

Planning What To Do

March 24, 2019 ~ Marching Orders ~ 1 Corinthians 16.1-12

Sermon Series ~ “Marching Orders”

- Today’s message is the 3rd of a 5-part series
 1. “Knowing What To Do” / Be reasonably certain of a goal or direction
 2. “Wanting What To Do” / Align our hearts with chosen goal or direction
 3. “Planning What To Do” / Coordinate our thoughts & actions towards goal
 4. “Choosing What To Do” / Avoid distractions ~ Stay focused
 5. “Do Do Do” / Hold ourselves accountable for progress ~ No excuses
- Head / Heart / Head / Heart / Hands

Last Two Weeks Recap

- “Knowing What To Do” ~ Asked 8 questions to test certainty of decision
- “Wanting What To Do” ~ Examined difficulty of aligning heart with decision

Today’s Message

- Today’s ~ 3rd “Planning What To Do” (*coordinating our thoughts & actions*)
 - Planning is something all humans need to do
 - Some may be more gifted in it / But everybody must do it
- Humans not alone in planning abilities (*learned much past 35 yrs*)
 - A scrub jay hides food in a place it will be the next day
 - A chimp in Sweden hides rocks to throw at humans the next day
 - Elephants protected a lost woman from hyenas in cage of branches
- Only humans appear to perceive time – we see time as linear

Planning is Throughout Scripture

- NKJV ~ Only 43 occurrences of 4 forms (*plan, -s, -ed, -ing*)
- Planning found throughout Bible – though specific word not used
- Word only occurs once in Pentateuch – yet plans abound

7 Aspects of a Good Plan

1. “Good plans .. are consistent with God’s will and direction” good vs evil
2. “Good plans .. are to be assessed and can be improved by wise counsel”
3. “Good plans .. are clear, well structured, and as simple as possible”
4. “Good plans .. account for known variables” (time / resources / \$)
5. “Good plans .. depend upon support and involvement of others”
6. “Good plans .. must be flexible and adapt to changing circumstances”
7. “Good plans .. will be opposed by enemies of God”

Xition: Let’s discuss the 1st aspect of a good plan . . .

#1 – “Good plans are consistent with God’s will and direction”

- All history is “His Story” so ultimately all plans are God’s plans
 - **Read Is 46.9b-11** ~ “.. I am God, and there .. I will also do it”
 - God accomplishes His will through believers and unbelievers
 - God hardened Pharaoh’s heart (6) – Pharaoh did too (3)
 - Joseph told his brothers “you meant it for evil but God meant it for good.”
 - **Rev 17.17** ~ “.. God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled.”
 - Gamaliel advised in **Acts 5** “.. if this plan is of God you cannot overthrow it”
- Not only are all plans God’s plans – your plans ought to be God’s plans
 - Gamaliel warns us too - We might find ourselves fighting against God
 - **Josh 5** – “Man with drawn sword” – Joshua asks “Are you for us or for our adversaries?” / “No, but as Commander of the Army of the Lord I have now come.”
 - **III: Lincoln quote** ~ “**Sir, my concern is not whether God is on our side; my greatest concern is to be on God’s side, because God is always right.**”
 - **Pro 19.21** ~ “There are many plans in a man’s heart, Nevertheless the Lord’s counsel, that will stand.”
 - The “Lord’s counsel” prevails because it’s right / It’s “the plan”
 - **Pro 16.9** ~ “A man’s heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.”
 - This proverb should be very comforting to us
 - Though our plans may be a bit off, God can direct our steps aright

#2 – “Good plans are to be assessed and can be improved by wise counsel”

- “How do you know your plans are good?” / “Can they be improved upon?”
 - We become blind / desensitized to our own work / We need fresh eyes
 - **Pro 15.22** ~ “Without counsel, plans go awry, but in the multitude of counselors they are established.”
- Studies have shown that groups problem-solve better than individuals
 - **III: 1932 M Shaw** – Groups of 4 solved riddles better than individuals
 - Team building classes demonstrate this practically – ind and team scores
 - **III: Who Wants to be a Millionaire** – Lifelines
 - 50/50 / Phone a Friend / Ask Audience / (50% / 67% / 91%)
- Groups even guess better than individuals
 - **III: Jelly bean** ~ Averaging estimates get within 2% (*wisdom of crowds*)
- **Pro 12.15** ~ “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he who heeds counsel is wise.” Hear and possible heed the counsel
- **Pro 1.5** ~ “A wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel” Seek wisdom & become wise

Xition: Let’s look at the 3rd aspect of a good plan . . .

#3 – “Good plans are clear, well structured, and as simple as possible”

- Let’s look to Solomon and building of the temple
- **Read 1 Kings 5.6-9** ~ “Now therefore, command .. food for my household”
 - Clear - Hiram to manage Solomon’s men & name his own men’s wages
 - Well structured – Who, What, Where, When, and How
- **Read 1 Kings 5.10-14** ~ “Then Hiram gave Solomon .. of the labor force”
 - Simple – 1 month of work / 2 months of leave / Adoniram in charge

#4 – “Good plans account for known variables”

- Three aspects of a plan to review were in our reading (**1 Cor 16.1-12**)
 - First is the weekly collection – Paul addresses the who, what, when clearly
 - Who – “for the saints” from “each one of you”
 - What – “lay something aside .. storing up .. no collections when I come”
 - Who again – “whomever you approve” and perhaps “I go also”
 - Second is the timing of Paul’s arrival
 - **v5** ~ “I will come ,, passing through Macedonia”
 - **v6** ~ “it may be that I will remain .. spend winter”
 - **v7** ~ This isn’t “passing visit” – but “stay a while .. if the Lord permits”
 - **v8** ~ “I will tarry in Ephesus”
 - Third is that Timothy will come soon and Apollos may come eventually
- Paul addressed known variables / hinted at unknown – “if the Lord permits”

#5 – “Good plans depend upon the support and involvement of others”

- Solomon forged an alliance with Hiram to build temple (*1,000’s of men*)
 - Epic adventure / People want to be involved / Incorporate enthusiasm
 - !!!: Todd Adams recent Field and Hearth – “**Goers or Senders**” (15 yrs)
- Moses was tasked with building and equipping the tabernacle
 - Everything used had to have been carried or carted out of Egypt
 - **Read Ex 35.4-9** ~ “And Moses spoke .. in the breastplate”
 - **Read Ex 36.4-7** ~ “Then all the craftsmen .. indeed too much”

#6 – “Good plans must be flexible and adapt to changing circumstances”

- David is fleeing Jerusalem with household after Absalom’s rebellion
- **Read 2 Sam 15.30-34** ~ “So David went up .. counsel of Ahithophel for me”
 - **v31** ~ David asked God to “turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness”
 - **v34** ~ But then asked Hushai to “defeat the counsel of Ahithophel for me”
 - David had more faith in God than most men
 - Yet David acted on this new information

Xition: Let’s look at the 7th and last aspect of a good plan . . .

#7 – “Good plans will be opposed by enemies of God”

- Because 1) we’re God’s child, and 2) we’re trying to do a good thing
 - We can assume our plan will be embraced and supported by others
 - Yet often others oppose us – even those we’d think would be supportive
- “**Enemies**” is a strong word to use / Sometimes they’re Christians
 - But as Gamaliel warned, sometimes Christians oppose God
 - Ignorant Christians abound today – support nation and oppose church
- Jesus said, “.. **a man’s enemies will be those of his own household**”
 - If the Word of God divides “**nuclear family**” it must divide “**political party**”
 - Yet Jesus said we’re to “**love our enemies**” and “**pray for them**”
- Examples of opposition - “**No good deed goes unpunished**”
 - Isaac dug wells and Abimelech’s men appropriated them
 - Jacob worked for Rachel yet Laban tricked him into taking Leah
 - Nehemiah tasked to rebuild wall yet Sanballat and Tobiah opposed him

“But What About the Actual Planning?”

- These 7 aspects of “**good plans**” were extracted from biblical examples
- But I didn’t describe how to actually plan - You may be disappointed
- Planning is something we all do - Yet we don’t do it with equal ability
- Many, many books and articles exist on planning (*strategic vs tactical*)

7 Aspects of Good Planning verses Good Plans

1. Proper level of specificity – not too vague – but not too detailed
2. Objectives need to be clear – means to achieve them not as much
3. Who must be involved by When and to What degree?
4. Specific dated goals should be set and managed – adjusted as needed
5. Helpful tools - Brainstorming / List reduction / Weighted voting
6. Decompose large problems into smaller ones – less clear at first
7. Tackle first things first – prioritize everything all the time

**All humans have the ability to plan / Not all exercise this ability equally well
But your skill at planning will improve with practice**

**Jude 24-25 ~ "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and
to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy;
To God our Savior, Who alone is wise,
be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen."**

Planning What To Do - Handout

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1. Name 7 aspects of good plans. Good plans:
 - a. are consistent with _____ and _____.
 - b. are to be _____ and can be _____ by wise counsel.
 - c. are _____, _____, and as _____ as possible.
 - d. account for _____,
 - e. depend upon the _____ and _____ of others.
 - f. must be _____ and _____ to changing circumstances.
 - g. will be _____ by _____ of God.
2. Whose side was the “Man” of Joshua 5 on? _____
3. How can “asking the audience” be termed wise counsel? _____
_____ Which proverb supports it? _____
4. Clear simple plans should answer these questions? _____, _____,
_____, _____, and _____.
5. List some “known variables” involved in Solomon building the temple 1) _____,
2) _____, 3) _____, and 4) _____.
6. Todd Adams (*CPC Elder of Field and Hearth*), in describing Christian missionary work, regards all Christians as either _____ or _____. Which are you? _____
7. Why must a plan be flexible to be considered good? What does this take account? _____

8. Why doesn't God make it easier for us to fulfill our good plans? Doesn't He want to see us succeed? _____
