

Better Decision Making

Do you have trouble making decisions? For some people, it is simple to make a decision. For most of us, it is difficult to know if we are using good judgment (Biblical Insight) as we make daily decisions about life.

Biblical decision making begins with a willingness to submit your intentions to God's perfect will and humbly follow His directions.

The problem is that most of us don't know how to figure out exactly what God's will is in every decision we face – it becomes even harder with important, life-changing decisions.

Questions to Ask Yourself Before Making Up Your Mind about Anything Important

1. Is the information I have gathered timely, accurate and complete?
2. What is my objective in making this decision?
3. What will happen if the objective is not achieved?
4. Once the decision is made, how will it be executed?
5. What can go wrong during the execution of the decision?
6. What future decisions will be necessary as a result of this decision?

Life is composed of making many decisions. Each decision involves many other decisions.

The quality of life for all of us is determined by the quality of decisions we make (we reap what we sow). In the Bible (THE MIND OF CHRIST) God makes available to us the resources to make wise decisions.

The Significance of Decision Making



It has been said, “Do not worry about not making decisions, someone else will make it for you.”

You cannot advance in the Christian Way of Life, while letting others make decisions for you. Indecisive people are like a blind man looking in a dark room for a black cat that is not there.

James 1:8 (NASB77) *being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.*

“Double-minded” - is the **Greek Word:** “δίψυχος” - **Transliteration:** “*dipsychos*” and it means “two souled” *two-spirited*, i.e. *vacillating* (in opinion or purpose). Unstable and inconsistent.

1. To sway through a lack of equilibrium
2. To waver in mind, will, feeling
3. To hesitate in choice of opinions or courses

Every routine, responsibility and relationship involves decisions. We will make them either from divine viewpoint (God’s perspective) or human viewpoint (man’s perspective).

Making Wise Choices

Proverbs 14:12; 16:25 – Both verses say the same thing. *“There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.”*

Man often, in his finite way, tries to set up his own requirements in dealing with life. We must recognize that man’s ways are not God’s ways; therefore, it is easy to make decisions opposite of what God wants. These two verses teach us that it is easy to make the wrong decisions and then justify those decisions. Why? We all have an **Old Sin Nature** and that **Old Sin Nature** wants to influence our decision-making process. The **Old Sin Nature** does not want you to be obedient to the Word of God.

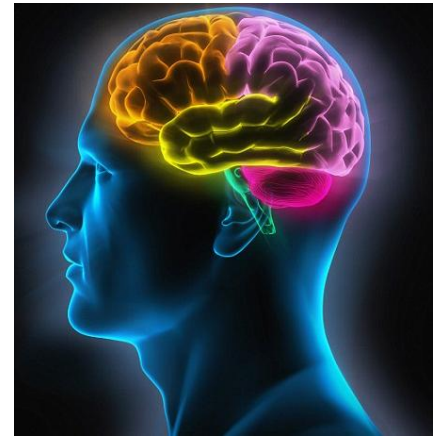
We are constantly being influenced by the cosmic system, an anti-god way of thinking (such as humanism and liberalism) which is a belief system that Satan has developed that is opposite of the truth we find in God’s Word.

It is so important for a believer to study and apply what he has learned and to be filled with the Holy Spirit of God, which means being “in fellowship.” Therefore, the Holy Spirit can help us make right decisions based on the doctrine we have learned. It is difficult to make a good decision when we fail to apply what we know from God’s Word.

Something to Think About

The man who created the cartoon strip "Pogo" makes a theological statement that is rather true. He said, "I have found the enemy, and we are they."

What he is saying is that we are our own worst enemy. Why are we our own worst enemy? It is because the enemy, the **Old Sin Nature**, is within each of us. He uses our brains to think his own destructive thoughts. He uses our hands and feet to perform his own destructive deeds.



From Greek mythology comes the story of the wooden horse of Troy. The Greeks were pursuing the city of Troy, but sailed away leaving a great wooden horse. The great wooden horse was brought through the gates which had been impregnable to the Greeks. Inside this great horse was a handful of skillfully trained soldiers who came out and won the victory from within.

***Isaiah 55:8 - 11** "For My **thoughts**¹ are not **your thoughts**², **Neither are your ways**³ **My ways**⁴," declares the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are **My ways higher than your ways**⁵, And My thoughts than your thoughts." For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth, And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; So shall My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.⁶*

1. "**thoughts**" in the Hebrew means "Divine Viewpoint Thinking – My way of thinking, My ideas, My concepts". It means to invent something, to think, to set a value on something. God is saying, "My inventions (creations), values, and thought patterns are not the same as yours."
2. "**your thoughts**" Human Viewpoint Thinking – your idea of correct absolutes – what you think is clear thinking.

***Proverbs 16:25** There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death. **Proverbs 23:7** For as he thinks within himself, so he is. He says to you, "Eat and drink!" But his heart is not with you.*

3. "**Neither are your ways**" Human Achievement – within our human ability – we can only accomplish so much.
4. "**My ways**" Divine Achievement – unlimited source.

5. “*My ways higher than your ways*” So it is time to re-program the way you think.
6. We learn three things from *Isaiah 55:10-11*
 - A. His Word will give results
 - B. His Word will furnish tools and resources
 - C. His Word will meet every need we have

Be Careful of Making Human Adjustments to Life

1. ***Rationalization*** – This is a form of self-justification.
2. ***Direct Attack*** – A person adjusts to the problems and frustrations of life through anger.
3. ***Defense Mechanism*** – When the soul is confronted with pressures that are too weak to bear, the person protects himself by reverting to human viewpoint in order to block out reality.
4. ***Denial*** – This is a human viewpoint adjustment that ignores or attempts to ignore some difficulty or danger.
5. ***Sublimation*** – When a person becomes bored, lonely, discouraged or filled with mental attitude sins, he seeks a new outlet for his frustrations through a frantic search for happiness in many different areas.

Two Examples of Making Bad Decisions in the Old Testament



Examples for the Christian

1 Corinthians 10:11 “Now all these things happened unto them (Old Testament saints) for example: and they (their decision-making process are written for our admonition (to help us make the right decisions), upon whom the end of the world are come.”

1. **Lot** made a choice as to where to live, and as a result he experienced:
 - A. War and kidnapping. *Genesis 14*
 - B. Oppression and torment by the ungodly citizens of Sodom. *2 Peter 2:7-8*
 - C. Loss of all his possessions, death of his wife, and incest with his daughters. *Genesis 14*
2. **David** chose to commit adultery with Bathsheba, and as a consequence he suffered:
 - A. The death of his infant son. *2 Samuel 12*
 - B. A daughter molested by her half-brother. *2 Samuel 13*
 - C. That son killed by her vengeful brother. *2 Samuel 13*
 - D. A rebellion led by that son, who shamed him publically, and whose death brought even more grief to David. *2 Samuel 15-18*

With Lot and David illustrating the need for “Making Wise Choices,” let’s consider Saul who made many bad decisions.

To Obey is Better than Sacrifice Saul’s Disobedience

1 Samuel 15:1-31

Saul was tested twice and failed under each test. The Philistine was God’s instrument in the first test; the Amalekite in the second. The first test proved him to be carnal, for he waited on God for instructions, but did not follow them. The second test showed him to be disobedient, for he set his own will above God’s will. Unfit to serve because of this, God’s chosen King, David, appears next on the scene.

Saul, with a great army of 210,000 men destroyed the Amalekites. However, in disobedience **1 Samuel 15:13-15** (bad decisions) he tells lies...blaming the sparing of the spoil on the people **1 Samuel 15:15** and saying the spoil was saved to offer a sacrifice to God **1 Samuel 15:15, 21**. His first lie was in telling Samuel he had performed God's commandment **1 Samuel 15:13**. He was exposed when Samuel heard the bleating of sheep **1 Samuel 15:14**. You cannot hide from God. Be assured, your sin will find you out **Numbers 32:33** and bad decisions lead to bad results (reap what we sow).

Why is obedience better than sacrifice? Obedience is the giving up of our will to that of God. Therefore, it is the offering of the whole man. Obedience is submission to authority. **Romans 12:1-2** *"I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."*

If you take too long in deciding what to do with your life, you will find you have done it!

Back to King Saul - 1 Samuel 15

The Characteristics of a Bad Decision and Justifying It!

1. Are You Arguing with God? (**1 Samuel 15:17-21**)

"And Saul said to Samuel, 'But I have obeyed the voice of the Lord'..." Well, had he? – No!

Symptoms include:

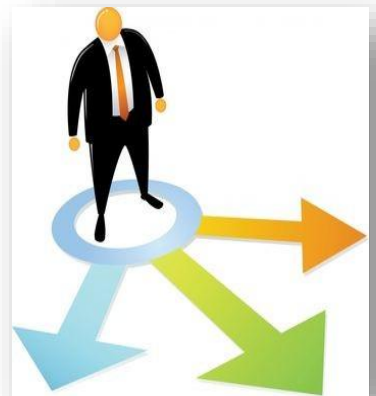
- A. Offering Partial Obedience (**1 Samuel 15:20**)
- B. Refusing Full Responsibility (**1 Samuel 15:21**)

2. Are You Focusing on Temporal Gain? (**1 Samuel 15:9-19**)

"But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep..."

- A. Substituting personal objectives for God's will
- B. Substituting earthly rewards for eternal reward
- C. *Believer's Inner Struggle* – Are You Listening to Men Rather Than God? (**1 Samuel 15:24**)

"I have sinned...because I feared the people and obeyed their voice."



4. Are You Violating God's Word? (*1 Samuel 15:1-3, 22-24*) "...to obey is better than sacrifice..."

Decision Making – It's a Process

Decision making is a process by which one makes a choice or judgment about an action or attitude. This process involves the application of learned doctrine, which can range from *gnosis* (simple knowledge of facts) to *epignosis* (full knowledge and understanding).

Everyone is confronted with countless decisions throughout life. Many are of little significance, but some may change your life forever. The attitude of every believer should be that of *Psalms 40:8*. *I delight to do Thy will, O my God; Thy Law is within my heart.*"

Our choices are a direct reflection of our values; our evaluation reflects our standards. You show me what you are interested in and I will show you where your priority is.

We look at something and say "That's good" but by what standards? According to our values? What we want? Your values reflect your choices (it's not about what we want but what God wants).

Word Study (Two Hebrew and One Greek Word)

In the Hebrew "*abah*" (English: to will, be willing) means "to breathe after" and is used to indicate a willingness to accept or comply.

Application: Your decisions receive God's blessing when you are willing to obey God.



In the Hebrew the word "*bachar*" (English: choose) – means "to select or to prefer or desire."

Application: Your decisions reveal the desires of your heart.

In the Greek the word "*Krino*" (English: Judge) – means "to distinguish, to determine or resolve."

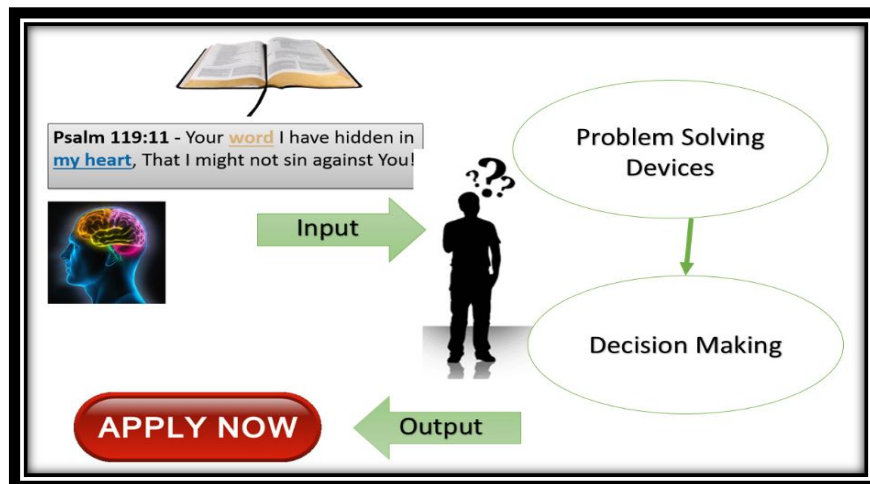
Application: Your decisions should be based on what you know to be God's revealed will.

Divine Guidance

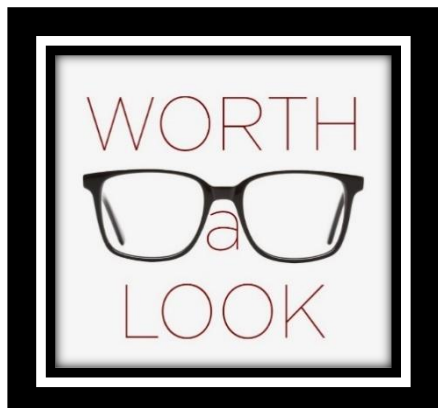
Sooner or later every believer is faced with the question, “What is the will of God for my life?”

The question of the will of God falls into three categories:

1. What does He want me to think? Obviously, He wants me to think Divine Viewpoint (His Word).
2. What does He want me to do? The operational or revealed will of God involves everything that a Christian should do for the glory of God.
3. Where does He want me to go? It is different for every believer. If a believer is doing what God wants him to do, he will eventually end up in the place where God wants him to be.



The Five Categories of the Will of God



1. **God's Sovereign Will** (His absolute will, direct will). What happens is what God decreed (allowed).

God does whatever He pleases. (*1 Samuel 2:6-8, Psalm 115:3*). We don't know what God's sovereign will is or what His decreed will is until it happens. We don't know what tomorrow entails or what God will permit until it happens.

2. **God's Revealed Will** (moral/desired will) – The Mind of Christ. These are the absolutes in God's Word (principles, precepts and mandates).

The Holy Spirit teaches us doctrine – responding to the challenges of scripture. We respond to His guiding and leading. As long as you are filled with the Spirit, walking by means of the Spirit, learning doctrine, assimilating it into your thinking, operating on divine viewpoint thinking and applying doctrine - ***You are in the will of God!***

3. **God's Permissive Will** – is clearly taught in two passages: the provision of quail in the wilderness (***Numbers 11:33-34***) and Israel's pleas for a king (***1 Samuel 8***).

God's permissive will is the opposite of God's revealed will.

At first, permissive will appears to be a great blessing. It may involve a miraculous intervention (as the provision of quail). It seems that God is answering your prayers. You get what you want.

In reality, permissive will is discipline and judgment. God is grieved and angered in granting His permissive will. Discipline soon follows.

Permissive will is granted to men with wrong motives, sinful attitudes and complaining spirits. To receive God's permissive will is to reap what you sow. (***Galatians 6:7***)

To reject God's revealed will is to court His permissive will. God often allows his permissive will when His revealed will is rejected. He allows us to learn the hard way.

4. **God's Overruling Will** (He overrides our decisions that are in contrast to His will)

Many times we make decisions that are in contrast to God's revealed will. His sovereign will allows it, but sometimes He overrides the decisions and there are consequences to those decisions.

5. **God's Geographical Will** – where He wants me to be geographically.

- A. ***Genesis 12:1-3*** (Abram)
- B. ***Genesis 13:5-13*** (Lot)
- C. ***Genesis 19:30-36*** (Lot)
- D. ***Book of Jonah*** (Nineveh)

POD: The issue in the human race: Will the free will of man act in conjunction with the Will of God or act independently of it?

The Five Most Important Decisions in Life

1. **Your Messiah:** “Who will be your Savior?”
2. **Your Master:** “Who will you serve in life?”
3. **Your Mission:** “How will you spend your life?”
4. **Your Pastor:** “What will he teach you? What will you learn?”
5. **Your Mate:** “Who will be your spouse?”

Pattern for Decision Making

Presuppositions

1. We do not need to know God’s decreed will and how He is providentially bringing it about before we make a decision.
Deuteronomy 29:29 *"The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law."*
2. The Holy Spirit’s role for us is to convict, teach and conform us all through the vehicle of the Word of God.
John 16:8 *"And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment; John 17:17* *"Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth."*
3. God only guides or leads His people today:
 - A. By providence (we know it after the fact) –**Psalm 21:1** *O Lord, in Thy strength the king will be glad, And in Thy salvation how greatly he will rejoice!*
 - B. By Scripture (we can know it before we act) –**Psalm 73:24** *With Thy counsel Thou wilt guide me, And afterward receive me to glory.*
4. God is a gracious God who has provided everything we need in order to do what He wants us to do. **2 Peter 1:3** *seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.*
5. God holds us fully responsible to search out and follow His permissive will (God’s written Word) in all of life. **2 Timothy 2:15** *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.*



6. To rightly interpret and apply the Word of God we must use a prayerful, literal, historical, contextual and grammatical method of studying it.

2 Timothy 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth. 2 Peter 1:20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation,

7. Every believer needs pastoral oversight and the body of Christ to help him stay true to God's Word. **Proverbs 18:1-2** *He who separates himself seeks his own desire, He quarrels against all sound wisdom. A fool does not delight in understanding, But only in revealing his own mind. Hebrews 13:17 Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.*

Questions Answered

1. Can I actually know God's will for my life? YES!
2. How does God reveal His will? The Holy Spirit and His Word!!
3. What decisions are pleasing to God? God blesses decisions:
 - A. That He **initiates**
 - B. That **line up** with His Word
 - C. That **accomplish** His purpose
 - D. That **depend** on His strength
 - E. That **result** in giving Him glory

When Trouble Comes

When trouble comes into our lives, we can do one of three things:

1. **Endure it:** If we only endure our trials, then trials become our master, and we have a tendency to become hard and bitter.
2. **Flee it:** If we try to escape our trials, then we will probably miss the purposes God wants to achieve in our lives.
3. **Enlist all the available resources:** But if we learn to enlist our trials, they will become our servants instead of our masters and work for us; and God will work all things together for our good and His glory. **Romans 8:28** *And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.*

How Can I Make Decisions Consistent with God's Will for My Life?

Decision making can be a daunting task for anyone, but Christians have the unique advantage of making decisions that are informed by God's Word. To do so, there are at least three factors to consider.



First, you must obey the moral will of God as it is revealed in Scripture. If Scripture prohibits the action in question your decision is easy: *don't do it*. Likewise, if one of the options in your choice causes you to neglect something God specifically commands you to do, you are required to make the choice that will allow you to fulfill your biblical obligation. For example, if God requires you to be an active part of a local church and **Hebrews 10:25** indicates He does require it. *Hebrews 10:25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.* Any decision that prohibits you from that is against God's revealed will.

In order to uphold God's moral will in your decision making, ask yourself, "What does God's Word say about it?" If it says anything, obey that. **1 John 5:3** *For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.* If it says nothing, you have freedom and do not need to fear missing God's will or sinning against Him. **Romans 14:2-6, 22**

Second, good decision making requires that you exercise Biblical wisdom. Such wisdom comes from a diligent study of God's Word, coupled with God's generous provision. **James 1:5** *"But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him."*

To make wise decisions, you need to gather necessary information, consider all the options carefully, seek godly counsel, and then choose based on the Word of God, Holy Spirit leading.

Finally, you need to consider your own desire. If the Bible is silent about your decision, and if one choice is not clearly wiser than the other, then do what you want. You have the freedom to do so, and God's sovereignty works out His plan through your desires. **Psalms 3:4** *I was crying to the Lord with my voice, And He answered me from His holy mountain. Selah.* **Philippians 2:13** *for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.*

All three pre-supposes that you are submitted to Christ and filled with the Spirit. Otherwise, you won't be able to make Biblical decisions as sin blinds your ability to understand and apply God's Word to your life. However, if you do have a vital relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and are walking in the Spirit as opposed to the flesh, you are

free to make decisions so long as they don't violate God's revealed (moral) will. You shouldn't be concerned that your decisions will somehow derail God's sovereign will for your life, because He routinely works through your decisions to accomplish what He purposes.

Types of Decision Making

1. **Scripture Manipulation:** Opening the Bible and pointing to some random scripture for guidance without considering the context, wanting a God-given sign, or proof. *John 14:24 & 2 Timothy 2:15.*
2. **Passing the Buck:** Letting others make decisions for us. Remember we are responsible for our own decisions.
3. **Procrastination:** Hoping things will get better without having to make some tough choices.
4. **Rationality & Empiricism:** There is a time for rationality and empiricism along with a balance of spiritual insight. BUT when the Bible is clear and the Holy Spirit is leading, rationality and empiricism are not necessary.
5. **Emotional:** Allowing how you feel to determine your behavior.
6. **Just to Please Method:** I know it's wrong, but to please everybody, I will do it.
7. **Small Group:** Where two or three are gathered – remember, all could be wrong.
8. **Setting up Conditions:** *Judges 6:36; 40.*
9. **Faith Method:** Spiritual discernment from the Word of God!

Reasons for Confusion in Discerning God's Will

1. **Procrastination:** We decide to “wait and see what happens” or “think about it some more.” Procrastination paralyzes performance.
2. **Ambivalence:** This occurs when we feel all of the options are of equal value or when we feel that none of the options are of equal value or when we feel that because none of the options are perfect we cannot decide.
3. **Impulsiveness:** Impulsive decisions are not real decisions. They are a desperate attempt to “just do something” in order to relieve fear, anxiety, guilt or boredom. Impulsive decisions have a nasty habit of turning into disasters.

4. **Codependency:** This happens when you develop the habit of always letting someone else decide for you. You yield your freedom of choice in exchange for false security.
5. **Non-conformity:** Some people mask their insecurity by always deciding to do the opposite of whatever others do. They are compulsive rebels. They *think* they are expressing independence but actually, they are not. They are simply reactors. They have to wait and see what others will do first before they can make a move.
6. **Partial Commitment:** These people try to walk on both sides of the road at the same time. They may call it “keeping my options open,” but, actually, it is immaturity being demonstrated in “fence sitting.” It is another way of avoiding a real decision.
7. **Nostalgia:** You spend so much time thinking about the past and “what might have been” that you avoid making the tough decisions you need to make today.

Seven Don'ts

1. Don't wait until all else fails before seeking God's will. **1 Kings 22:5** *“First seek the counsel of the Lord.”*
2. Don't seek the plan but rather the Person who reveals the plan. **Proverbs 3:5-6** *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”*
3. Don't pray for permission regarding something God has forbidden. **Psalms 119:106** *“I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws.”*
4. Don't make decisions based on feelings. **Proverbs 4:23** *“Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.”*
5. Don't assume that God's will is too difficult for you to do. **1 John 5:3** *“This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.”*
6. Don't have divided loyalty where money, family, job, personal preference, etc., dictate your decision. **Matthew 6:24** *“No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”*
7. Don't test God by seeking visible signs. Signs and visions are not given after the completion of the Bible. Well, this happened, this happened, this happened so this has to be God's will. NO! Satan is god of this world. **Deuteronomy 6:16** *“Do not test the Lord your God as you did at Massah.”*

Don't think trials and adversity indicate you are out of God's will. **1 Peter 4:19** *"Those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good."*

Bad decisions lead to disappointment, pain and inner turmoil. You will reap what you sow!

Biblical Decision Making Steps to Solutions

Study – **2 Timothy 3:15:**

He teaches your mind how to think

Prayer – **John 15:7 and John 8:32:**

He directs your will how to act.

Submission to the Holy Spirit:

He brings your emotions in alignment.



Steps Involved

1. **Begin with prayer.** Frame your attitude into one of trust and obedience as you commit the decision to prayer. There is no reason to be fearful in decision making when you are secure in the knowledge that God has your best interest in mind.
Jeremiah 29:11 – *"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."*
2. **Define the decision.** Ask yourself if the decision involves a moral or non-moral area. It is actually a little easier to discern the will of God in moral areas because, most of the time, you will find clear direction in God's Word. If God has already revealed his will in Scripture, your only response is to obey. Non-moral areas still require the application of Biblical principles, however, sometimes the direction is harder to distinguish. **Psalms 119:105** – *"Your Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light for my path."*

3. **Be ready to accept and obey God's answer.** It is unlikely that God will reveal His plan if He knows already that you won't obey. It is absolutely essential that your will be completely submitted to God's. When your will is humbly and fully submitted to the Master, you can have confidence that he will illuminate your path. **Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV)** *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek His will in all you do, and He will show you which path to take."*
4. **Exercise faith.** Remember, too, that decision making is a process that takes time. You may have to resubmit your will over and over again to God throughout the process. Then by faith, which pleases God, trust Him with a confident heart that He will reveal His will. **Hebrews 11:6 (NIV)** *"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him."*
5. **Seek concrete direction.** Begin investigating, evaluating and gathering information. Find out what the Bible says about the situation. Gain practical and personal information that relates to the decision, and begin writing down what you learn.
6. **Obtain counsel.** In difficult decisions, it is wise to get spiritual and practical counsel from the godly leaders in your life. A pastor, elder, parent or simply a mature believer can often contribute important insight, answer questions, remove doubts and confirm inclinations. Make sure to choose individuals who will offer sound Biblical advice and not just say what you want to hear. **Proverbs 15:22 (NIV)** *"Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisors they succeed."*
7. **Make a list.** First, write down the priorities you believe God would have in your situation. These are not the things that are important to you, but rather the things that are most important to God in this decision. Will the outcome of your decision draw you closer to God? Will it glorify Him in your life? How will it impact those around you?
8. **Weigh the decision.** Make a list of the pros and cons connected with the decision. You may find that something on your list clearly violates the revealed will of God in His Word. If so, you have your answer. This is not His will. If not, then you now have a realistic picture of your options to help you make a responsible decision.
9. **Choose your spiritual priorities.** By this time you should have enough information to establish your spiritual priorities as they relate to the decision. Ask yourself which decision best satisfies those priorities. If more than one option will fulfill your established priorities, then choose the one which is your strongest desire.

Sometimes God gives you a choice. In this case there is no right and wrong decision, but rather a freedom from God to choose, based on your preferences. Both options are within God's perfect will for your life and both will lead to the fulfillment of God's purpose for your life.

10. **Act on your decision.** If you have arrived at your decision with the sincere intention of pleasing the heart of God, incorporating Biblical principles and wise counsel, you can proceed with confidence knowing that God will work out His purposes through your decision. ***Romans 8:28(NIV)*** – “*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, and who have been called according to His purpose.*”

How to Make Wise Decisions in God's Will

1. **Don't trust your own understanding.** *See Proverbs 3:5; 28:26; Jeremiah 17:9*

The individual that trusts his own understanding will not follow God's will. He will make wrong decisions every time. Because of our fallen nature, we don't have the ability to make wise decisions on our own. We need to always seek God and trust Him without doubting. We must then be diligent Bible students, because it is through the Bible that we know God's mind - ***1 Corinthians 2:16***, learn God's will - ***Psalms 119:105***, and obtain faith - ***Romans 10:17***. If we don't know the Word of God we do not have the mind of Christ. The Holy Spirit can only draw from what you have learned to help you. He cannot bring to mind something that was never there.

2. **Trust in the Lord and pray much for wisdom.** *Proverbs 3:5-6*

Instead of trusting in our own understanding, we need to depend upon the Lord and ask Him for wisdom and guidance in all major decisions. He has promised to lead His people, but we must seek His guidance and not presume upon it. We must “acknowledge Him” in all of our ways. It is tempting to think, “Well, the Lord already knows that I need His wisdom and help; surely He will just give it.” God has taught us in His Word to pray specifically and earnestly concerning all matters. To fail to do this is a recipe for making unwise decisions.

3. **Walk in the light.** *1 John 1:5-10*

To walk in sin is to walk in darkness, and it hinders spiritual living and thinking. If a believer is disobedient – gossiping, lying, stealing, loving the evil things of the world, or such things, his prayers are hindered and he will not have wisdom to make good decisions. To make important decisions out of fellowship is a terrible thing – *We Should Rebound. 1 John 1:9*

4. **Delight in the Lord.** *Psalms 37:4*

The way to know God's will is to put Him first in our life. The will of God is not found by those who approach the Christian life as a list of do's and don'ts. It is found by those who know Christ personally and love Him.

5. **Do not make any decision that would cause you to disobey the Bible.** *John 8:31-32*

What is God's will? How do we find it? God's will is obeying His Word. Jesus described it as to "continue in my Word." Any decision that causes you to disobey the Bible is contrary to God's will. There are no exceptions. What does it mean to live by faith? It means to learn to make decisions based on the Bible rather than on one's feelings, human thinking and circumstances, and then to trust God to open the right doors and provide the needs.

6. **Do not fear man; fear God.** *Proverbs 29:25*

Jesus warned that we must love Him even more than our dearest relatives. See *Luke 14:26*. What did Jesus mean when He demanded that we "hate" our nearest and dearest loved ones? We understand this by comparing Scripture with Scripture.

In *Matthew 10:37* when Jesus said we must hate our father, mother, wife, children, brethren, and sisters, he was saying that we must not love them more than Him and His will. The Lord requires that we put Him absolutely first in our affections and that we live to please Him above all else. Family relationships are important and God's Word instructs us to care for our loved ones. *1 Timothy 5:8; Colossians 3:18-21*. At the same time, the call and work of God takes precedence over any human relationship.

7. **Seek wise counsel.** See *Proverbs 12:15; 19:20*

One of the important parts of making wise decisions in God's will is to seek godly counsel. Before making any major decision such as marriage, education, a job, or a move, a person should seek godly counsel.

Seek counsel from wise, mature people - ***Proverbs 24:6***. The classic case in Scripture of someone who failed to do this is Solomon's son Rehoboam ***1 Kings 12:1-16***. Soon after he ascended the throne, he was confronted by his subjects who beseeched him to treat them compassionately. In making his decision, he first consulted the old men that had counseled his father, and they wisely advised him to heed the people's request. He then consulted his own peers, and they advised him to treat the people as he wished and to ignore their feelings. He followed this foolish advice and lost the majority of the kingdom.

8. **Look to the future. *Hebrews 11:24-27***

Moses made a major decision sometime in his youth "when he was come to years." He was the adopted son of Pharaoh, who was the wealthiest and most powerful king of his day. Moses could have chosen to cast his lot with the wealthy and powerful, with the pleasure seekers, but instead he cast his lot with the despised, enslaved Jews. He made this wise decision by looking at the future through God's Word. He looked ahead to the next life and saw that if he followed Christ he would have trouble in this world and riches in Christ's eternal kingdom, but if he followed Pharaoh he would have "the pleasures of sin for a season" and then an eternity of regret.

The believer particularly needs to look at the judgment seat of Christ and make his decisions based on what he will hear on that solemn occasion. ***1 Corinthians 3:11-15***

9. **Wait on God. *Psalms 27:14***

When endeavoring to make a wise decision in God's will, it is very important to not be in a hurry. When we are in a hurry, it is easy to make the wrong decision. We must wait until we are certain that we know the mind of the Lord, and then He will take care of us.

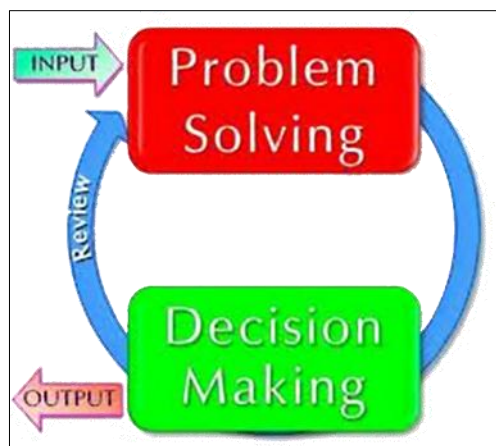
Joshua and Israel were hasty when they agreed to an alliance with the men of Gibeon; they trusted their eyes and did not seek God's face in the matter. ***Joshua 9:14-15***

There are two Biblical principles that we need to heed when waiting for the Lord: the principle of ***abiding peace and the principle of no confusion***. We find these two principles in ***First Corinthians 14:33***. When there is a lack of peace and when there is confusion, we must be cautious and not be in a hurry to move forward in that particular decision.

The wisdom that is from God is always peaceable. **James 3:17 (NASB77)** *But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.*

God gives peace always by all means. **2 Thessalonians 3:16 (NASB77)** *Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance. The Lord be with you all!*

How to Make Decisions Based on Hebrews 11:23-28



Hebrews 11:24-27 (NASB77) *By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin; considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen [Jesus Christ].*

1. Verse 24 – “Faith” – Moses was in fellowship with God. He was walking with God and he applied the faith principle to the situation. Faith based on knowledge means what you know about God. *It is not blind faith.*
2. Verse 24 – “Refused to be called” – Thinking Divine Viewpoint over Human Viewpoint. You can’t have it God’s way and your way!
3. Verse 25 – “Choosing rather” – Consider all the facts. You are responsible for your own actions. Are you willing to choose something to satisfy the flesh when you know it will have a dramatic effect on your life now and in heaven? Is one moment of sinful pleasure worth the lasting effect?
4. Verse 26 – “Esteeming the reproach” – Consider all the angles. He knew the will of God meant more than all the glitter of Egypt.
5. Verse 26 – “For he had respect” – Make decisions with eternity’s values in view.

Moses had the most fantastic options go the wrong way, yet made the decision to go the right way by making good decisions which resulted in many options for him, so that he became the greatest man of the Old Testament.

1. *Acts 7:22 (NASB77) "And Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, and he was a man of power in words and deeds."*
2. He was the greatest man of genius in the Old Testament. He was handsome, extremely strong, and the best educated person of his time. He was a great builder, soldier, musician and as an administrator.
3. Remember:
 - A. The power of decision is based on cognition and inculcation of Bible doctrine. Therefore, it is vitally important to obtain spiritual skills.
 - B. Bible doctrine is the evidence of things not seen about God. When you have Bible doctrine circulating in your stream of consciousness as *epignosis* (full knowledge), you have the reality, the evidence of things not seen.
4. Moses had the option to be humanly and historically great or follow the plan of God. He decided to become the leader of the most recalcitrant people in history. From this, God used Moses in a way He never used any other believer in history. Every time Moses made a decision, it opened up more options.
5. Every routine, responsibility and relationship involves decisions. We will make them either from Divine Viewpoint or Human Viewpoint.
6. Then there are a number of major decisions that come to us in the crisis times, good and bad.
7. However, as believers we have God's help in all decisions through the indwelling Living Word, the Holy Spirit, and the written Word, the Bible.

What We Learn from Moses in Hebrews 11:23-28

Suggestions which will help us make decisions from the perspective of Divine Viewpoint based on Bible knowledge.

A. Faith Rest the Situation

1. This means to relax mentally into what we know about God in the situation.

2. This gets our thinking straight and into a proper perspective as we deal with the situation. God is controlling our minds, so we are thinking divine viewpoint.
3. This also allows us to deal with the situation on the basis of our own character, who and what we are, and not on the basis of the circumstances or the behavior of any other person involved.

B. Get All the Facts Related to the Situation

The will of God eliminates one thing and enables us to choose another.

Moses exercised his volition (choice) to be able to say no to human viewpoint and embrace divine viewpoint. You can't have the best of both worlds. Every choice, including minor ones, always has consequences. This is even more so if you make a series of choices which cannot be reversed.

1. To make proper decisions, we must have all the information involved.
2. We are to investigate all the pros and cons and make sure that the information is true and honest.
3. Then we are to deal with the information objectively on the basis of what we know about God. It is imperative to weigh all the information against Bible knowledge and not on the basis of feelings or carnal desires. This approach is important even when we have to use trial and error.

C. Next, Make a Decision

Think the matter through, using Divine Viewpoint, select the pertinent doctrines and apply them to your situation. Moses thought, evaluated and made his decisions.

1. Under God's control, we must make a decision about the situation. We cannot remain mentally stable if we remain in limbo.
 - a. We may decide in favor of the situation or against it. Also, in some situations, we may decide to wait for a while. If you can't decide and time has not run out and an immediate decision is not necessary, gather more data or start over.
 - b. ***No decision is still a decision.*** So, we are to make sure we approach the situation logically and on the basis of facts and Bible knowledge.
2. If we decide that it is God's will, then we are to move on in favor of the situation and continue until God closes the door.

3. To the contrary, if we believe that it is not God's will, we should admit it to Him.
4. Then we are to stick to our decision, whatever it is, unless God reveals evidence that we are wrong and should reverse our decision.

D. Set up a Plan of Action

Now that we have gathered the facts and decided in which direction we will move, it is time to act.

Then there is a plan of action directly related to the problem. If we believe it is God's will, then we must follow through with whatever action is required. If we believe that it is not God's will, then our plan of action should be to stay the course and look for other doors of opportunity that God may be providing.

E. The Last Step Is To Move On

- A. Once the decision is made and we are following through, we are to move on in the normal function of life.
- B. We are to enjoy life to the fullest by relaxing into what we know about God. We are to develop our talents and use them for God's glory.
- C. When we fail, and we will, we are to rebound by confession and move on. *1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

We should take seriously every decision we make. One decision can set off a series of other decisions. One wrong decision can ruin our lives and our witness for Jesus. Right decisions can lead to fantastic representation of Jesus. The by-product of our worthy representation of Jesus will be peace of mind and mental attitude stability, moment by moment.

Three Areas Where Confidence is Necessary

1. The Person of God – knowing Him. *Philippians 3:10*
2. The Plan of God – The Work of God.
3. The Will of God – Your personal involvement in the plan of God.

We usually don't lack confidence in the Person and/or the Plan of God, but we lack confidence in our personal involvement in His Plan.

**This is
Real
Confidence**



Merriam-Webster's: Confidence - A feeling or consciousness of one's powers or of reliance on one's faith or belief that one will act in a right, proper, or effective way - reliance on another's discretion.

The dictionary definition is different from the Bible's definition!

As a Christian, our faith is in God's ability – His way of thinking not ours.

Nehemiah's Decision-Making Process

Nehemiah Prayed – He Sought the Leadership of God

Nehemiah 1:5 (NIV) “Then I said: “O LORD, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and obey his commands.”

Nehemiah 2:4 (NIV) “The king said to me, “What is it you want?” Then I prayed to the God of heaven,”

Nehemiah Gathered General Information

From Reports

Nehemiah 1:2-3 (NIV) “Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem. They said to me, “Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire.”

Nehemiah Determined What He Wanted to Accomplish in General Terms

Nehemiah 2:4-5 (NIV) “The king said to me, “What is it you want?” Then I prayed to the God of heaven and I answered the king, “If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city of Judah where my fathers are buried so that I can rebuild it.””

Nehemiah Gathered Additional Specific Information from an Onsite Inspection

From First Hand Study – The Night He Surveys

Nehemiah 2:11-16 (NIV) “I went to Jerusalem, and after staying there three days, I set out during the night with a few men. I had not told anyone what my God had put in my heart to do for Jerusalem. There were no mounts with me except the one I was riding on. By night I went out through the Valley Gate toward the Jackal Well and the Dung Gate, examining the walls of Jerusalem, which had been broken down, and its gates, which had been destroyed by fire. Then I moved on toward the Fountain Gate and the King's Pool, but there was not enough room for my mount to get through; so I went up the valley by night, examining the wall. Finally, I turned back and reentered through the Valley Gate.

The officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing, because as yet I had said nothing to the Jews or the priests or nobles or officials or any others who would be doing the work.”

Nehemiah Then Adapted His Plans

***Nehemiah 2:17-18 (NIV)** “Then I said to them, “You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace.” I also told them about the gracious hand of my God upon me and what the king had said to me. They replied, “Let’s start building.” So they began this good work.*

A Few More Examples of Those Who Made Good Decisions

1. Abraham, when he staggered not at the promise of God:
 - A. Abraham is circumcised and promised a son by Sarah. **Genesis 17:1-27**
 - B. Isaac is born. **Genesis 21:1-7**
 - C. Abraham is challenged to sacrifice Isaac. **Genesis 22:1-19**
2. Joshua, in **Joshua 24:15**, when he stood before a rebellious group of people and said, *“And if it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose you for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord.”*
3. Elijah said in **1 Kings 18:21** *“How long will you hesitate between two opinions? If the Lord is God, then follow Him.”*
4. The Book of Daniel. **Daniel 3:17-18**, *“If so be, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us (Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego) from the furnace of fire; then He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But even if He does not, let it be understood by you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”*

Daniel made many decisions that opened up options for a long and fantastic life.

Eight Concepts of Wise Decisions

Success is largely a matter of making wise choices. As F. W. Boreham said, “We make our decisions and then they make us.” That is why every decision has an element of risk to it. We cannot always predict the outcome. Are you dealing with any difficult decisions these days?

Step 1: PRAY FOR GUIDANCE (Principle of Inspiration)

Start by asking God to help you see His perspective on the problem. Intuition is often wrong.

Proverbs 28:26 (NIV) “He who trusts in himself is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom is kept safe.”

Step 2: GET THE FACTS! (Principle of Information)

Do not make decisions out of ignorance. Find out all you can first.

Proverbs 13:16 (NIV) “Every prudent man acts out of knowledge, but a fool exposes his folly.”

Proverbs 18:13 (NIV) “He who answers before listening – that is his folly and his shame.”

Proverbs 23:23 (NIV) “Buy the truth and do not sell it; get wisdom, discipline and understanding.”

Step 3: ASK FOR ADVICE (Consultation)

Talk to someone who has already taken the risk, if possible. It is wise to learn from experience – but it’s even wiser to learn from the experiences of others! That way you do not have to learn everything the hard way.

Proverbs 18:15 (NIV) “The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge; the ears of the wise seek it out.”

Proverbs 20:18 (NIV) “Make plans by seeking advice; if you wage war, obtain guidance.”

Step 4: SET YOUR GOAL (Selection)

Be sure you understand the reason and purpose for the decision you are about to make. You cannot chase two rabbits going in different directions at the same time. *Proverbs 17:24 (NIV) “A discerning man keeps wisdom in view, but a fool’s eyes wander to the ends of the earth.”*

Step 5: COUNT THE COST (Evaluation)

This is called a “calculated risk.” Ask yourself:

- (1) Is it necessary?
- (2) What will it cost...in terms of time, energy, and money?
- (3) Is it worth it?

Proverbs 20:25 (NIV) “It is a trap to dedicate something rashly, and only later to consider your vows.”

Step 6: PLAN FOR PROBLEMS (Preparation)

Remember Murphy’s Law – and he was an optimist! Do not ignore problems because they will not ignore you. So be prepared.

Proverbs 20:18 (NIV) “Make plans by seeking advice; if you wage war, obtain guidance.”

Proverbs 22:3 (NIV) “A prudent man sees danger and takes refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it.”

Step 7: FACE YOUR FEARS (Confrontation)

Fear is not a sign of weakness – it is a sign of your humanity. Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather it is moving ahead in spite of your fears.

Proverbs 29:25 (NIV) “Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.”

Step 8: GO FOR IT!! (Initiation)

If you still don't know what to do after you have prayed for God's choice and you have to make a decision because time has run out, this is the point at which you must stop talking and start acting. You must begin.

Do so by saying to Him...

“Lord, since You know everything, You know the decision before me and the way I should go. I want only Your will. Since I no longer have the option of waiting, I will choose one of the options. If this decision is not right in Your sight, I ask Your Spirit in me to put a heaviness in my heart. If this is the right direction, confirm it with Your peace. I am willing to take whatever detours You decide to put in my path, as long as I reach the destination you have for me. In Christ's name I pray. Amen!”

Psalm 40:8 'I desire to do your will, O My God; your law is within my heart.'

Proverbs 16:3 (NIV) "Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and your plans will succeed."

Faith Rest

1. Faith rest means believing what God has said in the Bible and therefore relying upon God and resting instead of worrying.
2. Faith rest requires a knowledge of Bible promises so one has God's Word to believe. *Psalm 119:49-50; Lamentations 3:19-26*
3. When pressure comes, the believer trusts God's promises. When this is true, the believer is not worrying; is not upset; is not trusting himself, others, or circumstances. *2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, 15*
4. Faith rest is illustrated in the story of Caleb and Joshua. *Numbers 13-14*
 - A. Caleb and Joshua were part of a reconnaissance force of twelve sent into Canaan.
 - B. The mission was to gather intelligence on Israel's enemy.

- C. Caleb and Joshua trusted and rested in God's Word. This gave them courage to give a favorable report.
 - D. The remaining ten were fearful, rejected God's promises and gave a bad report to Israel.
5. There are many Bible promises to learn, believe and rest in, including:

Romans 8:28; Philippians 4:6-7; 1 Peter 5:7; Matthew 6:33; Proverbs 3:5-6; Hebrews 13:5-6; 1 John 1:9; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Hebrews 4:15-16; Philippians 4:19; and Psalm 16:8.

**When we are faced with life changing decisions
or even the day by day decisions we have to
make, let us rest in what we know about God
and trust His Word and leadership.
God the Holy Spirit helps us
make the right decisions.**

Ten Problem Solving Devices

Remember, that in making Biblical decisions, you have the Ten Problem Solving Devices that God has given to help you deal with the problems of life.

1. ***1 John 1:9*** ***Acknowledging your sins to God the Father.***
Confession of known sin.
2. ***Ephesians 5:18*** ***Result of Rebound.*** Filling/Controlled by the Holy Spirit. You want the Holy Spirit to guide you in life then problems are being solved. ***YOU DO NOT WANT EMOTIONS TO LEAD YOU.***
3. ***1 Peter 5:7*** ***Faith/Rest Drill.*** Relax and let God. ***Hebrews 4:1, 10-11*** - This is leaning (standing) on the promises of God. Trust in God – His Word and all His promises.
4. ***James 4:6*** ***Orientation to Grace.*** Living by Grace and not Law. You deal and live life based on Grace not by rules. You treat others in

grace as God treats you. This teaches us how to deal with people.

5. ***Romans 12:1*** ***Orientation to Doctrine.*** Making God's Word a priority. Familiarity with Bible Doctrine, (the Mind of Christ). Teaches us how to live. You need to know what God says...you need to have Bible Doctrine resident within you (the only way the Holy Spirit can bring to mind what you know – therefore you MUST KNOW SOMETHING).
6. ***Philippians 1:21*** ***Personal Sense of Destiny.*** Understanding that God has a plan...a purpose for your life. Now your life has meaning. You are where God wants you to be and doing what He wants you to do.
7. ***Deuteronomy 6:5*** ***Personal Love for God.*** You love God the ***1 Peter 1:8*** Father because of all that He has done for you. Learning to love God as we grow to know Him by studying. Love is based on a relationship (you need to know Him...putting Him first). You do not really love someone until you know Him.
8. ***James 2:8*** ***Impersonal/Unconditional Love for All Mankind.*** You love someone because of who and what you are, not because of who and what they are or do to you. Loving others as God loves us. This takes our eyes off people and on God...you see that person through God's eyes.
9. ***John 15:11*** ***Sharing the Happiness of God.*** (Absolute Happiness). You have inner peace and happiness in all situations. Your happiness then is based on Him and not on the details of life or other people. You are not controlled by the circumstances in life, but based on what God is doing.
10. ***Ephesians 3:19*** ***Occupation with Christ.*** Making Jesus Christ the priority in our life. This will establish what is really important in life. Christ needs to be FIRST.