



A Time for Everything

Lesson 3

A Time to Plan

PRAYER

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

Planning, Just for Fun

We give our best to God when we plan. You could even say that to give God our best, planning is necessary. Proverbs 21:5 says, *“The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty.”* Of course, anything good that comes from our planning is solely because of God’s blessing. Proverbs 16:9 says, *“In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps.”*

Imagine your experience in a restaurant that did:

- No planning
- Poor planning
- Great planning

What would it look like if, in preparation for their wedding day, a bride and groom did:

- No planning
- Poor planning
- Great planning

Brainstorm what it would look like if a church did:

- No planning
- Poor Planning
- Great planning

GOD PLANS SO WE PLAN

Mark 8:31-33 [Jesus] then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. ³² He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³ But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. “Get behind me, Satan!” he said. “You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.”

1. Throughout Scripture we see our God is a planning God. He created the world with the plan to live with humanity in perfection, but when sin ruined this world, God immediately announced his eternal plan to send a Savior thousands of years in advance: *“I will put enmity between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head and you will strike his heel”* (Genesis 3:15). Thereafter God revealed more and more specific plans about Messiah. What lessons can we learn from the following?

- **Genesis 41** – Pharaoh’s dream of seven fat and lean cows and seven full and withered heads of grain
- **Jeremiah 29:10-11** This is what the LORD says: *“When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place. ¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you,”* declares the LORD, *“plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”*
- **John 14:1-3** *“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”*
- **Acts 17:26** *“From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.”*
- **Revelation 1:1** The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place.

WE PLAN, TRUSTING GOD TO BLESS

1.) There is such a thing as bad planning! Based on the passages below, name two things that make a plan “bad.” Give a real life example of each.

Luke 2:16-21 *[Jesus] told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’ Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I’ll say to myself, “You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.”’ But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’ This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.”*

Luke 14:28-32 *“Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, ‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.’ Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace.”*

2.) What is the difference between God's plans and our plans?

Acts 16:6-10 *Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.*

3.) We want our personal and congregational plans to be guided by God's Word while also making use of our reason and logic. What guidance and encouragement does God give us in the following passages?

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

Proverbs 19:21 *Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.*

Matthew 6:33-34 *"Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."*

Philippians 4:6-8 *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.*

GROUP DISCUSSION

Planning helps us clarify where we want to go and keeps us focused on what is most important. With your neighbor...

- List three things you currently plan for in your personal life.
- Understanding the blessings of planning, come up with two things you would like to start planning for.

A common axiom in planning goes, "We don't need to plan the things we love to do, but we do need to plan the things we don't like (or are hard to do)." How is this true in your personal life? How is this true for our congregation?

- Think of one thing your church does well when it comes to planning.
- Think of one thing our church could improve on when it comes to planning.

CLOSING

Often planners will talk about making “SMART” goals (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, **T**imed). This can be a useful framework because these are things that we can do, while we wait on God to bless as he sees fit. We don’t dictate to him what the results should be. What might be some examples of SMART goals when it comes to...

- Evangelism?
- Group Life?
- Worship?

Our Long Range Planning Committee has been meeting for months to refine our goals and will soon be taking next steps to bring before Council and congregation.

NEXT TIME: A Time to Pause