

Finding God's Will: A 15-Step Guide to Discernment

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Christian Reflections to Build your Faith, By Melkisedeck Leon Shine

Navigating Existential Crossroads: A Framework for Seeking Divine Guidance in Decision-Making

Human existence is characterized by a continuous stream of decisions, ranging from minor choices to life-altering ones. Within a theological framework, the pursuit of divine guidance transcends mere helpfulness; it becomes a foundational principle. This process, encompassing prayer, scriptural interpretation, and introspective reflection, empowers individuals to harmonize their choices with a perceived divine will, fostering a life imbued with purpose and tranquility. This framework presents fifteen sequential steps, grounded in theological principles, to facilitate confident and faith-based navigation through life's complex decision-making processes.

1. **Cultivating Epistemic Humility:** Initiate the process with a disposition open to divine wisdom, acknowledging both the supremacy of the divine and the inherent limitations of human understanding. Humility serves as a cornerstone, preparing the way for spiritual insight. This aligns with the concept of epistemological humility, recognizing the limits of one's knowledge and embracing the possibility of being wrong.
2. **Employing the Method of Supplicatory Prayer:** Engage in heartfelt prayer, transparently expressing anxieties and aspirations. Actively invite divine intervention and direction into the decision-making process. This leverages the power of prayer as a means of communication and seeking spiritual guidance.
3. **Engaging in Hermeneutical Analysis of Scripture:** Regularly engage with sacred texts, meditating on relevant passages and seeking wisdom within their narratives. Scriptural interpretation provides timeless guidance and illuminates the divine attributes and intentions. This involves applying hermeneutical principles to understand the text within its historical and cultural context.
4. **Developing Spiritual Discernment:** Create an environment conducive to quiet reflection, actively listening for intuitive insights or guidance. Divine communication may manifest subtly, through intuition, or through counsel from trusted spiritual mentors. This speaks to the importance of developing spiritual sensitivity and discernment, the ability to distinguish between different sources of influence.
5. **Performing Motivational Analysis:** Undertake introspective self-assessment, honestly evaluating personal intentions. Ensure that desires align with divinely perceived purposes, seeking to identify any hidden agendas or self-serving motivations. This is crucial for ensuring that decisions are aligned with ethical and spiritual values.
6. **Seeking Counsel from Spiritual Mentors:** Consult with mature and spiritually insightful individuals capable of offering theological perspectives and prayerful

discernment. A supportive community provides valuable insight and encouragement, highlighting the importance of community and mentorship in spiritual growth. This reflects the principle of communal discernment within a faith-based context.

7. Understanding Kairos and Chronos: Practice patience, recognizing that divine timing is often distinct from human perception of time. Resist the urge to precipitate decisions, trusting that the divine plan unfolds according to its own sovereign timing. This involves differentiating between kairos (opportune moment) and chronos (sequential time), understanding that divine intervention may not follow a predictable temporal pattern.

8. Invoking the Gift of Discernment: Specifically request divine assistance in understanding the divine will amongst various options. Discernment is considered a divine gift, freely bestowed upon those who actively seek it. This emphasizes the role of prayer in seeking spiritual gifts for enhanced decision-making.

9. Embracing Theological Voluntarism: Acknowledge the ultimate divine control, surrendering personal desires to a perceived divine plan. This act of faith allows for the free operation of divine will within one's life. This highlights the theological concept of surrender and trust in divine sovereignty.

10. Exercising Pisteological Action: Once divine guidance has been sought, take a step of faith, trusting that the divine will direct one's path. Faith necessitates acting on the belief of revealed guidance. This emphasizes the practical application of faith as a vital element of decision-making.

11. Evaluating the Teleological Outcomes: Pay close attention to the outcomes of decisions, assessing whether they align with perceived divine purposes and attributes. This iterative process is crucial for learning and personal growth, using outcomes to evaluate the effectiveness of the decision-making process. This highlights the importance of reflecting on the results of decisions and adjusting future strategies accordingly.

12. Applying Christological Modeling: Study the life of Jesus, observing how he consistently sought his Father's guidance through prayer and obedience. Emulate his humility and reliance on the divine. This emphasizes the importance of using Christ as a model for seeking divine guidance and embodying spiritual virtues.

13. Practicing Metanoia and Seeking Reconciliation: If decisions lead astray, humbly repent and seek divine forgiveness. The divine is portrayed as gracious and readily available to restore fellowship. This reflects the importance of acknowledging mistakes and seeking reconciliation with the divine and others.

14. Experiencing Shalom: When decisions align with perceived divine will, a profound and lasting sense of peace will be experienced. This inner peace serves as evidence of divine presence and guidance. This highlights the emotional and spiritual benefits of aligning one's life with perceived divine will.

15. Maintaining a Continuous Pursuit of Guidance: Decision-making is a lifelong endeavor. Maintain a close relationship with the divine, consistently seeking guidance in all life aspects. This continuous pursuit strengthens faith and deepens the relationship with the divine. This emphasizes the importance of ongoing spiritual growth and the continuous need for guidance in all areas of life.

By diligently applying these fifteen steps, individuals can confidently navigate life's complexities, trusting that divine wisdom will guide their actions and lead them toward a perceived divine will. Remember, the divine love is unwavering, and the divine desire is for individual flourishing. May divine blessings enrich life as one seeks guidance.

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