

## HOW TO MAKE GODLY PLANS

SERIES: HOW TO: LIFE | WEEK 8 | 8.1.2020

Stephen, this is gonna be your last Sunday in leadership, we gotta say thank you to you, [APPLAUSE] church. Thanks, Stephen, you've been an incredible blessing, you and Jesse, and you have been the one who has created the label at Calvary "high capacity volunteer." David starts next week but you're going to still be up here. We love you, thank you. You have for – what is it? – two years since you told us that you needed to step aside from being a high capacity volunteer? That's the problem with volunteering; it is the blessing of volunteering. Thank you, Stephen. Love you, appreciate your time. [APPLAUSE] And, um, yeah, I'm told David Virgo, who's going to be our new Worship Leader, left Tennessee today to head to Pennsylvania. So, anyhow, we're excited next week he'll be with us and he'll be leading with us so we're excited about that.



Stephen

Welcome to those of you who are joining us online, thank you. I hope you chat it up in the chat box, it's the best way to have community to just chat back and forth on there, there's online pastors doing that. Those of you who are outside this morning good morning, thank you for jumping out there, I hope it's not raining but if it is I know you've got lots of cover out there, so that's great. And for those of you in the room thank you for being in the room! And I want to just give an extra big shout out to the children in this room. Listen, we love having you in this room [APPLAUSE] and I just want to say good morning to you. And, you know, you just relax, it's okay, this is – we're just hanging out together, it's a good morning together. So I hope that you hear what we're sharing; I hope it's a blessing to you. Parents, thanks for bringing them in and it's just a wonderful day to have them in church with you. And next Sunday we're going to take the next step, not only is David Virgo coming next Sunday but next Sunday we're going to have some children's programming, you're going to hear more about that throughout the week so they're going to have some classes and they've been working incredibly hard to figure all that out so that's next week, bring your kids if you feel comfortable with that, we'll be doing all sorts of stuff to make it easy and comfortable to do that, so we love that.

Hey, listen, a couple of things to mention to you. We are in need of people serving here at Calvary because of all this, it just sort of changed all of those rhythms and how we get involved and who gets involved and when. So if you feel comfortable serving in this time in person, we need your help in a number of areas. Sound and Production, how we make all that goes on in this room, outside, and online happen takes an army of people to make happen and so if you want to learn it, now is the time. In fact, I'd like to say like if it ever even crossed your mind that you might be good at that, touch base with us. You can go online to [cfdowningtown.com/serve](http://cfdowningtown.com/serve) and you can fill out some stuff there [CHECK THE PRODUCTION BOX], we'll be in touch with you, or just go back to the soundboard right afterwards and say, "I'm interested in helping out in Production."



Soundboard

Also, starting out with the Kidz stuff, we need help in Kidz. Again, [cfdowningtown.com/serve](http://cfdowningtown.com/serve) [CHECK KIDZ BOX], we'd love to have you jump in on that with us. And one other thing, we're still serving coffee and bagels free every week [PAUSES] – no, we're not serving bagels, old habits die hard – packaged goodies, all sorts of stuff but every week free, but we need people to help with that process. Again, [cfdowningtown.com/serve](http://cfdowningtown.com/serve) [CHECK COFFEE/BAGELS BOX]. So if you want to jump into those, we want you to keep on serving and being a part of what God's doing here. Again, thank you so much.

Also, we don't pass a bucket any longer here for giving, but we still rely on the giving to keep the

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ministry of the Gospel going out and I'm just telling you in this time it is going out all the time in ways and more than it ever has before. I decided to mention this to you [cfdowningtown.com/give](https://www.cfdowningtown.com/give) will give you all the different ways in which you can give. I would encourage you to go there and give. The month of July, well, everyone's been asking me all along throughout this whole period of time we're in, "How's giving been?" And I've been just like God's been so good, it's been crazy, it's just – we thought it would just drop off the cliff and it hasn't and so we're so thankful for that, but in July it did. So if you would consider giving, again, [cfdowningtown.com/give](https://www.cfdowningtown.com/give). Thank you for your faithfulness. Thanks for being part of what God's doing. The ministry is going out so we're excited about that.

So thank you so much for being here this morning. Those of you who are in the room I just want to say one other quick thing, one of our global partners, our missionaries, is with us, Tom and Sandy Basile are down here on the second row, stand up and wave at everyone, Tom and Sandy Basile. [APPLAUSE] And listen, they're from Mexico, Pueblo, Mexico, they do unbelievable mission work. Just stop up here and see them afterwards.

Okay. Ready to get going? HOW TO: LIFE, book of Proverbs, today we're studying planning. And when God speaks in wisdom to us He gives to us His attribute of wisdom and He gave wisdom to a guy by the name of Solomon who wrote it down to hand it to us so we can live life wisely, as opposed to as Proverbs talks about all the time—foolishly. The wise or foolish, how to life, I want to live a wise life. I want to hear what God's wisdom is for me.

If you want to, here would be how I would look at this message today. If you want the notes—everything's [cfdowningtown.com](https://www.cfdowningtown.com) forward slash serve, forward slash give, forward slash notes. The notes are on your [WAVES HIS CELLPHONE] whatever this thing's called, whatever you're looking at today, at [cfdowningtown.com/notes](https://www.cfdowningtown.com/notes) and there are four simple things with four verses on planning. There's like at least 51 verses in the book of Proverbs on planning, so this is a big subject, this is something God wants us to hear. We have just picked here for the sake of this five different verses that we've listed on here that'll help you go through here.

<https://www.cfdowningtown.com/notes>

### SERMON NOTES 8/2/2020

#### 1. Pray

*Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established. Proverbs 16:3*

#### 2. Plan

*The wise man looks ahead. The fool attempts to fool himself and won't face facts. (TLB) Proverbs 14:8*

#### 3. Get help

*Plans are established by counsel... Proverbs 20:18*

#### 4. Work the Plan

*The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty. Proverbs 21:5*

*Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring. Proverbs 27:1*

So here's what we're going to do, I want to just sort of set this up quickly. I'm going to give you just four little things that the Proverbs talks about like categories on planning that'll help you think about this, and then I want to throw out just a few questions that you might have. Sort of some "But what about this?" and end with a story and that'll be our morning on planning. If you want to go to the verse that I think is – if I had you to remember one verse throughout Proverbs on planning its Proverbs 16, verse 3. If you want to memorize a verse on planning, if you want to keep a verse in your head, this is the verse you should keep in your head, 16:3 of Proverbs:

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*Commit your work to the Lord and your plans will be established.*

—PROVERBS 16:3 (ESV)

So let me ask you this question, you just raise your hand or if you're on online just put in the chat "I am" or "I'm not" — how many of you in here are a planner? [HE SURVEYS THE AUDIENCE] Not bad. How many of you are just totally not a planner, you're not going to, you just don't plan? [HE SURVEYS THE AUDIENCE] Awesome! Awesome! We asked our staff that question this week and most of our staff were planners. And by the time most of the staff would raise their hands the ones that are not planners sort of raised their hands sort of sheepishly and wanted to say that.

As I've asked around this week sort of, I don't know, unofficial poll asking what areas do you find yourself planning in most? Because when you think about it, there's a, you know, an infinite amount of areas that you could plan in. And as I've talked about the things that people came up with were finances. Another one, I like this one, this one kept on coming up, it was sort of a tie between vacations and weekends, planning my vacations, planning my weekends. And this was another one that I'm so – I'm beyond this so I probably don't think about it, it was kids' sports; that was the next thing that came up. And then I asked this question of everyone I was asking about this, I said, "Hey, what's your biggest frustration in planning?" And the first two started with a "c". The first one was COVID, and the second one was change. And then it went from change to people, that was their frustration in planning because I guess people get in the way of our plans. The fourth one was boss, we'll stop there.

Okay, I told you there were four things, four little categories that are on your [cfdowntowntown.com/notes](http://cfdowntowntown.com/notes) that the Scriptures talk about when it comes to planning. And the first one I'm just gonna put under a big category of pray, and the text says this in 16:3 of Proverbs:

*Commit your work to the Lord and your plans will be established.*

—PROVERBS 16:3 (ESV)

**1. PRAY** I'm going to tell you this is the first one, this is the main one, this is the one you gotta keep on coming back to, and it shouldn't just be at the front end of the planning. So, "Okay, Lord, I'm about ready to plan; I commit my plans to You," and then just come up with your plans and end it at that, but it's the first thing, it's the first thing, and it becomes the main thing and the only thing, and you just keep on cycling back to it. Whatever your plans are you commit them to the Lord, you keep on giving them to the Lord. Jesus did it; prayed at the beginning of His ministry, prayed before He chose His disciples, prays before He goes to the cross. I would just say to us let's commit the plan for our day, commit the plan to the Lord for our week, commit our plans to the Lord before we make a purchase, before we even begin the resource.

And I would just say this to all of us watching in this room, online, outside, we need to stop crowd sourcing our plan. I mean, I just see this constantly, everyone's gotta go out for a vote. I'm about ready to buy a car, what kind of car should I buy? I'm trying to figure out where to go on vacation. I'm trying to figure out the schooling for my kids, what should we do? And we go out and we ask everyone's opinion and then we pick the opinion we like the most—we need to go to God. And that's what this text says is the Proverb that is so important: "*Commit your work to the Lord and your plans will be established.*" Keep bringing that to Him.

**2. PLAN** The second one is create a plan, that's what the wisdom of the Proverbs these 51 verses say is plan. Plans matter. Don't just go at this thing called planning with going, "Life will happen. Life does happen. It's all going to happen anyhow so I'm

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just going to roll ahead." I think for many of us this is exactly what has happened.

In fact, I want to just say this right up front regarding the biggest frustration most people had—COVID and the feeling regarding COVID as we went into deeper conversations were this, is, "I really can't plan right now. Everything is topsy-turvy, everything's just unleashed. We just have no clue where things are going so I've just sort of forgotten about planning. I'm stepping aside. I'm stepping back from planning." I want to suggest to you that if there's ever a time that we recognize that we *are* out of control in our world it's now been laid bare before us that we don't have control.



We thought we had control until March 15 when all of a sudden we realized we have none. And rather than seeding that moment I believe this is a phenomenal moment to begin to plan. A phenomenal moment to realize that up until this time we were sort of just bumping along the bottom of life. We're just doing everything everyone told us we needed to do; the kids go to school, then they go to soccer, then they go to dance class, then they go to this, and then we repeat, and we just sort of bump along and go after it.

Other than planning on who has to be where when and which vehicle goes where to drop off which kid, life just sort of went on and just kept on repeating; and other than planning out the details of that there was no seeking God as to what do we do next. And I think one of the things that this moment has done for us it's taken the wrap off of all of that and said, wow, we actually have decisions that we have to make to decide what is it that we're going to do. Kids are going to be home now? I mean, I rarely look at Facebook but – panic! What are we going to do this year? And yet it opens up for us a moment to say, "I've gotta stop. I've gotta commit that to the Lord and I've got to make a plan." Listen to what Proverbs 14:8 says:

*<sup>8</sup> The wise man looks ahead.*

— "Yeah, but that looks scary so I don't want to do it." Look what it says. So if you're going to go that route —

*The fool attempts to fool himself and won't face facts.*

**–PROVERBS 14:8 (TLB)**

Make a plan, look to the future. You say, "I don't know how I can work from home and have the kids being homeschooled at the same time, and have all of us in the house at the same time." And in my experience in the last four or five months all of us using Zoom at the same time, just to get enough Internet bandwidth to make it all happen without freezing up, the words I hate the most on my screen is YOUR INTERNET CONNECTION IS UNSTABLE. Well, that's because we're all taking maximum amount. But we stop and we say, "I'm going to create a plan in every aspect of my life." And again, go back to number one and the main thing, because all of a sudden I don't know what to do. I don't know where to send the kids to school. I don't know how to handle the schooling. I don't know how I'm going to teach them. I don't know how we're going to all work in the same room. I'm going to come up with a plan and we're going to begin to listen to God and commit our work to the Lord so our plans will be fulfilled.

### 3. GET HELP

And the next one, #3, get help. And I think one of the things that we oftentimes do is we forget that as we're making our plan that God gives us godly people around us to go ask for their help.

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Listen to Proverbs 20, verse 18:

*<sup>18</sup> Plans are established by counsel . . .*

– PROVERBS 20:18 (ESV)

So all of a sudden you feel like, yeah, there's a place I'm wanting to go, something I'm wanting to do, and we said we need to go get counsel. Again, our tendency is to go to social and crowd sources—I would say to us no, let's back up for a moment, who is it that you know that is really good in this one specific area; who, when you look at their lives they have planned in that area, they have succeeded in that area.

Maybe it's in the area of child rearing, maybe it's in the area of trying to figure out how to work and do a bunch of other things at the same time and be able to be successful at that. Maybe it's in the area of a medical need that you have, or a goal that you have in the area of say maybe losing weight or something like that and you go to that person and you say, "How are you doing that?" "How is it that you're able to do all that during the day and you still lead a Bible study at night?" "How is it that you've been able to maintain the disciplines in your life of spiritually and physically and professionally and as a family and still succeed?" And you see certain people and you go, "You're amazing that you're able to do that!" And you go to them, "It says here, '*Plans are established by counsel,*' here's what I'm thinking, here's how I'm trying to do it, how did you do it? How did you get there? Can you just give me a little bit of direction there?" And all of a sudden that's huge. And oftentimes we think *I got this* and we don't want to ask because when we ask we create a little bit of accountability and people expect that we're going to go down that way.

## 4. WORK THE PLAN

Number 4 is huge to me, work the plan. Listen to these words, Proverbs 21:5:

*<sup>5</sup> The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance,*

— like if you actually do it something happens, and the problem is we sit down and we create plans and we write them down, maybe you're a guy that writes into moleskin and you're just writing them down. Or maybe you're the person that you have a journal going at all times and you're writing them down. Maybe you're a little 3 x 5 card type of person and you've got them on there. Maybe you're one that just, you're phenomenal with the brain but you've got all sorts of categories in your brain and all those plans are in there, but you never get there if you don't do it.

I can just tell you one of the most frustrating things that I've seen throughout the course of my life is the amount of meetings that I've sat in that are planning meetings.

Anyone love planning meetings? [LAUGHTER] Here's why I don't like planning meetings. They're long, they're laborious, we talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, and then about a day later something else happens and all these marvelous ideas that everyone was so excited and created all these little one-liners for are out the window and no one ever cares about them again, and no one ever really goes after them. And then we have to have another planning meeting to re-plan everything that we didn't plan—you know what I'm talking about? And maybe your frustration is the same but is different than mine in planning. But here's what this text is telling us:



*<sup>5</sup> The plans of the diligent surely leads to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty.*

– PROVERBS 21:5 (ESV)

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Work out that plan. There's the four things. Give it to God. I'm just gonna say over and over:

**Give it to God ▶ Pray ▶ Bring it back before God**

**2▶ Plan 3▶ Get help 4▶ Actually work the plan**

Let's go back to #1, give it to God, keep bringing it to God—not just at the leading edge, at the end. So that leads me to a verse that I want to use to set this up because if you just do that, you're doing planning, you're in the wisdom of God, you're acting out of wisdom and great things come when we act according to what God has told us to do. In this case His attribute of wisdom of living wise lives of planning. But here's a fascinating statement and it sort of goes to what we were just talking about a moment ago when we were saying a lot of times we plan but nothing ever comes out of it. Look at Proverbs 27:1; if you're looking at your notes it's the last verse listed there, it says:

*<sup>1</sup> Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.*

– PROVERBS 27:1 (ESV)

You get this. Got your plan and you're even giving it to God, you're praying about it, you've talked to people about it, you're working it, you're all over it, and then you get unwelcome news from your doctor, or you see an image on your teenager's phone that is absolutely unacceptable, or a second wave of COVID hits, or someone wrongs you, or a loved one suddenly dies. *"Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring."* And it sort of has a way of bringing the brakes on this planning thing.

Our staff was having a great discussion about this this week and there's a verse in James that we have heard many times but I think in this moment that we live in, like it all of a sudden makes sense. James Chapter 4, verse 13, says:

*<sup>13</sup> Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit"—*

— I mean, just a couple 5-6 months ago we couldn't imagine a day that we couldn't just hop on a plane and go wherever we wanted for whatever reason and make a plan. He says those of us who are saying hey, let's go do that, listen to this:

*<sup>14</sup> yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring.*

— and then James says:

*What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.*

*<sup>15</sup> Instead*

— he says —

*you ought to say,*

— and this goes back to the first thing and the main thing and the only thing – commit it to the Lord —

*"If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that."<sup>16</sup> As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. <sup>17</sup> So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.*

– JAMES 4:13-17 (ESV)

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There is this incredible reminder that I feel like it's really important in this time. When it comes to planning so much of our planning has just been to buy those tickets, to prepare that spreadsheet, to move to the next situation in our business or in our personal life, and this verse reminds us what happens when that day comes you can't do that. And we couldn't have imagined of such a day and he says our lives are like a vapor, a mist [SNAPS HIS FINGERS] that appears for a moment and is gone; and he says I want you to change your focus and put it in on Jesus. When we're doing our planning whatever our planning is I don't want you to see this time as a lost time. I don't want you to pop it neutral and wait for a vaccine or wait for something that'll make this better, or wait until it passes, or wait until after the election, or— don't allow this moment to put our planning in hold. In fact, leverage this moment.

I was just thinking about this this week because the thing that I hear the most about right now is the kids being home. Use this as a moment—what is your plan? When else do you get all 24 hours with your kids? When else is it that you get to work from home and you don't have to be sitting there dealing with the daily grind of driving back and forth in traffic? How can we plan to leverage these moments? James says you only have a few of them, they're going—the moments are going away quickly. How are we going to plan to do something that matters?

So as I've been talking to individuals over the last couple months there seems to be a lot of darkness hanging over lives. There seems to be a lot of dead ends that people are hitting because everything has been thrown helter-skelter. And even in the moment where I'm able to say to a person, "God is in control," I know it doesn't feel like it. I know it feels like all the foundations are shifting. God is in control. The response is, "But I can't get there because I can't feel that. It doesn't look like He's in control." And so then there's the answer, I mean, "Is there a possibility that God is just angry with me? I can't seem to make progress." And that's why a lot of people just really, I mean, there's crazy stuff going on behind closed doors. There's crazy stuff going on in individuals' lives and some of the stuff that's presenting right now is just ugly because of this.

And the question is: Is God angry with me? And I say, you know, a lot of times in our world our sinful response to things is angry. I don't want to see us taking and projecting that onto God. In fact, the thing that I want you to know and just start out with today is He loves you. Do you remember those words of Jeremiah 29:11? They are words you see on plaques and this kind of thing all over the place.

***<sup>11</sup> For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.***

**– JEREMIAH 29:11 (ESV)**

God says for I know the plans I have for you, these are plans where He wants to help you or He wants to love you, wants to give you a hope and He wants to give you a future. Instead, we're going, "God, is He angry?" And we need to stop and say no, He loves you. I want [INAUDIBLE 0:11:43.5] you this morning to be swallowed up in that love. I want you to put aside this accusation that Satan's trying to put on you that God hates you, that He's angry with you, that He's done with you, that He's put you on the back shelf for now. And so then the moment I mention Satan in that, the question is well, is Satan winning? It feels like the power of Satan has been unleashed in our world, and whether it be on a macro level or just quietly internally it just seems like things have become unhinged when it comes to satanic power. And we need to remember, yes, Ephesians Chapter 4 tells us this in, I'm sorry, Chapter 6 in verse 12 says this:

***<sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood,***

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— it's not your husband, it's not your wife, it's not that kid, it's not that teenager, it's not that leader of a country or a state or whatever. It's not the flesh and blood that we wrestle against, but it is against principalities and against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age:

*but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*

– EPHESIANS 6:12 (ESV)

Yes, our world is messed up by sin *but*—and this is why we come here, it's why we celebrate, it's why we get to join together this morning, why we ought to be giving shout-outs in this place today—Jesus has overcome this world. And when all of a sudden that darkness becomes exposed for all to see and everyone's going, "Yes, this is messed up by sin and Satan's running the table right now," we now can step back and say, "but thanks be to our God the Father through Jesus Christ." He transforms us. He reconciles us. He cleanses us. He makes us his own and He has called us by His Name. We no longer have to live under that dark cloud, and we need to stop and we need to say, "That's not who I am. I don't need to go there in my home. I don't need to behave that way."

I just, um, saw an incredible expression of this just, um, just recently where there was just insane amounts of profanity and just ugly words being spoken, and I'm reminded that is not of God. You just, I mean, you probably saw in the news this week Bibles being burned in Portland. Yes, that's exactly what's going on in our world. We know that as the times come closer to the end Satan gets more and more furious and Satan is going to throw everything that is his command.

But we as children of the Most High God who have put our trust in Jesus Christ, who have His Holy Spirit to live in this life, we need to step back for a moment and say, "No, I will not be a part of that world. That is the kingdom of darkness." [APPLAUSE] "I want to be a part of the Kingdom of Life and Light, and I want to plan towards that." And so much of what we're saying it's like, "Uh, it's a terrible time," "It's dark," "All is lost," "I don't even know how this generation is going to make it. I wonder what they're going to name this generation; I think we have an idea what they're going to name this generation." And so we give up and we just make this self-fulfilling prophecy that that's where it's going to go. "Oh, the world's going to come to the end so I'm not even going to try now." No. He says to keep on planning and putting our attention on the thing that matters. Jesus came into this world to seek and to save that which was lost. He came into this world to take us and get us to a place where we no longer had to live under the condemnation of sin.

And listen, I hear a lot of people saying, "Well, but, I get that for some people," but you say, you know, "I've messed up too much, I don't think I can— I don't think there's any recovering from that moment." And I'll even get, you know, "Is there a Plan B for me? You know, there was a day I could have been in



God's plan and I was trying to go down God's plan and I was doing well in that until I fell off that cliff." But I want to remind you and I just want to keep on talking to you about this: Jesus came into the world to seek and save that which was lost, so to say that if I messed that up – NO, you're the one He came to save. You're the one He came to give His grace to. That's why the word grace is all the way through the Bible to let us know that He wants to make this right for us. He does love us. He does care about us. God's "A" plan for your life is rooted in His grace and His love and His mercy. BUT it doesn't feel like that when you're going there and I get that, and I know that this time doesn't – we have to remind ourselves that this time doesn't feel like that.

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So let me just throw this out for you: All of us, aw, maybe not all of us, majority of us, we've gone for a good hike and a lot more of us have gone for a good hike in the last five months than we had had in the private prior five months. And I don't know about you but there's just something about going for that hike and you finally, after a thousand switchbacks and sitting down and grabbing a drink of water going, "I don't know if I can make it to the top," and looking to see and you've hardly made it any distance. And you finally get to the top of wherever it is that you're hiking to and you get there and you look out and the first response is [GASPS]

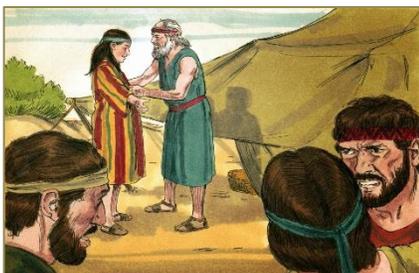


"Wow!" You get to see that river or that lake or that mountain range or to see way in the distance and there's this feeling like you're on the top of the world, the air is cleaner, there's a feeling of accomplishment, it's feeling like everything's right. And oftentimes in that moment we just put our hands up and just scream out and yelp and it's just like, "I'm on the top of the world!"

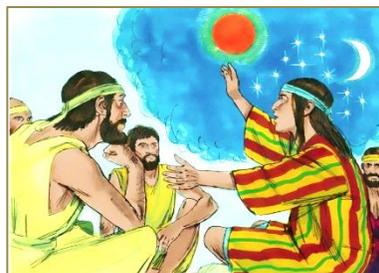


But it was only moments before that that you were trying to find your way through the trail, that you were lost, that you went the wrong way, that you got around the circle the second time and you realize *We did this once before*, and you finally figured it out; those twists and turns though are really frustrating. You finally get there at the top of the mountain and you look down and you see these little dots of people walking down below there, or you see where the trail went, or you see where the car is where you parked and you go, "Wow! I came from there." All of a sudden it makes sense and you can see everything and everything makes sense, but when you were on the trail or you're in the middle of that woods or you were in that really hot meadow in-between two hills it felt totally disorienting.

That's where a lot of us are at right now, but I want to lift you up and I want you to see through a story in the Word of God that that's not always the way it is, that God has a bigger picture in this. And when we when we can pull back and look at that bigger picture we can go, "Okay. I get this." I'm just going to say this really fast, the story of Joseph in the Old Testament in your Bible in the book of Genesis is worth chasing down and tracing. Joseph is a guy that in the earliest years of his life he has these dreams and he's crazy enough to tell his brothers he is the chosen child, he's been given everything, he's got from his daddy in the time that color was at a premium he has this robe of many colors. His brothers look at him with jealousy and hurt and pain. And when he tells them that he has had this dream that someday they'll bow down before him they freak out, they have a fit, and they end up throwing him in a pit. This doesn't sound like his dream. They end up selling him out to slave traders.



Joseph given a coat of many colors



Joseph tells his brothers about his dream



His brothers become jealous and throw him into a pit

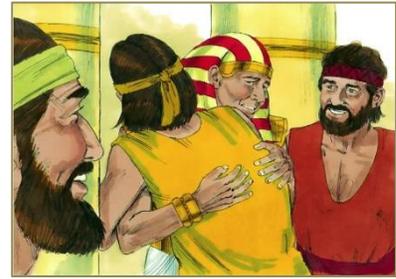
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When he finally gets through that moment he ends up in the home as a slave to someone by the name of Potiphar and this guy's high up in the government when this guy's wife blames him, makes a false accusation against him. He ends up being thrown in jail. And so, just about the moment that it seemed like he was rising up in this home where he was seen as golden in this place, it ends up going south and makes the next hook and turn and all of a sudden he ends up in jail.

He's there, it's a horrible, dark, awful experience. The word *pit* is used at one point, so he's in a pit again just when he thought he was getting out of the pit. When two guys show up as prisoners that also were high up in government, he gets to know them in the course of time. He ends up interpreting their dreams for them and in the course of that he says, "Hey, if you ever get free from this place, all goes well, would you come back and get me free from this thing?" And they get out and the Scripture has this like clear phrase<sup>1</sup> – never gave him another thought. Of course not, that's how it works, you and I know how the people program works.

They go through that and all of a sudden it says, I think it's about two years later, they remember him and he ends up being taken to the Pharaoh who again he interprets some dreams for and as a result he ends up being put at a #2 place in the country; ends up being the one who because of his work and where he ends up, he ends up saving God's people. And his brothers come bowing down before him and in that moment he says that phrase that we've all heard so many times—what you meant for evil, God meant for good.



"I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life."

– GENESIS 45:4b-5

The thing that I see in the midst of that story, it's the story that I'd love for you to think of because God puts these stories into this Book because we can see what it looks like from the top of the mountain as God has worked the program. So we moved to the top of the mountain and we looked down and as we look at this story God says this is how it's working. It feels like at times we're in the pit, feels like at times we're in jail, you know, how in the world can anything good come out of this, until all of a sudden God is in in the works of doing something way bigger, something way more amazing than anything we could have imagined. And I want to encourage us here this morning that as we plan sometimes it doesn't look like it's working out, it doesn't seem like what we would have expected, but God wants us to pull back, He wants us get to the top of the mountain and look out even if we can only do that through the story of a guy by the name of Joseph.



So I just encourage you today, hey, don't write off 2020, sit down and plan. Planning is future based. We have a God who is a God who shows us what the past was, we just talked about that, and a God who knows the future. And we go back to Him and back to Him, and I end with the first words being the first words that I want you to keep in your mind.

Invite the team to come up here as we as we wrap up. Here's what I'd like to end with, 16:3, Proverbs 16:3, put it in your head, it's the first one we're going to end with it, "*Commit your work to the Lord and your plans will be established.*"

So maybe I can just ask you to do this as we're ending, would you stand up and I'd like you to read that

<sup>1</sup> GENESIS 40:23 (ESV): Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

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verse and I'd like to read it together as a church and then the team's going to lead us with—I'm excited for you to sing this last song because it's exciting [AUDIO BREAK] nice and loud. If you're sitting at home, it may sound weird, you gotta say it real loud. If you're standing outside under the cover, I want you to read it nice and loud. You ready? Thank you.

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***Commit your work to the Lord and your plans will be established.***

– PROVERBS 16:3 (ESV)

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KEYWORDS: serve, give, pray, plan, get help, work the plan, grace



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