

Discernment

We show discernment — for good or bad — when we make decisions. Sometimes we have to decide whether something is wrong or right and at other times we have to choose one path over another one.

As believers in Christ, we have incredible resources for decision making. We have the Holy Spirit, God's Word and counsel from others.

Because God wants what is best for us, the Holy Spirit will steer us in the right direction as we do our part and seek His will. And for that, we have to be intentional through prayer. We grow in discernment as we grow closer to God. The closer we follow Him, the more we'll recognize His voice. John 10:27 (NIV) says, "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me."

God's Word also gives us direction. It provides principles to live by and guidance for daily life. Psalm 119:105 (NIV) says, "Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path."

We also have a community of believers to give us counsel. A trusted pastor, mentor or friend can speak into our lives out of their knowledge of God and His Word. We can benefit from their wisdom and life experience.

Some choices are easy to discern. Other decisions are more difficult — like who to marry, what job to choose, where to live, what house to buy, etc. These types of decisions call for quiet, reflective time listening to God and discerning His will.

Consider these practices of discernment whenever you have a decision to make:

- Come before God in prayer. Thank Him for His ability to move in your situation. Pray that God will lead you to the right decision.
- Read the Word. As you're reading Scripture, pay special attention to passages that stand out to you.
- Ask for counsel from people you respect and trust. Get input from people who know you from different areas of your life.
- Ask yourself questions: Does this decision honor God and His Word? Will this decision lead me to a closer walk with God? Will this be a life-giving decision? Do I have a sense of peace and hope? Is this a decision I can live with for a long time?
- Don't rush the decision. Wait on God's timing!