

Growth Points

with Gary L. McIntosh, Ph.D.

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God the Planner

Planning is central to accomplishing God's purposes. Note how the following examples from scripture affirm the significance of planning.

God was deliberate about the way he created the world and the order in which he created things. There is a logic and progression to the seven days of creation described in Genesis 1 and 2, which reveal His thoughtfulness and intentionality. He has the power and the authority to do what he pleases when he pleases, yet we see that He

deliberately chose to create the world with forethought, order, and systems.

He carefully developed complex and intricate systems for humanity to coexist and interact with nature, which is reflected in Genesis 1:28 when he spoke directly to Adam and Eve. "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.' Then God said, 'I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground-everything that has the breath of life in it-I give every green plant for food.' And it was so." God designed the world to operate in a specific way to provide for and bless humanity, and the instructions he gave to Adam and Eve reflect His plan for the created order.

God also knew, from the beginning of time, that sin would destroy His relationship with people and that he would need to provide a solution to the sin problem. Although Christ did not come to earth as

a man until the first century, he was part of God's plan and existed with God at creation. In reference to Christ, John 1:1-2 says "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning." Christ existed before creation and was part of God's plan to redeem humanity. The profundity of God's activity is highlighted for us in Ephesians 1:4 when Paul says, "For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight." The Old Testament is the story of God working to redeem His people, reveal His gracious plan for them, and prepare them to receive Christ as Savior.

Before Adam and Eve were even able to begin grasping the consequences of their sin, God began revealing his plan of redemption to them.

“Planning characterizes the way in which God works.”

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Does your church have a plan for the future?

Planning is central to accomplish God's purposes.

After the fall in Genesis 3, the Lord says to the serpent, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." The Lord is recognizing the spiritual battle that will ensue because of the power of sin, but he offers hope in the offspring of Eve who will have victory over Satan. Christ fulfilled this promise, demonstrating that God was prepared to address the sin problem through the person and work of Christ, even in Genesis.

God is not haphazard, casual, or unintentional about addressing the sin problem of humanity, nor does he approach the Christian life that way. God is intentional about calling his people to serve him and equipping them to do so. Ephesians 2:10 says that we are "his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." God has already prepared opportunities and placed circumstances in our lives to serve, and our responsibility is to simply accept them. Believers do not have to orchestrate opportunities for themselves or desperately search for some way to serve and live out the Christian life. God has already done the work and prepared opportunities for us in advance.

Planning characterizes the way in which God works, and it is through his plans for creation, redemption, and service that we see how integral planning is to realizing His good purposes in our individual and corporate lives. God's value for planning is also reflected in the process of building the Tabernacle in the fifteen chapters of Exodus.

The instructions and specifications for the tabernacle in Exodus 25-40 provide a great example of the importance of planning. These chapters are filled with detailed descriptions on such things as the color and pattern of the curtains, the measurements of certain beams, the type of wood to be used, and the exact items that are to be inside the Tabernacle. Why is there such great detail about the

building of the Tabernacle in these passages? What does this tell us about planning and the significance of the Tabernacle?

The detailed descriptions and specifications given to Moses in Exodus reflect the significance of the Tabernacle as a place for God to dwell. Building the Tabernacle was not just a worthwhile endeavor; it was the best investment God's people could make with their time and energy. The Tabernacle was so special as a place for God's presence that it required a detailed plan to ensure its proper completion.

The same is true for ministry today. God has given us wonderful opportunities that are worth the investment of our time and energy. Although we may not be building a literal Tabernacle, he has given us opportunities and ministries that deserve our attention and care. When we commit the time and energy to plan, we are recognizing the spiritual value of these opportunities and honoring the ministry God has entrusted to us.

Do your church leaders believe in planning? Does your church have a plan for its future? If not why not? How does your church reflect the nature of God the Planner?



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