–7; Colossians 3:15 **7. IMPRESSIONS, DREAMS, AND SPIRITUAL CLAIMS SHOULD BE TESTED.** 1 Thessalonians 5:19–22; 1 John 4:1 **8. CHRISTIAN FREEDOM MEANS FAITHFUL BELIEVERS MAY SOMETIMES CHOOSE DIFFERENTLY.** Romans 14:1–12 **9. GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY IS GREATER THAN HUMAN MISTAKES.** Genesis 50:20; Romans 8:28 **10. THE GOAL IS NOT PERFECT DECISIONS. THE GOAL IS FAITHFUL FOLLOWING OF JESUS.** Romans 12:1–2; Mark 8:34–36

SCRIPTURE READING PATH

WISDOM AND GUIDANCE

Proverbs 2 Proverbs 3:1–12 Proverbs 16 James 1:2–8

GOD'S REVEALED WILL

Deuteronomy 29:29 Romans 12:1–2 1 Thessalonians 4:1–8 1 Thessalonians 5:12–24

PRAYER AND PEACE

Philippians 4:4–9 Colossians 3:12–17 James 1:5

COUNSEL

Proverbs 11:14 Proverbs 12:15 Proverbs 15:22 1 Kings 12:1–19

CIRCUMSTANCES AND PROVIDENCE

Genesis 50:15–21 Proverbs 16:9 Acts 16:6–10 1 Corinthians 16:5–9 James 4:13–17

CHRISTIAN FREEDOM AND CONSCIENCE

Romans 14 1 Corinthians 8 1 Corinthians 10:23–33

TESTING SPIRITUAL CLAIMS

1 Thessalonians 5:19–22 1 John 4:1–6

SIGNS, FLEECES, AND LOTS

Judges 6 1 Kings 19:9–18 Matthew 12:38–42 Acts 1:15–26

AUTHORITY AND OBEDIENCE

Romans 13:1–7 Acts 4:13–20 Acts 5:27–32

CORPORATE DISCERNMENT

Acts 15

THE HOLY SPIRIT

John 16:5–15 Romans 8:1–17 Galatians 5:13–26

JESUS, OBEDIENCE, AND SURRENDER

Mark 8:34–38 Luke 22:39–46 Philippians 2:5–11

GRACE AND SECURITY IN CHRIST

Romans 5:1–11 Romans 8:1–39 Ephesians 2:1–10



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KEY TERMS

Biblical Decision-Making — Making choices under the authority of Scripture through wisdom, prayer, responsible counsel, and trust in God. **God's Revealed Will** — What God has made known in Scripture for people to believe and obey. **God's Sovereign Will / Providence** — God's sovereign governance of creation, history, circumstances, and outcomes, much of which is not revealed beforehand. **Wisdom** — Skill in living faithfully within God's world by applying biblical truth to real circumstances. **Discernment** — The ability to recognize and evaluate what is true, good, wise, and faithful. **Christian Freedom** — Freedom to make choices within the boundaries God has established without inventing universal rules Scripture does not give. **Conscience** — A person's internal moral awareness, which should be respected and increasingly shaped by Scripture. **Providence** — God's ongoing sovereign care and governance of His creation. **Personal Impression** — An internal sense, prompting, thought, or conviction that someone may believe has spiritual significance; it should not be treated as equal in authority to Scripture.



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FINAL REFLECTION

Some decisions will be easy. Others will keep people awake at night. Sometimes Scripture will make the answer unmistakably clear. Sometimes wisdom will strongly favor one option. Sometimes circumstances will narrow the possibilities. Sometimes trusted people will help someone see what could not be seen alone. Sometimes a church or family must discern together. Sometimes grief or crisis will make even ordinary decisions feel overwhelming. And sometimes, after: **reading, praying, thinking, asking, waiting, and weighing**, two doors may still remain open. A believer may still wish God would write the answer across the sky. But perhaps faithfulness in that moment does not require another sign. Perhaps it requires trust. God has not promised His people complete knowledge of tomorrow. He has given something better. **His Word for truth. His Spirit to form His people. Wisdom for the path. Prayer for dependence. His people for counsel. Grace for mistakes. Providence over outcomes. And Jesus Christ Himself.** The Christian's confidence is therefore not: **"I will always know exactly what to do."** It is: **"I belong to the One who does."** So obey what God has made clear. Seek wisdom where judgment is required. Walk humbly in the freedom He gives. Make plans without pretending to control tomorrow. And when what lies beyond the decision cannot be seen— **trust the God who can.**

CLOSING MEMORY ANCHOR

OBEY WHAT IS CLEAR. USE WISDOM WHERE JUDGMENT IS NEEDED. WALK FREELY WHERE GOD GIVES FREEDOM. TRUST HIM WITH WHAT YOU CANNOT KNOW.

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