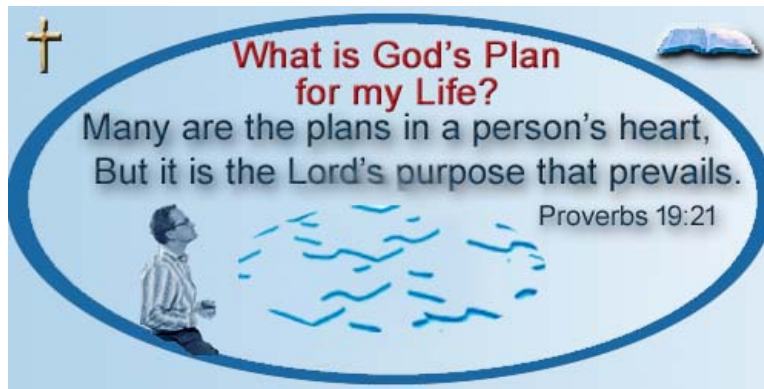


MAKING PLANS



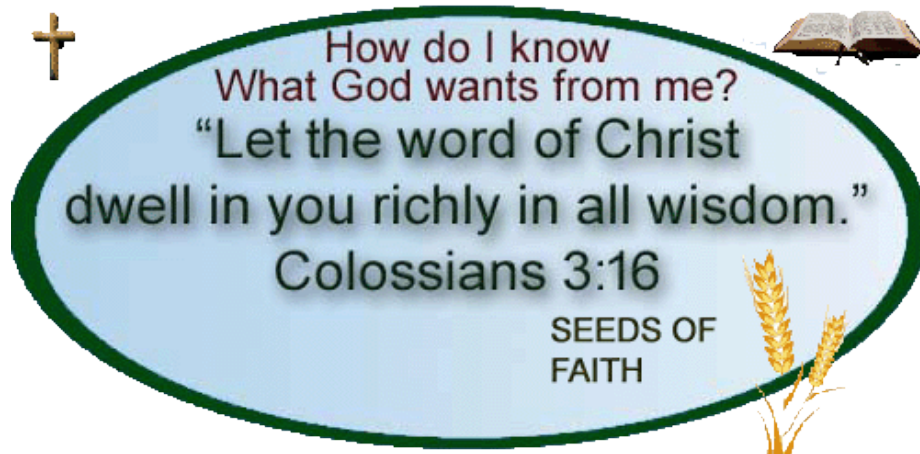
Making Plans For The New Year?

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." Jeremiah 29:11

We're starting a New Year and a common practice by some people is to make a list of "New Year Resolutions." The fact of the matter is that for most, the list has been put aside and forgotten by the time we reach February, or even before. Why is that? Simply that making plans require much more than putting out a list, but rather first, it is to define our intended core purpose from the heart, and asking ourselves whether or not it lines up with God's will for our life. Jeremiah clearly defines that God's thoughts and plans are to give us His peace, and desires to give us hope and a future, in this life and for eternity. In Luke 14:28, Jesus asked the question, "For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has *enough* to finish it?" In other words, Jesus is telling us that we must have a reason to live and plan our lives, not simply live as we go day by day. In Ephesians 2:10 Paul said, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."

Let's make true plans to seek, follow and serve our Lord and Savior in 2021. May this New Year bring us all His blessings as we honor the path He has for each of us.

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John MacArthur, in his teaching on the Book of Luke gave us this insight.

“How do we know how to apply the Word of God in life’s situations? First, we discover that by studying His Word, we think biblically. Then, the Spirit of God guides our life and leads us through the Word. That’s why Scripture says, “Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly.” Therefore when we think biblically, our thought process is dominated by an understanding of divine truth, and our reactions to life’s situations bring biblical responses that conforms to God’s Word.

Christianity is defined by the understanding of the pure divine truth, so that it so dominates our mind and that we instinctively act in response to that understanding. And so we endeavor to understand the mind of Christ that we might think the way He thinks, and so conduct our lives accordingly.

The Bible says, “as a man thinks in his heart, so is he. Religions, on the other hand, adopt moralities that they define, and while they claim to be worshipping God, in effect they seek recognition and rewards from God. However, true relationship with God is to serve Him. This is exactly what Christ came on this earth to show us, and proclaim as the only way to Salvation.”

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Who will I follow?

“A man’s heart plans his way,
but the Lord directs his steps.”

Proverbs 16:9



As we make plans for our life, the tendency is oftentimes to seek comfort, pleasure and blessings. However, while those intentions may not necessarily be wrong, do we seek to honor God in the process? We make plans for career, family and so on, but shouldn't those plans line up with God's Word and wisdom?

Psalm 127:1 says, “Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it.” We can conclude from this scripture that any plan we make that doesn't fit in with God's sovereign plan for us, will not only become futile, but as well can result in regrets. In Matthew 6:24, Jesus is quoted, “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.” In other words, if our plans seek to serve materialistic worldly selfish desires, we then consciously exclude God's guidance in the process, and thereby knowingly choose to reject God's direction and will.

Let's commit, in this New Year 2021, to seek God's guidance so that our plans glorify God as well as bring us His peace and joy. To achieve this, let's remember the scripture “Your word *is* a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” Psalm 119:105.

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Whom will I trust?

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
And do not lean on your own understanding;
In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He shall direct your paths.”

Proverbs 3:5-6



Isn't the fear of hearing "NO" from the Lord perhaps the reason why we sometimes fail to ask for His guidance and trust Him? Do we perhaps already know that our plans may not be what the Lord would want from us? If we are steadfast in studying God's Word, obviously God gives us the discernment to evaluate whether we are submitting to His will or not. If we affirm that we trust God for eternity, in all honesty, shouldn't we be able to trust God for this very limited lifetime on this planet?

In the present pandemic, we can find security and peace if we simply trust God. However, it also infers that we must be wise and avoid situations where we could be compromised. We must discern between temerity faith and putting our faith in God. Sometimes God says no because He has a better plan for us. And when this happens and we choose to follow the Holy Spirit's guidance, we quickly find out that God is always right.

Whenever we trust God with the intent to follow His will, we are assured that He will never forsake us. After all, didn't He even accept to suffer and die for us? In Philippians 4:13, Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." That includes trusting God for all our life plans and goals.

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Putting Plans to the Test!

What's the purpose of making plans?

Should we... or should we not?



“Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit”; whereas you do not know what *will happen* tomorrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you *ought* to say, “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.” But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.” James 4:13-16

Here are questions to consider when making plans and setting goals for our lives:

- 1- Will it be spiritually profitable?
- 2- Will it contribute to improve myself and those whom I am responsible for?
- 3- Will it hinder me in my faith in God?
- 4- Will it start a positive habit that honors God in the process?
- 5- Will it be consistent with Christ's teachings?
- 6- Will it glorify God?
- 7- Will striving to achieve the goal give me peace and joy as a result or will it bring stress in my life?

Putting all our plans and goals to the Lord's test is a wise manner to establish whether or not our plans will contribute to improving ourselves, both on the physical and spiritual levels. We must as well add prayer to ask God's guidance and discernment in making plans. Let's place God at the helm of our life's ship in 2021.

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PLAN TO SEEK...

Knowledge... Psalm 119:105

Understanding... Psalm 119:130

Discernment... Hebrews 5:14

Wisdom... James 3:17

Here are, in a nutshell, the four most important attributes to seek from God.

First, it is the “Knowledge” of our Creator’s purpose and will for our lives. And, how do we acquire this knowledge? “Your Word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.” Psalm 119:105.

Second is the “Understanding” of God’s plan for our lives. This is achieved through not only reading God’s Word, but very importantly studying its context as well as comparing scriptures from prophets and apostles who were inspired by the Holy Spirit. “The unfolding of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.” Pr. 119:130.

Thirdly, “Discernment” is an attribute we should strive for so we can know right from wrong. “But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.” Hebrews 5:14.

Finally, “Wisdom” is a most important attribute of God that we acquire through having a healthy fear of God, but as well a willing heart to apply God’s Word to our lives for the purpose of glorifying Him. “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.” James 3:17

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