

# Decision Assistance Tool

Copyright © 2020 by Harold D. Thomas  
All rights reserved worldwide.

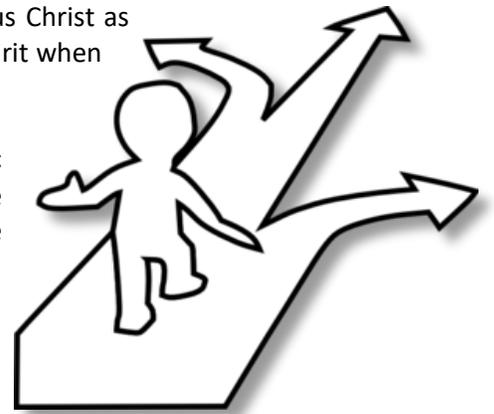
This document may be freely distributed, printed, translated and shared for God's glory.  
The only request is to include a reference to [www.UniqueBibleStudies.com](http://www.UniqueBibleStudies.com) so that others may find the website.

Scripture taken from the New King James Version®.  
Used by permission.  
All rights reserved.

## Introduction

The decision assistance tool is primarily intended for Christians who seek Jesus Christ as Lord. The objective of the tool is to assist in revealing guidance by the Holy Spirit when an important decision does not seem to have a clear choice.

It is important to understand that if you feel led by the Holy Spirit to a specific option—then by all means—this should be your decision. However, there are times when we are overwhelmed with the “pressures” of life. This is when we can become mentally and emotionally “overloaded” when facing an important decision. We tend to repeatedly think about (over and over...and over...and over) each decision variable (both positive and negative)—thereby becoming increasingly “bogged down in the weeds.” When this occurs, it makes it (1) more difficult to see things from a broader perspective, and (2) more difficult to “hear” from the Holy Spirit.



The purpose of the tool is to simplify, organize and quantify your thoughts; clarify decision variables; and minimize emotions—all with the intent of making it easier to recognize the influence and direction of the Holy Spirit—Who is our desired decision maker.

If two or more persons are involved in a decision (i.e. husband and wife, church leaders, etc.), each should complete the decision tool separately and compare results.

And yes, this is a dogmatic approach. Some may find it difficult to complete because this technique requires documentation of reflective thoughts and personal analysis. However, by taking time to write down what you are repetitively thinking about on paper, it will free up your mind so that you can see things more clearly.

One more point...prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit to assist you through this process, prepare your heart, and guide you to the decision that aligns with God's will.

Additional information as to how we make decisions is provided in a topical Bible study titled “Free Will.” This lesson may be downloaded for free at [UniqueBibleStudies.com](http://UniqueBibleStudies.com).

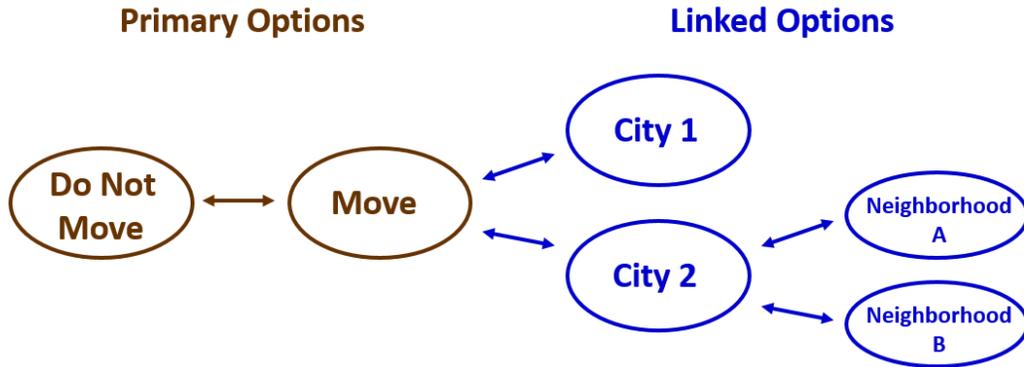
**Instructions:**

The decision assistance tool is comprised of (7) separate steps. Each step should be completed before moving to the next step. As you progress you may discover something new you have not considered (such as a new option, benefit, or cost) which may necessitate returning to a previous step.

- Step 1: Identify each decision option.
- Step 2: Draw a benefit and cost column for each decision option.
- Step 3: Identify and describe each possible benefit and cost for each decision option.
- Step 4: Assign a weight (W) of importance to each benefit (+) and cost (-):
- Step 5: Determine your intuitive / emotional response to each option.
- Step 6: Add the totals for each option
- Step 7: Reassess: With enhanced clarity, do you feel compelled by the Holy Spirit to a specific option?

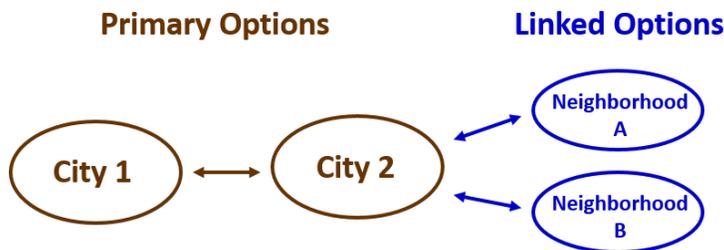
**Step 1: Identify each decision option**

Every decision has two or more primary options (or choices). Some decisions also have linked options. The first step is to identify primary options and linked options.



For example, (refer to the graphic above), let's say you're considering moving your family to a new location. Given this scenario, the primary options are do not move and move. Note how the primary option of move has two linked options: city 1 or city 2. City 2 has two linked options: neighborhood A and B. As you identify the primary options and linked options draw the interrelationships on a sheet of paper as depicted in the example.

Important note: The objective during these (7) steps is to make a choice between the primary decision options of do not move or move. After all steps are completed—and let's say a decision is made to move—then the primary decision options become city 1 or city 2, and the process is repeated. If the benefits and costs for the cities and neighborhoods were adequately documented (in step 3), the effort to decide upon which city and which neighborhood will be minimal.



**Step 2: Draw a benefit and cost column for each decision option**

On separate sheets of paper draw a two-column table for each primary and linked option you identified in step 1. Name the left column for each option "Benefits" and the right column "Costs."

Do Not Move		Move	
Benefits	Costs	Benefits	Costs
1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.

**Step 3: Identify and describe each possible benefit and cost for each decision option**

This is when you get the opportunity to "dump" all the positives (benefits) and negatives (costs) that have been going around and around in your mind and put them on paper. As you complete this stage you will likely identify additional benefits and costs you never considered.

Benefits are positive and improve life. Whereas, costs are negative because something of value must be given to obtain the benefits. As you consider each decision option refer to the table below. Document all benefits and costs in the tables you created in step 2.

Benefits	Costs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What will I gain?</li> <li>• Perceived as positive / improving life</li> <li>• Visualize ourselves:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enjoying a pleasurable experience</li> <li>• Reducing/eliminating negatives</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Creates desire and/or emotions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What will I lose/pay to obtain the benefits?</li> <li>• Perceived as negative</li> <li>• Costs include money, effort, time, etc.</li> <li>• Costs may affect others by causing them to give up something of value</li> </ul>

Depicted below is an example of benefits and costs that have been documented for the primary decision options of do not move and move. Note the following:

- A benefit for one option (i.e. Do Not Move Benefits #1 = 0 moving expense) may be a cost for another option (i.e. Move Costs #1 = moving expense).
- All relevant benefits and costs from linked options are listed in the primary decision options. For example, listed under Move are benefits of living closer to the beach, better school, and a larger home. However, remember...the focus here is upon the primary decision options. You may find yourself getting caught up in trying to decide between linked options. Do not do this. Simply identify benefits and costs for the linked options and add them to the primary options if they are relevant.

Do Not Move		Move	
Benefits	Costs	Benefits	Costs
1. 0 move expense	1. Avg. School	1. Better school	1. Move expense
2. Family visits	2. Smaller Home	2. Larger home	2. Less Family visits
3. Friends	3. Same income	3. Larger income	3. Miss friends
		4. Closer to beach	4. Stress of move



## Step 6: Add the totals for each option

Now simply add the numeric values for each option.

Do Not Move			
Benefits		Costs	
1. 0 move expense	W <sub>3</sub>	1. Avg. School	W <sub>-5</sub>
2. Family visits	W <sub>5</sub>	2. Smaller Home	W <sub>-3</sub>
3. Friends	W <sub>1</sub>	3. Same income	W <sub>-3</sub>

Weighted Score: 9-11 = **-2**  
Intuitive/Emotion Score = **1**  
Total Option Score = **-1**

Benefits		Costs	
1. Better school	W <sub>5</sub>	1. Move expense	W <sub>-3</sub>
2. Larger home	W <sub>3</sub>	2. Less Family visits	W <sub>-5</sub>
3. Larger income	W <sub>5</sub>	3. Miss friends	W <sub>-3</sub>
4. Closer to beach	W <sub>5</sub>	4. Stress of move	W <sub>-1</sub>

Weighted Score: 18-12 = **6**  
Intuitive/Emotion Score: 9-11 = **-3**  
Total Option Score = **3**

The weighted score for each option is determined by adding the positive benefit scores and subtracting the negative cost scores. The weighted score is either raised or lowered by the intuitive/emotion score. In the above example, moving has a higher total option score. As such, moving may be a prudent decision.

## Step 7: Reassess: With enhanced clarity, do you feel compelled by the Holy Spirit to a specific option?

The overall intent of this tool is to provide an opportunity to free up the mind so that it is easier to see things with improved clarity. After completing the Decision Assistance Tool you should now be able to look at your primary decision options from a different perspective (than when you began). As such, given the results of your analysis, do you feel compelled by the Holy Spirit to one of the decision options?

- If yes, your next step is to obey.
- If you do not feel compelled to a decision option...if it is possible, you may consider delaying your decision (a new option may “surface” or something may change).
- If you do not feel compelled to a decision and you must decide...this is when you must depend upon prayer and faith. As time passes—and with reflection—you will realize He was guiding you the whole time.

Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans. Proverbs 16:3

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. Proverbs 3:5-6

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. Isaiah 43:2

But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit. Jeremiah 17:7-8