

How to Make Right Decisions Together...Every Time

Introduction

Tune your ears to wisdom, and concentrate on understanding. Cry out for insight and understanding. Search for them as you would for lost money or hidden treasure. Then you will understand what it means to fear the LORD, and you will gain knowledge of God. For the LORD grants wisdom! From his mouth come knowledge and understanding. He grants a treasure of good sense to the godly. He is their shield, protecting those who walk with integrity. He guards the paths of justice and protects those who are faithful to him. Then you will understand what is right, just, and fair, and you will know how to find the right course of action every time. For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will fill you with joy. Wise planning will watch over you. Understanding will keep you safe. (Proverbs 2:2-11 - NLT)

1. Hasty is hazardous!

It is not good to have zeal without knowledge, nor to be hasty and miss the way. (Proverbs 19:2) Wait for the Lord and keep his way. (Psalm 37:34a)

2. Teams make team decisions!

"Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. (Matthew 19:4-6)

➤ The Method – COW LIPS

C – _____ *If you love me, you will obey what I command. (John 14:15)*

O – _____ *The godly give good advice, but fools are destroyed by their lack of common sense. (Proverbs 10:21 NLT)*

W – _____ *"Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. (Matthew 14:28,29)*

Walking by faith requires a _____ to stand on.

Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. (Psalm 119:105)

L – _____ *Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord. (Isaiah 1:18a)*

I – _____ in Prayer – *Cornelius answered: "Four days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me and said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.' So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us." (Acts 10:30-33)*

P – _____ *Yet he [Abraham] did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. (Romans 4:20,21)*

S – _____/Circumstances – *To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. (2 Cor. 12:7-9)*

➤ How To Use COW LIPS

1. Give yourself _____ to make the right decision. (If possible, at least two weeks.)
2. Get into the Scripture _____ as a couple.

3. Stay in the Scripture text where you are _____ reading.
All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Tim. 3:16,17)
4. Be on the look out for each of the _____ in the acrostic.
If you need wisdom – if you want to know what God wants you to do – ask him, and he will gladly tell you. He will not resent your asking. (James 1:5)
5. _____ every element down as you find them, and label them.
6. After you have at least ten elements listed, make a _____ page with the stated option at the top. It will look like page 4.
7. _____ all the elements listed onto the T-Square page with the appropriate label for each.

➤ **Conclusion**

Ephesians 5:21 – ***Submit to one another*** out of reverence for Christ.

Philippians 2:5-11 – ***Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross....***

Now that you know these things, DO THEM. That is the path of blessing. (John 13:17 LB)

➤ **Couple Sharing:**

Apply the COW LIPS method to a decision you are facing.

➤ COWLIPS Exercise

Situation: We had bought the house next to us at a VA auction in an attempt to resell it and liquidate credit card debt. It did not sell for three months and the double payments were INCREASING our debt. A pastor couple who had looked at the house, asked us if we would consider a lease purchase on it. We wanted to be open to it, but, frankly, it scared us to death.

For each item listed, write the letter or letters of COWLIPS which apply in front of it and place that item # and letter(s) immediately onto the Pro/Con sheet "Sell the house on a lease purchase."

1. Ed K., a believer in another church we were visiting and experienced real estate investor, told us, after we shared with him our fears about a lease option: "Let go and do what God wants, then NOTHING is a big deal, even a lease purchase."
2. Ed K. also told us: "It's hard to go wrong with one."
3. We came across Romans 13:8 in our Bible reading – *Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.* Scripture we knew applied to us, urging us to do something to get out of debt.
4. In doing our homework about lease purchases, an Internet site proclaimed lease options as a "sure fire" means of both selling a house and of not having the normal headaches of a landlord.
5. Waking early one morning, Bette was in prayer over the matter and was impressed that God might want to bless **both** the pastor couple **AND** us, not one at the other's expense.
6. We visited the pastor couple's church to check them out. In his sermon that morning, he said: "I'd rather respond to what I think God is prompting me to do with a heart of obedience and be wrong, than not to respond and miss God's blessing."
7. The Scripture printed in the bulletin that Sunday we visited the pastor couple's church was Psalm 37:4,5 – *Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this:*
8. After sharing our concern in our Sunday School class about a lease purchase arrangement, our teacher said: "Well, you can't hardly go wrong with it, if they default you get the house back to sell later. My aunt has made a lot of money that way."
9. An older couple in real estate for 40 years told us when we asked them about the lease purchase, that they would do it in a "New York minute." They are our friends, but we don't think they know the Lord personally.
10. We read in our regular Bible reading, *For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. . . . we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you.* (1 Thess. 2:3, 9b) This calmed our fears about the pastor couple's motives.
11. We had no offers on the house in three months, and the payments were killing us.
12. We were spending more and more in trying to market the house (advertising and utilities).
13. We heard a song on Christian radio proclaiming, "God will provide all your need." It really assured us that God would take care of us whether we sold the house or not.
14. We reasoned: If we sell on a lease purchase, we would not have the freedom or capability to invest again in another house until later when the sale was completed (1 or 2 years).
15. We reasoned: If we sell on a lease purchase, we would not have the capability to help our daughter and son-in-law who were experiencing severe financial hardship.
16. While in prayer one morning, we were impressed that God wanted our daughter and son-in-law to depend on Him, not us.
17. 2 Chronicles Chapter 9, we read how God blessed Solomon's generosity. Solomon's wisdom brought glory to God.
18. In 1 Thessalonians 3, we read about how people are more important than things. We glory in the people we touch and help – not things (like houses).
19. We kept thinking of Galatians 6:10: *Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.*

STOP NOW and place each element on T-Square and make decision. Do NOT factor in rest of elements below YET. Then go on to 20-23.

The pastor couple informed us they had found a place to buy and were no longer interested in lease purchasing our house.

20. Debbie G. was out looking for houses around a week after the pastor couple had dropped out, saw our "Open House" sign and got our daughter to let her in to look at the house. Coming down the stairs, finishing her look through, she was surprised to see Bette, who had just come home and gone over to the house. She asked Bette, "Would you consider a lease purchase?"
21. Debbie G., whom we had discipled, had just gone through divorce and prayed God would provide a house she could get into on a lease purchase. Debbie G. was a new believer in desperate need.
22. Selling to a newly single mom on a lease purchase certainly would delay the actual sale of the house and could put it in jeopardy.

NOW label each additional element and place on T-Square and make decision about doing a lease purchase with Debbie G.

Option: Sell the house on a lease purchase

Pros

Cons

Option: _____

Pros

Cons