

# House-Hunting Cheat Sheet

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These are some questions that you should ask yourself before you buy a house. If buying as a couple/family, make sure you discuss these questions together and come to agreement on the answers as you proceed.

## 1. Financial Basics

- Is this home within a safe budget ( $\leq 25\text{--}30\%$  of monthly take-home)?
- Do I have at least a 20% down payment saved?
- If I don't have a 20% down payment saved, what will be the cost of my monthly Private Mortgage Insurance (PMI), and am I willing to pay that until I have 20% equity in the house?
- What will the monthly mortgage payment be (including taxes & insurance)?
- Hidden costs: HOA fees, insurance premiums, utilities, property taxes.
- Maintenance costs: 1–3% of home value annually.

## 2. Structural & Practical Checklist

- Roof (age, condition, recent repairs?)
- HVAC (heating/cooling system condition?)
- Foundation (any cracks, water intrusion?)
- Electrical & Plumbing (updated and functional?)
- Appliances (working and efficient?)
- Bedrooms & Bathrooms (enough for current + future needs?)
- Storage (closets, garage, basement space?)
- Layout (open vs. closed floor plan — does it fit your lifestyle?)
- Yard/Outdoor Space (safe, usable, manageable maintenance?)

## 3. Location & Lifestyle

- Proximity to Church/Ministry Opportunities
- School district quality (even if you don't have kids, affects resale value)
- Commute time to work, family, and community commitments
- Access to shopping, groceries, hospitals, and basic services
- Neighborhood safety (crime rates, lighting, walkability)
- Parks, trails, or green space nearby

#### **4. Spiritual & Family Considerations**

- Does this home make hospitality easy? (space to invite others in)
- Will this home help or hinder our financial stewardship?
- How will this purchase affect our ability to give generously?
- Are we buying to impress others or to serve our family & God's purposes?

#### **5. Red Flags**

- Seller in a hurry to move with little explanation
- Unusual smells, stains, or signs of water damage
- Too many recent "cosmetic fixes" (may be hiding bigger problems)
- Priced suspiciously below market value
- You feel pressured to rush before praying and thinking

#### **6. Final Decision Questions**

- Does this home fit our budget and values?
- Are we prepared for the repairs and upkeep?
- Does this location help us serve God, family, and community well?
- After prayer, do we both feel peace about moving forward?

A home inspection by a qualified professional is usually worth doing, especially for single family homes and old houses. It's one of the best investments you can make before signing anything.