

Lesson 7: Planning and Setbacks

Review

You have discerned an inner calling—your vocation.
Your mind has imagined a fulfillment—your occupation.
Beware! While the first is God-given, the second is manmade.

Question: *How will you get from point A to point Z?*

Not just point B, because there are a lot of points along the way, and because...

Answer: *You need an open-handed plan.*

Make a plan and hold in your hand.
Keep your hand open to God changing your plan.

Step #1 – Have a plan.

God does nothing without a plan:

(1) Ephesians 1:11 – He is working all things according to the counsel of His will.

He plans His work and works His plan!

(2) The Tabernacle illustrates God has a pattern in heaven that He is building off of (cf. Exodus 25:40).

Therefore, it is not just wise to have a plan (i.e. prudent), but godly.

Illus. Paul did not change plans unless he had to change his plan (2 Cor. 1:15-2:4).

Make it your ambition to illustrate the faithfulness of God through your commitment to casual plans.

Illus. Luke 14:28-32 – Count the cost before engaging in building or fighting (e.g. put a sharp pencil to it).

Although you do not know the destiny, you do know yourself and your calling.

Therefore, plan to receive training and experiences that will enrich you with tools for whatever may lie ahead.

Step #2 – Be flexible.

Spontaneity is not necessarily a virtue.

By definition, being spontaneous means having no plan—not being godly!

Being spontaneous on a vacation may be necessary for rest, but then being spontaneous has become a plan.

Flexibility is a virtue since our plan is always under God's plan

Interruptions! Delays! Redirection!

Proverbs 16:9 – “The mind of man plans his way, but the LORD directs his path.”

Man proposes—God disposes.

James 4:15 – We must add to our plan, “Lord willing”—why? We may not even be alive later!

Application

Regarding vocation, it is not uncommon for a young person to know the endpoint, but not the path (“career”).

You are at point A, but you imagine a point Z and a way to get to point Z—both are still unknown.

God may even give us a goal, but that does not sanction the path our imagination envisions.

Therefore:

We should believe with *expectancy*, but not with exact *expectations*.

Trust that God will lead you and that His leading is ultimately best (Ps. 23:3; 48:14).

Examples of a Zig-Zag path to point Z (hence “Z”): Joseph, Moses, David, Paul.

Why does God often lead His people on a zigzag path?

Possible answers:

- (1) Testing builds character, ← It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth (Lam. 3:27).
- (2) Delays bring humility,
- (3) Deliverances are more wondrous and remembered (Ps. 111:4),
- (4) God is better known, and
- (5) His glory is more seen.

Therefore, make your plans and wait expectantly for the Lord.