

THE PLAN



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THE PLAN

Introduction.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight." Ephesians 1:3-4

"And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit" Ephesians 1:13

The most important point of the scriptures you just read is that Jesus has a plan for your life. It is a great plan filled with blessing and hope. It is not a plan that tells you who you should marry, where to live, what career path to follow or what vacation to take. It is a plan designed to take the one life you have to live, and to live it well. His plan addresses the most basic questions of life: Why am I here? Is there a point to life? What is it? Where do I fit? Was I made for a reason and if so, what reason? The point of studying the Bible is to understand this plan that Jesus has and what it means for you personally.

As with every great plan there are four elements: a vision, goals, a strategy and a timeline for implementation. In the first two chapters of Ephesians you will not only see these four elements revealed, but also a great invitation for you to participate in this plan. It is a great plan and you shouldn't miss out on it. The point of this workbook is simple: Show you God's plan and then coach you in how to participate in the plan.

If you make the effort to go through this short workbook, it can change your life. It will pull out of you what you truly believe about your life, where you think your life is going and help you to align your life with God's plan for you. As you do this, your life will change like never before.

Step One: Vision.

The first step in any great plan is the vision. Vision asks the question: what is the point of the plan? So here is the vision Jesus has for your life in three categories:

In your faith:

1. He wants you to know Him.
 - "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." Jesus quoted in John 17:3
 - "God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms." Ephesians 2:6
 - His vision is that you know Him and walk through life with Him.
2. He wants you to have a full and complete life.
 - "Praise be to God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ." Ephesians 1:3
 - "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." Jesus quoted in John 10:10.
 - His vision for your life is that as you know Him and walk with Him through life, your life is full and complete.
3. He wants your life to be meaningful and make a difference.
 - "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Paul writing in Ephesians 2:10.
 - Living becomes an event with a purpose. His vision is that everyday is filled with opportunities for you to make a difference in the world.

In your family:

1. He wants your life to be filled with love.
 - 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' Jesus quoted in Matthew 22:37-39.
 - His vision for you is that as you love Him, you love others deeply. Your husband, wife, future husband, future wife, your children, your friends, your community- Jesus wants all of these relationships built on love and filled with love.
2. He wants your family to be a place of strength and encouragement.
 - If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." 1 Timothy 5:8

3. He wants marriages to be incredible.
- “and the two shall become one.....” Genesis 2:24
 - Jesus has a vision where love is built in a marriage, where two people are able to become one flesh. A place where you truly find your soulmate.

In your finances:

1. He wants you to trust Him in everything.
- “Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.” 2 Corinthians 9:10-11
 - His vision is that you have more in order to give more in order that you trust more.
2. He wants you to be blessed.
- “Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” Luke 6:38
 - “You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.” 2 Corinthians 9:11

What is your vision for your life? (as you write out a vision for your life, think about God’s vision for your life. Align your vision with His.)

In my faith:

For my family:

For my finances:

Step Two: Defining specific goals:

Jesus has defined some specific goals in order for you to reach the vision He has for your life. If you know the specific goals Jesus is working towards in your life, then you have a deeper understanding of how He works in your life each day. The goals He has are designed to bring about the vision He has for your life.

In your faith:

1. First, in order to know Him you must be righteous. Therefore, His first goal is to make you righteous.
 - “He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight.” Ephesians 1:4
 - If the vision of Jesus for you is to know Him, then His goal is a specific step towards that vision. In order to be able to know Him, you must be holy and blameless.
2. Second, His goal is to see you grow. He wants you to pray, to know the scriptures and to grow sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit.
 - ...give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better...” Ephesians 1:17
 - His goal of seeing you pray, know the scriptures and be led by the Holy Spirit increases your knowing Him.
3. Third, His goal is to see you live a life expressing this great vision.
 - “...we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works...” Ephesians 2:10
 - “I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ.” Philemon 1:6
 - When you pursue God’s goals for your faith, you know Him better.

In your family:

1. Build a strong marriage.
 - Pick the right person to marry and be ready to get married. “do not be unequally yoked with non believers.....” 2 Corinthians 6:14.

- Work on your marriage. "each one of you must love his wife as himself and the wife must respect her husband." Ephesians 5:33
- 2. Be a good parent.
 - "fathers, do not exasperate your children..." Ephesians 6:4
- 3. Be a good adult.
 - "When I became a man, I put away childish things..." 1 Corinthians 13:11
- 4. Be connected to His family and be a good family member.
 - "Let us stimulate one another towards love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together..." Hebrews 10:24-25

In your finances

1. Set the right goals so your life doesn't get off track.
 - "No servant can serve to masters. Either he will hate the one or love the other, he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money." Luke 16:13.
 - "Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs." 1 Timothy 6:10.
2. Avoid debt and work to get out of it.
 - "The borrower is a servant to the lender." Proverbs 22:7
 - "Let no debt remain outstanding..." Romans 13:8
3. Be generous so finances don't control you.
 - "Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. 3For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, 4They urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. 5And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord." 2 Corinthians 8:2-5.
 - People who give have given themselves to God first and nothing is able to control them. God's goal is that your money is never able to control you.
4. Manage it well for a higher purpose.
 - "You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God." 2 Corinthians 9:11.
 - Jesus wants to give to you so you can give to others.

What are some specific goals for your life?

In your faith?

•Growth goals: _____

•Prayer goals: _____

• Bible knowledge goals: _____

For your family?

• Marriage goals: _____

• Parenting goals: _____

• Connected to the church goals: _____

For your finances?

• Affirming who you serve goals: _____

• Budgeting goals: _____

• Investing goals: _____

- Giving goals:_____
-
-
-
-

Step Three: Strategy.

Every great plan starts with a vision, and needs goals to achieve in order to make the vision a reality. But how do you reach your goals? A strategy to reach your goals is the next important step. Jesus has a specific strategy to accomplish each of the goals He has established for your life.

Strategic planning is about thinking through specific steps that will move you towards your goals. They are incremental by nature, meaning they focus on one step at a time. However, those steps are focused on one direction.

Jesus is very strategic in His plan. Every little step leads toward His ultimate vision for your life.

In your faith:

1. His strategy for making you righteous was to die on the cross. In doing so, He was able to make you righteous by paying the price for all of those things in life that make you unrighteous.

- "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins..." Ephesians 1:7
- "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Mark 10:45.
- By paying the price for you, His strategy was to make it possible for you to become righteous without forcing it on you. Your participation through faith is critical.

2. His strategy for helping you grow was to send the Holy Spirit to walk with you.

- "Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance." Ephesians 1:13-14
- "I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better." Ephesians 1:17
- Once again your participation is critical. Through praying, reading the scriptures, and worship the Holy Spirit guides you.

3. His strategy is that your life bears fruit. He does this by challenging you to be spiritually healthy. The healthier you are, the more fruit your life will bear. Similar to a fruit tree, the healthier it is, the more fruit it bears.

- “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.” Galatians 5:22-25.
- Everyday you live you are either becoming more led by the Holy Spirit or more calloused to His presence in your life. It is your choice which you become.

In your family:

1. His strategy to see you hit the goal of a “soul mate” in your marriage is to make sure you are ready when it is time to get married, that you have built a solid relationship before you get married and finally, that once you are married He gives instructions on how to deepen it and strengthen it.

- “Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.” By working on yourself you get rid of those tendencies that destroy relationships. Healthy people attract healthy people and build rich and meaningful relationships.
- “Be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another just as you have been forgiven by God in Christ Jesus.” Ephesians 4:32. Learning how to build love is critical once you are married.

2. His strategy to see you be a great parent is primarily to increase your maturity and wisdom. Wisdom is the greatest tool of any parent. The entire book of Proverbs was written to show how wisdom impacts everyday life and how to pass it on to your children.

- “My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding,.....then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.” Proverbs 2:1-5

3. His strategy to see you become a better person is by adopting you into His family- the church. By doing so, he connects you to His family and creates a place where you learn and grow by serving.

- The New Testament has 52 “one another” commands. Commands on how we should treat one another in the church family. God’s strategy is that by practicing these “one another” commands, you grow significantly.
- Your spiritual family is a significant part of God’s strategy because you can’t practice and grow without being active in it.

In your finances:

1. His strategy for seeing you become a good manager is by teaching you discipline. Learning to live on a budget and staying out of debt are huge spiritual goals because they are His strategy to see you become a good manager.

- "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'" Matthew 25:21

- So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?" Luke 16:11

- God's strategy is to grow you through the managing of wealth. When a person is irresponsible here, they tend to be irresponsible everywhere in their life.

2. His strategy for seeing you make good financial decisions is through the process of tithing.

- "Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9:6-7.

- Jesus is instructing you to think through how and what to give. By doing so, you make better financial decisions.

3. His strategy for developing a deeper trust in Him is through tithing.

- "Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord." 2 Corinthians 8:3-5

- The people in this verse believed that giving was a direct expression of their connection to God.

What is your strategy:

For your faith:

1. Firmly establish your relationship with God. Jesus said to know Him one needs to have faith. Your faith is expressed in belief, repentance, confession and baptism. Which of these do you have yet to do?

When do you want to do them? Set dates to help you manage your expectations and to help measure your spiritual growth.

2. Walking with God throughout life. Jesus said He sent the Holy Spirit to lead and guide you through prayer and study. What strategy do you have over the next year to grow in prayer and scripture study? How will you accomplish the goals you set to grow in this area?

At the end of your days, what goal do you have for your: Knowledge of the Bible?

What goals do you have for your prayer life?

What goals do you have for being led by the Holy Spirit?

1. Jesus said an authentic life bears fruit. What strategy do you have to see your life make a difference? What do you need to first learn about yourself and then what commitments do you need to make in order to bear fruit?
Do you know, or have any idea of, what your ministry in life should be?

What can you do to find out your spiritual gifts and life ministry?

What strategic commitments will you make in order to fulfill your God given ministry?

For your family:

1.What is your strategy for a great marriage? (be specific) If have yet to get married, list out a specific steps of how you can grow in each of these areas for yourself before you get married.

-To increase communication:_____

-To build intimacy:_____

-To have more fun:_____

To grow spiritually together:_____

2.What is your strategy for being a great parent? (list specific steps on how you will grow in the following areas)

-Communicating love and acceptance:_____

-Being good at discipline:_____

-Teaching solid money management:_____

-Passing on the faith:_____

1. What is your strategy for being connected to God’s family? (choose specific

things you can do to increase your connection to God’s family. Remember

God’s vision for your life and how His family is a critical strategic step in that

direction)

-Developing a deeper connection:_____

-Discovering a place to make a significant contribution:_____

For your finances (laying out specific steps is crucial if you want to achieve

your goals and live out the vision God has for your life. Make sure they are

incremental in nature): 1. What is your strategy for getting out of debt? -How

much debt do you have?_____

-In 1 year, you will get rid of: _____

-In 5 years you will get rid of: _____

2. What is your strategy for establishing a budget

3. What is your strategy for building wealth?

-What age would you like to retire? _____

-What percentage of your income do you want to set aside? _____

-What type of long term investments do you want to develop? _____

-Who will you turn to for financial advice? _____

1. What is your strategy for becoming a tither and generous giver? (People often want to grow in this area but fail to do so simply because they don't have a good strategy)

-What percent of your income do you currently tithe? _____

-What percent would you like to be tithing right now? _____

-What percent would you like to achieve by the time you retire? _____

Lay out a schedule that hits your goal: _____

-What type of projects would like to be a part of over the course of your life that would make a huge difference in the world? _____

-What strategy do you have to be able to fund these projects? _____

Step Four: Implementation

God just doesn't have a vision for your life, but He has specific goals to make that vision a reality and these goals are achieved through a strategic plan. Most importantly, God's plan is **not**, I repeat, not a passive plan. What I mean by this is that God is not doing all this without your participation. You are not a passive participant and your efforts do make a difference. What is true is at the very core of God's plan is an invitation- an invitation for you to participate.

God made it possible, now you need to partner. When you make a commitment to do something, and then follow through on that decision, that is implementation. All the steps prior to this one are beneficial, but their desired effect will not happen unless you implement.

Notice what God did, and how he did it:

In your faith:

1. God implemented by making known to you His will.
 - "He made known to us the mystery of His will." Ephesians 1:9
 - He took action when He sent Jesus.
2. God implemented by making it possible for you to be holy and blameless.
 - "we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with His grace, which He lavished on us...." Ephesians 1:7
 - Notice how God implemented by doing all the work.
3. God implemented by making it possible for you to keep growing.
 - "give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better." Ephesians 1:17
 - Notice how God makes it possible for you to keep growing.

In your family:

1. God makes reaching your family goals possible.
 - "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who labor do so in vain." Psalms 127:1
2. God gives you strength to build your marriage by giving you Christ.
 - "I can do all things through Christ, who gives me strength..." Philippians 4:13.
3. God gives instruction on what to teach children in Proverbs.

In your finances

1. God gives so you can give.
 - "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written:

"He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever." Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God." 2 Corinthians 9:8-11.

Notice how God wants to move through you in order to impact the lives of people around you.

- 1. God teaches the law of the harvest only through experience.
 - "Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously." 2 Corinthians 9:6
 - There is no way to remember something if you have not done it. It requires experience in order to know the law of the harvest. This is the concept of implementation in its purest form- you learn by doing.

How are you going to implement your strategy to reach your goals in order that you live out God’s vision for your life? Here is where the rubber meets the road, without real decisions and commitments then all your hard work is lost. Now is the time to make it happen. Do so, and your life will change!

The final step in the Personal Development Plan is to take all of the work you have done so far and begin putting it in a timeline. The purpose of the timeline is to bring your goals into reality. It makes things happen. Each step will have a little bit of review before you establish a timeline. Make sure to fill out the form completely for each step because this keeps the vision clear in your mind.

In your faith:

1) Write out the vision for your life that aligns with God’s vision:

2) Write out the major goals you have to develop your faith:
in prayer:_____

in scripture knowledge:_____

in worship:_____

3) Write out the specific steps you want to take over the next year with a time line and evaluation point:

In my prayer life I want to:_____

• Therefore I will commit to praying _____ times per week at _____ time of day.

• I plan on spending _____ amount of time in prayer.

Date I will start: _____

In six months I will have accomplished the following things in my prayer life:_____

In my bible knowledge I will:_____

Therefore I will commit to:

• Reading _____ times per week for _____ minutes.

• Over the next year I will take _____ Bible classes.

• I will join a small group for _____ weeks

Date I will start: _____

In six months I will have accomplished the following things:_____

In my worship life I will:_____

Therefore I will commit to: • Reading _____ times per week for _____ minutes.

• Over the next year I will take _____ Bible classes.

• I will join a small group for _____ weeks.

Date I will start: _____

In six months I will have accomplished the following things:

In my worship life I will: _____

Therefore I commit to:

- Participating in _____ worship services over the next year.
- Being more of a participant in every part of the worship service.
- I will take the SHAPE course to discover my gift and ministry.
- I commit to _____ hours per week pursuing my ministry by serving Christ and His kingdom.
- I will read _____ books on how to be a worshiping person over the next year.

Date I will start: _____

In six months I will have accomplished the following in my worship life:

In your family:

1) Write out God’s vision for your family:

2) Now write out your vision for your family.

3) Now list the major goals for your family.

• Concerning marriage: _____

• Concerning your parenting: _____

• Concerning your spiritual family (the church): _____

4) Now take the specific steps you have been considering and write them down with time lines. Some commitments have been established for you to keep you going in the right direction, but don't limit yourself. Let Jesus lead you in what steps to take and when to take them.

If I am **single** (if your married, skip to next section) my next steps are:

• Prepare myself to date healthy people by doing the 30 Day Challenge for Single in the next _____ months.

• Pursue spiritually healthy relationships by dating people in the following circles: _____

If I am engaged, I will go through premarital counseling in the next _____ months.

• If I am engaged, I will go through the 30 Day Challenge for Singles in a Relationship in the next _____ months.

Date to start: _____

In the next six months, I will have accomplished: _____

If I am **married**, my next steps are: _____

Therefore I will commit to:

- Going through the 30 Day Intimacy Challenge for Couples in the next _____ months.
- Go with my spouse on a weekend getaway in the next ____ months.
- If needed, I will commit to marriage counseling in the next ____ months.
- I commit to meeting my spouses' need for _____ over the next six months.
- I commit to spending _____ amount of time each week focused on my marriage.

Date to start:_____

In the next six months, I will have accomplished the following things in my marriage:_____

If I am a **parent**, my next steps are:

Therefore, I will commit to:

- Reading ____ books on parenting over the next ____ months.
- Attending a Love and Logic course in the next ____ months.
- Insuring my children are connected to a faith community by committing their participation in church youth group ____ times a month.

Date to start: _____

In the next six months, I will have accomplished the following:

In my connection to God's Family, my next steps are:

Therefore, I will commit to:

- Commit to membership in the next _____ months.
- Commit to developing _____ new friendships in the next _____ months.
- Commit to attending community worship _____ times a month.
- Commit to using my spiritual gift _____ hours a week in serving the body of Christ.

Date to start: _____

In the next six months, I will have accomplished:_____

In your finances:

1) Write out God's vision for your financial life:

2) Now write out your vision for your financial life:

3) Now list the major goals for your finances concerning:

- Budget:_____
- _____
- _____
- Debt:_____
- _____
- _____
- Investments_____
- _____
- _____
- Concerning tithing to God:_____
- _____

• Concerning generous giving: _____

4) Now take the specific steps you have been considering and write them down with time lines. Some commitments have been established for you to keep you going in the right direction, but don't limit yourself. Let Jesus lead you in what steps to take and when to take them.

Budgeting: _____

- I will set a budget in the next _____ months.
- If I have one, I will re-evaluate every ____ months.
- I commit to faithfully following my budget long term.
- I will redo my budget every _____ months.

Debt: _____

- I will commit to incurring no more debt.
- I will pay down debt by _____ a month.
- I will seek counsel from _____ before major purchases.

Date I will start: _____

Investments: _____

- I will set aside _____ % each month for savings.
- I will build an emergency fund equal to _____ months expenses.
- I will invest _____% in 401k, IRA's, Pension plan, etc.

Date I will start: _____

House: _____

will save \$_____ each month for a house.

- I will only get a mortgage where monthly payments do not exceed _____% of my monthly income.
- I will make _____ extra payments each year to pay it down.

Date I will start: _____

Tithing: _____

• I will tithe ____% each month to my church.

• I will review my percent every _____.

• I will use _____ (check, automatic withdrawal, cash, etc.) means of tithing in order to remain faithful.

Date I will start: _____

Generous giving: _____

• I will set aside \$____ in a fund each month to give away as the Holy Spirit leads me.

• I will speak to God regularly about bringing my attention to needs He is concerned about that I can meet.

• I will place myself on the church's special needs email list.

Date I will start: _____

The purpose of this booklet is for you to develop a Personal **Development Plan**. God has a vision for your life and is inviting you to be a part of that plan. It is a partnership, a journey of faith, and when you enter into this partnership with Jesus, your life changes.

When you spend time thinking about your life and setting goals, you are building a plan, a plan that keeps you active in your partnership with God. All too often, we never achieve the vision God has for our lives because we have no focus, no plan that keeps us on track. My prayer for you is that this tool helps you figure out God's plan for your life and what you need to do about it. I pray that the eyes of your heart are opened to Jesus and the adventure He designed this life to be. I pray that you embrace it and start living forward. Life is an intentional sport. Get out there and start playing!