



## Managing GOD's Money

### Theme for Month: Goals and Plans

*A New Year on the horizon; time for a fresh start. Do you want to start the year understanding what you should be doing and where you should be going? Better still, do you want to learn where God is working in your life, or where He wants you to be during the New Year?*

*This month, let's explore the Bible to answer these questions about goal setting and planning under God's direction. We will cover these topics:*

- *December 1-7: A Life Goal: Why am I here?*
- *December 8-14: His Goal or Mine: Why not mine?*
- *December 15-21: Smoothing Peaks and Troughs: Saving and spending?*
- *December 22-25: God's Perfect Plan: Available to me?*
- *December 26-31: Where is God: Where is my plan?*

### Topic for the Week: His Goal or Mine: Why Not Mine?

**December 8-14**

## The Word



### 1 Chronicles 28:9-10

**“And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will reject you forever. Consider now, for the LORD has chosen you to build a temple as a sanctuary. Be strong and do the work.”**

Many folks tell me they think setting goals and preparing plans waste time. Their logic goes like this: I am a Christian and I know God will take care of me, so why should I worry about tomorrow. Isn't this what His Word says? My reply:

Nobody said you should worry. But there is a major difference between

goal setting, planning, and doing in your own strength, and goal setting, planning, and doing under God's direction. In the first, you will worry because you will be guessing continually about the future. As well, when you decide to work on your own, you face insurmountable challenges; then you run to Jesus to bail you out. When He does, you bear *your decision's effects*. So, why not start by listening, obeying, and following His goals and plans. Then you will avoid negative outcomes of poor decisions because you will do what He prepared for you.

During most of my 32 years in business, developing goals and preparing plans were significant responsibilities. In the first 16 years before surrendering control of my life to Jesus, I was anxious, worried, and stressed as I identified goals, developed assumptions, prepared and contributed to carrying out plans. Plans seldom came about as envisaged because, as one colleague often said, the future is not what it used to be.

What happened when I gave Messiah Jesus control of my life? I realized without Him I could do nothing. And I knew it's His plans that prevail at all times. So, I tried to focus continually on identifying His goals and plans. Before starting, and throughout the planning and doing stages, I invested time seeking to know what God was doing in my life and where He wanted me to be: essentially trying to learn His will.

During the planning and performing stages, I kept asking Jesus to direct my path. I tried to ensure I saw where He was and where I ought to be, even if that was not where I wanted to go. This is so strange and challenging for me, because of my structured nature, but it is what He requires. Reflect on Jesus' Words in **John 15:5**:

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

Taking up my “second career” and moving from Quebec to Ontario, typified this approach that tested my faith. My wife and I prayed fervently for over five years asking the Lord to show us when I should leave Alcan, and where we should go after. To be sure, the “silence” was frustrating and difficult to endure, but we persevered, knowing we needed to be where He was.

Later He communicated with us through circumstances and His Word, the precise timing and location. More than three years later, we have no doubts about where he wants us to be, and what we ought to be doing. But we are not sure why we are doing what we are doing; except we know it is His will.

During the wait, did I hear clear and distinct voices telling me what to do? Not always, but sometimes! I found the more time I invested listening, praying and reading His Word, the greater my insight to where He wanted me to be. Specifically, I knew I needed to learn God-centeredness in thought, word,

and deed. I had to stop looking at what I thought might be best for me based on my skills, and instead, look at what He was calling me to do.

During this time of listening for God, I knew from His Word, when He calls, He equips— that reassured us. And as I searched the Scriptures, I saw a vivid reminder of God-centeredness in Jehoshaphat’s attitude in **2 Chronicles 20**. This attitude will allow you and me to shorten time spent in futility trying to rationalize what we ought to be doing. It will allow us to see every event as a learning experience God designed for our growth.

So, do I have it together? Ask my wife and children— on reflection, don’t! Getting to know God’s will daily, challenges me because I tend to focus on what I want to do.

This week’s verses are deep. In **1 Chronicles 28:9-10** we see David giving his son, Solomon, some caring counsel about the privilege God granted Solomon to build the temple. Let’s look at the context.

David wanted to build a permanent house for the “Ark of God” and the prophet Nathan agrees instantly, telling David: “Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the LORD is with you.” But that night, the Lord spoke to Nathan and told Him David is not the one to build the temple, instead, God chose his son Solomon.

David’s aim was noble and reasonable in human terms, but God said no. Was God rejecting David? No! God had greater plans for him – **2 Samuel 7:8-16**. *Here we see a major goal-setting lesson:* Try to understand what God is doing in your life, rather than what you think you ought to do—learn to become God-centered. Listen; be alert to people and circumstances during your daily walk with the Lord because God may use them to speak to you, in addition to His Word.

How often do we identify goals that look like they honor God and seem fitting for a Christian, but God says no? Do we ever think God has something better for us? Do we consider that He might just be telling us to wait? If my goal is as noble as David’s was, I will find a way to rationalize why I should develop a plan to go. I continue to pray for patience, so, in these circumstances, I may see the alternative blessings God prepared for me. He knows the future; I don’t. Always, He will give me His best.

How do we become more sensitive to what God is doing in our lives so we may see distinctly His goals? Mull over these verses in **Isaiah 30:20-21**:

Although the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, your teachers will be hidden no more; with your own eyes you will see them.

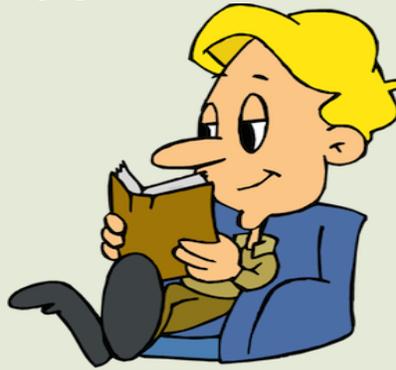
Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, “This is the way; walk in it.”

Even though God gave His people **adversity as food and affliction** as drink, He promised to be with them to guide them. The essential message: expect trials but know God will guide you through. God is always around you ready to guide and comfort you. In **Psalm 23:4**, King David reminds us of this:

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Jesus reminds us in **Luke 9:23** we must take up our crosses daily, and in **Matthew 28:18-20**, He will be with us always. Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ have the Holy Spirit indwelling in them. The challenge we face daily is to slow down so when the voice tells us “this is the way,” we hear it and “walk in it.”

## Application



### Proverbs 16:3

**Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.**

During the Christmas period, you might feel stressed and overwhelmed because of the many sources telling you what you need to do, and what you need to buy before Christmas. I suggest each of us earmark time each morning to ask God, as King David did in **Psalm 139:23-24**, to *search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!*

As you meditate on, and memorize **Proverbs 19:21**, I pray it will become your prayer. If God chooses someone else to do something you think you ought to do, bless and encour-

age that person. God may be preparing something special for you!

As well, because He knows you, and wants the best for you, He may not want you to work on a goal that you think is logical and right for you, even if it fits your talents. He might not even give you a reason!

Only through the Holy Spirit’s power will you develop the grateful attitude, and the patience needed to go where He is working in your life! That’s where you will find the goals He wants you to focus on. You might feel overwhelmed and unfit; that’s all right, He will equip you. He always does!

I pray this link encourages you as you shop:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mAd0kt4db94>

Considering this month’s theme, *Goals and Plans*, this period’s topic, *His Goal or Mine: Why Not mine?*, each day reflect on the verses on page three. These questions might help your reflection:

- ★ Who is talking to whom, about what, and in what context?
- ★ How do these verses apply to me today?
- ★ What can I start today?

## Christmas Goal

Set a goal for Christmas to answers two questions:

- (1) What does Christmas mean to me?
- (2) How will I fulfill this meaning?

See Exodus 3:10-12 for a clear, complete, concise goal from God to Moses.

If you don’t know Jesus as Lord and Saviour, set a goal to get to know about Him this Christmas.

This is a great start; listen for His voice; read His Word:

Here is my goal for this Christmas: To celebrate the birth of Jesus my Messiah, my Lord and Saviour, by giving gifts to glorify Him and further His Kingdom, using the following:

Time – I will continue to de-clutter my life and invest more time with Jesus, my wife and family.

Talents – I will use the skills He has given me to share His Word.

Money – I will use funds He has entrusted to me to fund His work as He directs me.

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# Memory Verse

Proverbs 19:21

Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.

# P e r s o n a l R e f l e c t i o n s

December 8<sup>th</sup>: 1 Chronicles 28:9-10; Proverbs 16:3

D e c e m b e r 9<sup>th</sup> – Isaiah 30:20-21; Psalm 23

D e c e m b e r 10<sup>th</sup> – Luke 9:23; Matthew 28:18-20

D e c e m b e r 11<sup>th</sup> – Psalm 139:23-24

D e c e m b e r 12<sup>th</sup> – 2 Samuel 7:8-16

D e c e m b e r 13<sup>th</sup> – John 15:5; 2 Chronicles 20

D e c e m b e r 14<sup>th</sup> – Proverbs 19:21