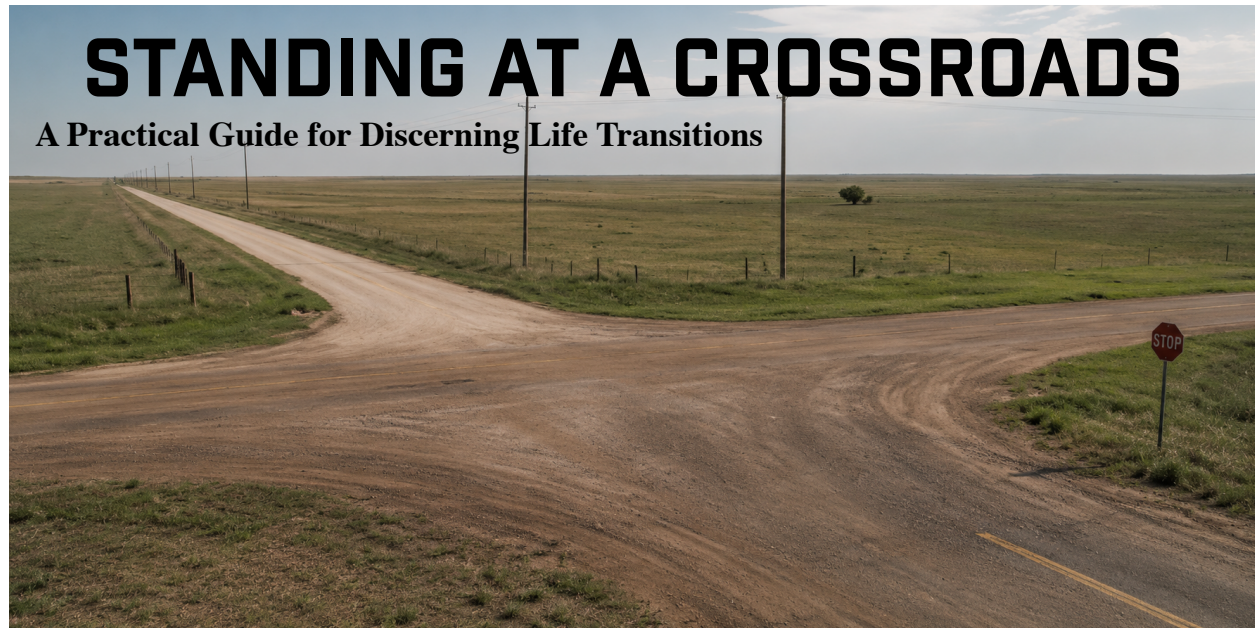




STANDING AT A CROSSROADS

A Practical Guide for Discerning Life Transitions

Imagine standing at a crossroads. The road behind you is familiar. But ahead of you several roads stretch in different directions. As you stand there, you ask yourself: *Where do I go from here?*

Over the years, I have sat with many people wrestling through these moments:

- Should I change careers?
- Should we move?
- Is she the one?
- Am I ready to have kids?
- Should I stay or should I go?
- Is God calling me toward something new?

What is the question you are wrestling with? _____

One of my mentors taught me an important truth: *The Lord never calls us from something without calling us to something*. The crossroads is not simply about what we leave behind. It is the place where God helps us discover where He is inviting us to go next.

Psychologist Daniel Levinson observed that life often moves through seasons of **building** and **reassessment**. We spend years constructing a life — careers, relationships, families, routines — until something causes us to pause and ask deeper questions:

- Do my expectations align with the reality of my life?
- Is this the life God is calling me to live?

Philosopher L.A. Paul describes these moments as “transformative choices.” These are decisions that do not merely change our circumstances — they change us.

This guide is designed to help you slow down, listen deeply, and discern the next faithful step God is calling you to take.

STEP 1: Become Free Before God

When God called Abram in Genesis 12, He called him away from security and comfort. But the Lord did not give Abram the entire map. He simply gave him the next step: “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you” (Gen 12:1).

God often does not reveal the whole journey before we begin. Instead, He invites us to trust Him with the next step. So before we ask: “Where should I go?” we need to first ask: “What is keeping me from being willing to go?”

Many times the greatest barrier to hearing God’s voice is not confusion — it is attachment. We come to God asking for direction, but we are already holding tightly to a particular outcome.

This is why followers of Jesus have practiced what is called **healthy indifference**.

Healthy indifference does not mean that we stop caring. It means we hold our plans, preferences, and desires with open hands before God, trusting that His will is better than our own.

The Apostle Paul modeled this when he left Ephesus, a church family where he had invested deeply: “But as he left, he promised, ‘I will come back if it is God’s will.’ Then he set sail from Ephesus” (Acts 18:21).

Notice the balance between planning and trusting.

1) Intentional planning: “I will come back.”

2) Surrendered trust: “If it is God’s will.”

Paul makes a plan, takes action and moves forward but he leaves the outcome in God’s hands.

Healthy indifference means we faithfully engage in the planning and the process, while surrendering the results and outcomes to the Lord.

Reflection

1) What decision am I bringing before God? _____

2) What outcome am I trying to control or over-engineer? _____

3) Am I seeking God’s will, or asking God to bless my will? _____

4) Am I running toward something good, or simply running away from something? _____

STEP 2: Pay Attention to Your Soul

Sometimes the next step is obvious: The door opens; the opportunity comes; the path begins to align, and yet, we hesitate. In those moments the most faithful thing we can do is simply take the next step.

As Kevin DeYoung reminds us, God is not hiding His will from His children. We can become so focused on discovering the “perfect” decision that we miss the opportunity to faithfully make a wise decision.

Sometimes we are asking God for more clarity because we are afraid to move.

But not every decision is obvious. Some crossroads require deeper discernment. When the path ahead is unclear, we need to slow down and examine what is happening beneath the surface of our souls.

We do this by paying attention to the condition of our souls.

Followers of Jesus throughout history have described this by asking whether we are experiencing a season of **spiritual consolation** or **spiritual desolation**.

Spiritual consolation is a season where our hearts are being drawn toward God. We experience greater faith, hope, love, gratitude, humility, and a desire to love God and others. It does not mean life is easy — we can experience consolation even in suffering — but our suffering is moving us closer to God.

Spiritual desolation is a season where our hearts are being pulled away from God. We may become driven by fear, resentment, isolation, comparison, anxiety, or the need for control. It does not mean we are experiencing difficult circumstances — it means those circumstances are leading us away from trust in God.

Am I in a season of consolation?

- ☐ I am spending consistent time with God.
- ☐ My times of Scripture, prayer, and worship are drawing me closer to Him.
- ☐ I am growing in faith, hope, and love.
- ☐ I am trusting God’s goodness, even when the outcome is uncertain.
- ☐ I sense growing peace, courage, and freedom.
- ☐ Wise and godly people confirm what I am sensing.

If you are in a season of consolation, you can often trust the quiet nudges of the Spirit. Move forward with prayerful confidence.

Am I in a Season of Desolation?

- ☐ Fear, boredom or anger is driving my decision.
- ☐ I feel overwhelmed by anxiety or uncertainty.
- ☐ I am exhausted, bitter, or resentful.
- ☐ I am trying to escape something painful rather than follow God toward something good.
- ☐ I am isolated from God and wise community.
- ☐ I am restless and looking for change simply because life feels ordinary.
- ☐ There is unconfessed or active sin in my life.

If you are in a season of desolation, be careful about making significant life decisions. Desolation can distort our vision. Pain, fear, exhaustion, boredom, and sin can cause us to mistake escape for calling.

Before moving forward:

- **Repent** — Bring your heart honestly before God.
- **Rest** — Give your body and soul space to recover.
- **Seek Counsel** — Invite wise people to help you discern what you cannot see.
- **Wait Upon the Lord** — If this is the Lord's plan for your life, you can trust that God is working even when the way is unclear.

Reflection

1) **What emotions are driving this decision?** (Faith, hope, love, fear, anxiety, resentment, exhaustion) _____

2) **What is at the root of my worry or hesitation?** _____

3) **If fear, money, and the opinions of others were not controlling factors, what would I choose?** _____

4) **When life becomes ordinary, how do I typically respond?** Do I remain faithful in the routines God has given me, or do I look for distraction, escape, or unnecessary change? _____

STEP 3: Name What You Really Want

Jesus' first question in the Gospel of John is: "What do you want?" Not because Jesus needs the answers but because He wants to give us space to say allowed what lurks deep in our souls.

There is power in naming what our hearts desire. I want:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ☐ Security | ☐ Peace | ☐ Adventure |
| ☐ Success | ☐ Control | ☐ Purpose |
| ☐ Recognition | ☐ Comfort | ☐ Other: _____ |

After naming your desire, ask why five times. Often our first answer reveals what we want on the surface, but the deeper answers reveal what is happening in our hearts.

The Five Whys

This is a simple practice designed to move beyond our first answer and uncover what is happening beneath the surface. Each answer becomes the starting point for the next question.

My desire is to: _____

1) Why do I desire this? *Because I want* _____

2) Why do I want _____
(write your answer from #1 above)

Because I want: _____

3) Why do I want _____
(write your answer from #2 above)

Because I want: _____

4) Why do I want _____
(write your answer from #3 above)

Because I want: _____

5) Why do I want _____
(write your answer from #4 above)

Because I want: _____

At the bottom of our desires we often discover the real issue at the heart of the matter.

STEP 4: Stand at the Crossroads

“Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls.”

— Jeremiah 6:16

A) “Stand and Look”

Often when we face a major decision, we quickly reduce it to two options:

Stay or leave.

Start or stop.

This or that.

Binary thinking feels simpler, but it can actually make discernment more difficult. We become trapped weighing Option A against Option B and miss other paths God may be revealing.

Wisdom sees that often there are more than two options to every decision. Sometimes discovering what the third option may be helps to bring clarity to the decision.

Describe Path One: _____

Benefits: _____

Costs: _____

Describe Path Two: _____

Benefits: _____

Costs: _____

Describe Path Three: _____

Benefits: _____

Costs: _____

Remember the path of faithfulness may not look like the easiest path on paper. Jesus calls us to take up our cross, not simply choose the road with the fewest obstacles. This exercise is not about finding the path with the most benefits and fewest costs — it is about seeing clearly so we can faithfully discern where God is leading.

B) “Ask for the ancient paths”

Throughout Scripture, when God’s people are afraid of what is ahead, God repeatedly invites them to remember what He has done — His provision, protection, guidance, and faithfulness.

Fear causes us to imagine a future without God’s presence. Remembering helps us recognize that the same God who was faithful yesterday will be faithful tomorrow. So now we look backward.

Reflection

How has God led me before? _____

Where have I seen God’s provision, protection, or guidance in my life? _____

What patterns or themes do I see in my story? _____

What unique gifts has God developed in me through those experiences? _____

C) “Ask where the good way is”

Many times when people come to process a major decision, they are not actually looking for discernment — they are looking for confirmation. Deep down, they have already chosen a path, and now they are looking for someone to bless the direction they have already decided to go.

We all do this. We can build convincing arguments for why we should walk away from a commitment, pursue a desire, or choose an easier path. We can explain it. We can justify it. We can even spiritualize it. But the question is not simply: “*Can I do this?*” The deeper question is: “*Should I?*”

- Is this the *good* way?
- Is this God-honoring?
- Does it love others?

Not every open door is the right door.

The question is not, “Will this decision help me build the life I want?” But “will this decision help form me into the person God is calling me to become?”

God’s will is not simply about blessing where we already want to go. It is about shaping us into who He has created us to be.

When assessing one of the paths forward you have identified, will this decision:

- ☐ Draw me closer to God?
- ☐ Increase my love for others?
- ☐ Grow humility and sacrifice?
- ☐ Require courage and faith?
- ☐ Produce the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) in my life?
- ☐ Align my life with Scripture?

A second question: Would choosing this path require me to lie, hide, deceive, abandon my responsibilities, or disobey what God has already revealed? If the answer to that question is yes, then God has already provided clarity. The answer is No.

God will never call you toward something that requires you to walk away from Him.

STEP 5: Walk In It

Notice that rest comes after walking.

We often want certainty before we move forward. We want God to remove every risk, answer every question, and guarantee every outcome. But God often gives peace as we faithfully walk in obedience.

Therefore, we should not assume that challenges, effort and work means you chose the wrong path. The good way forward is not always the easy way. Following God often requires perseverance, courage, sacrifice, and trust. If you prayed, listened, sought wisdom, and discerned the next faithful step — the invitation is to keep walking. To show long obedience in the same direction.

Remember, Abram never received the whole map, but he trusted the One who was leading.

My Next Faithful Step

What is one small actionable next step I can take? _____

“Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.”
— Proverbs 15:22

We are not meant to discern alone. God often confirms His direction through wise people who help us see what we cannot see ourselves.

Who is one person I will invite to walk with me and help me discern? _____

Closing prayer:

Lord, give me the courage to follow You — not because I know exactly where the road leads, but because I trust the One who walks with me. Amen.