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# Five Steps to Discern God's Will

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Free media and discipleship resources for pastors, leaders, and growing disciples.

# Five Steps to Discern God's Will

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God wants to guide you on your life journey, but do you know how to discern His direction?

“Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit’s leading in every part of our lives.” —Galatians 5:25, NLT

How do you separate what God is saying to you from all the other distracting messages around you?

## 1. Prepare Yourself to Hear God.

- **By getting right with God**

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous, forgiving us our sins and cleansing us from all unrighteousness.” —1 John 1:9

- **By surrendering your will to God**

“We know that God doesn’t listen to sinners, but if anyone is devout and does his will, God listens to him.” —John 9:31

- **By humbling yourself before God**

“Humble yourselves before the Lord and he will exalt you.” —James 4:10

- **By renewing your mind with biblical truth**

“Do not be conformed to this present world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may test and approve what is the will of God—what is good and well-pleasing and perfect.” —Romans 12:2

- **By having a mindset of faith, trust, and expectancy toward God**

“And without faith it is impossible to please him, for the one who approaches God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.” —Hebrews 11:6

- **By being patient and willing to wait on God**

“I waited patiently for the Lord, and he turned to me and heard my cry for help.” — Psalm 40:1

## **2. Ask God for Direction.**

God desires us to approach Him with specific requests for direction because it demonstrates we recognize His authority, trust His wisdom, and desire to follow His will.

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.” —Matthew 7:7-8

If you face a problem or opportunity, a fear or a desire, and need God’s guidance, Scripture assures us: “But if anyone is deficient in wisdom, he should ask God, who gives to all generously and without reprimand, and it will be given to him.” —James 1:5

- **Pray with Specificity**

Clearly articulate your request or question to God. Be as thoughtfully clear as if you are initiating an AI search. Avoid vague prayers; carefully define the request.

- **Record Your Prayers**

Write down your prayers, questions, and any specific details related to your request for direction.

- **Persist in Prayer**

Consistently seek God through prayer, even when answers aren’t immediate, trusting His timing and plan. Cultivate patience and faith, resisting the urge to rush decisions, and continue seeking until clarity emerges.

## **3. Seek God’s Directional Signposts.**

Keep a journal to document thoughts, scriptures, or impressions you believe may be God’s response over time. Review your notes regularly to discern patterns or recurring guidance that may indicate God’s leading.

## **God directs our steps:**

- **Through His Word, the Bible.**

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.” —Psalm 119:105, NIV

- **Through the prompting of the Holy Spirit.**

“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth.” —John 16:13, NIV

- **Through other people.**

“Make plans by seeking advice.” —Proverbs 20:18, NIV

- **Through providential circumstances.**

“You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.” —Genesis 50:20, NIV

## **4. Confirm the Direction Is from God.**

To ensure a decision aligns with God’s will, prayerfully evaluate it through these questions, trusting God to guide you:

- **Does it align with God’s Word?**

God’s guidance never contradicts His written Word. Ensure the direction is consistent with biblical principles.

“Guide me in the path of your commands, for I delight to walk in it.” —Psalm 119:35

- **Does it reflect godly reasoning?**

Use reasoning grounded in God’s truth, shaped by a mind renewed through Scripture, to discern His will.

“Do not be conformed to this present world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may test and approve what is the will of God—what is good and well-pleasing and perfect.” —Romans 12:2

- **Does it fit with your circumstances?**

Consider whether the direction harmonizes with the circumstances God has sovereignly arranged in your life.

“In him we have also obtained an inheritance, because we were predestined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to the counsel of his will.” —Ephesians 1:11

- **Does it align with wise, godly counsel?**

Seek input from trusted, godly advisors to confirm the direction. Their wisdom can provide clarity and perspective.

“Plans fail when there is no counsel, but with abundant advisers they are established.” —Proverbs 15:22

- **Does it bring God-given peace?**

Look for a supernatural peace that transcends circumstances, affirming God’s guidance even in challenges.

“Do not be anxious about anything. Instead, in every situation, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, tell your requests to God. And the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” —Philippians 4:6-7

Note: You don’t need a “yes” to every question to confirm God’s direction. However, a “no” to any question should prompt you to pause, pray, and seek further clarity from God before moving forward.

## **5. Knock on the doors God shows you.**

When you sense clear direction, take faithful steps forward, trusting God to correct or confirm your path.

“The steps of a person are ordained by the Lord—so how can anyone understand his own way?” —Psalm 37:23

“Your ears will hear a word behind you, saying, ‘This is the way, walk in it,’ whenever you turn to the right or to the left.” —Isaiah 30:21

**God will guide you as you take the next step by faith.**