



# God's Plans For You

By

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Happy New Year! What are your plans for the New Year? Spend more time with family and less time at work? Get healthy? Lose weight? Get a better job? Make more money?

If you look to the wisdom of the world about the importance of planning your life, you'll see things like this:

- Planning gives you purpose
- Planning gives you direction
- Planning puts you in control
- Planning gives you power
- Planning gives you hope
- Planning gives you balance
- Planning gives you peace
- Planning gives you freedom

While those sound like good ideas for planning your life, think about this question for a few moments. What about God's plans for your life? What does He have in mind for you to accomplish? Could it be that God's plans for your life are better than what the world's plans?

Most people think very little about God, if they think about Him at all. Even many Christians don't spend much time thinking about God on a daily basis. Why is that? If we profess to believe in the existence of a God who created the universe, gave life to His creation and sustains all life by His power, how can we go about living life without thinking about Him throughout our days, weeks, months and years?

Look at these verses about God and planning and ask yourself how you relate to these truths.

“The counsel of the Lord stands forever, The plans of His heart to all generations.” Psalm 33:11

“A man’s heart plans his way, But the Lord directs his steps.”  
Proverbs 16:9

“There are many plans in a man’s heart, Nevertheless the Lord’s counsel—that will stand.” Proverbs 19:21

“Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles.” Romans 1:13

Accomplishing great things begins with great planning. That’s true for most people. 2015 is a new year with new challenges and new opportunities. How will you face those challenges? How will you meet those opportunities?

## Study The Lives Of Successful People

One of the most successful people in the pages of God's Word is Joseph. What brought him success? Look at these verses and ask yourself how you relate to these truths.

“The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.” Genesis 39:2

The Lord was “with” Joseph and he was successful. Isn't the Lord “with” all Christians? Then, why aren't all Christians successful? Good question. Some of the answer can be found in how Joseph lived his life. He faced every challenge and took every opportunity with the plan of God at the forefront of his mind.

The declaration about Joseph's success in Genesis 39 was made while Joseph was a slave in Egypt and 'before' he was thrown in prison on false charges. How can anyone call that success? I'm afraid we Christians have lost sight of the true understanding of 'success.'

Success as a Christian has nothing to do with succeeding in the ways of the world and everything to do with succeeding in the ways of God. Joseph was first successful in obeying God in every situation of his life. Even in prison the Bible records this about Joseph – “the Lord was with him; and whatever he did, the Lord made it prosper” (Genesis 39:23). Joseph later

became wildly successful in the eyes of the world because of his obedience to God and because it was God's plan for Joseph's life.

“Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, there is no one as discerning and wise as you. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you.’ And Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.’ Then Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph's hand; and he clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. And he had him ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried out before him, ‘Bow the knee!’ So he set him over all the land of Egypt.” Genesis 41:39-43

Will you become wildly successful in this world because you obey God? Maybe, maybe not. If that's your goal, becoming successful in the ways of the world, you have already taken the wrong path. If you want to get a handle on how God wants you to live, read the words of Jesus in the Gospels again. He's very clear about how He sees success.

“Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of

His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works." Matthew 16:24-27

If we can believe that what Jesus said is true, then we realize there is no profit in looking to the world's ways for success. Success is following God's plan for our lives, a plan that entails obedience and sacrifice.

## You Are Unique!

Planning “your” life is unique to you. There is no one like you in the world. However, we can learn from each other about ways that might help us plan our lives. I enjoy the process of planning and helping other people plan. While you may not find my process to your liking, I hope you will find a process that works for you and then work it. Here are some suggestions to get you started.

- \* The first thing I recommend to you is to “have a plan” and make sure your plan is in line with what we know about planning from the Bible.
- \* The second thing I recommend to you is to spend time looking into how successful people plan. Successful people are often successful planners.
- \* The third thing I recommend to you is to make your plan “in writing.” Seeing your thoughts on paper (or computer) usually promotes better planning.
- \* The fourth thing I recommend to you is to begin working out the details of your plan without delay. Delay often leads to failure because little or nothing is ever done about the plan.

# Planning Ideas

As you work on your planning process for the New Year, here are some ideas you may find helpful.

## Step One – Get Motivated

We all need motivation with planning and carrying out our plan. So, here are some aspects of motivation you may find helpful.

### WORDS THAT MOTIVATE

God's Word is a strong motivation for a Christian. Think about Bible verses that have meant the most to you through the years. Why do you think they mean so much to you? Could it be that those are the Words of God that will best motivate you as you develop your plan for this new year?

Scripture 1

Scripture 2

Scripture 3

Scripture 4

Scripture 5

## PRAYERS THAT MOTIVATE

What prayers in the Bible mean the most to you? Which prayers speak to you – deeply? Why do you think those prayers speak to you? What about those prayers will best motivate you as you develop your plan for this new year?

Prayer 1

Prayer 2

Prayer 3

Prayer 4

Prayer 5

## Step Two – Take Action

Motivation should lead us to action. Jesus expects us to serve Him and others as we are in the process of “going.”

### PERSONAL ASSETS

What do you believe is God's calling on your life? What are your spiritual gifts? What is your personal skill set? What interests you most? What about your natural abilities? How about your personal values?

Calling

Gifts

Skills

Interests

Abilities

Values

## PERSONAL MINISTRIES

What type of ministries do you find most interesting? What ministries have you participated in the past that you believe led to the best results based on your understanding of what God wants from you in service to Him? What have you done that people have mentioned to you as being a blessing to them and others? What three types of ministries have you participated in that you would like to do again?

Ministry 1

Ministry 2

Ministry 3

Are you writing down your thoughts? You can always add to your list later. The important thing is to record your ideas as soon as you think of them. You should refer to your written plan at least monthly to make sure you are on track to finish what you started. You can also use your written plan at the end of the year to assess the success of your personal ministry and develop an even better plan for next year.

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