

# The Moral Obligation to Plan

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[ 0 : 00 ] share with you something quickly out of Proverbs chapter number 21, and I'm thankful to get to share God's word with our missionaries being here. Hope to encourage them. On Thursday night, Josh Ewing, Robert Becker, Justice Mize, and the respective families, we will have a send-off service for them, and that's incredible. We've been blessed to have some really wonderful services through the years. I don't believe we've ever had the opportunity to send three off at a time, and COVID kind of helped with the schedule, make that possible with a lot of things going, so they all came at one time, but none of the three mind sharing at all with the other two.

They have a great respect for them, and I am just so grateful. We got Robert Becker, Josh Ewing, and then Justice and these updates that they get to hear, and I have my kids here on the second row.

That's right, Thatcher. Uh-huh. That's what I thought, and I got my kids here on the second row getting to see this, and I am great. I'm just so grateful for their parents, these missionaries' parents. I'm so grateful for all the Sunday school teachers that they've ever had in their lives. I'm so grateful for your investment in their lives, and everybody who's allowed us the privilege to get to be part of this, and it's unique. It doesn't mean that we are better than any other group of people, but we are just as blessed as any group of people that there's ever been. They get to be around people that make so much of the gospel, to say, Christ, I love thee. Is that it? Oh, man. All right.

So, that's Thursday night. I meant to bring the boxes out tonight for you, the C, the send-off boxes to bring letters. That's all we're asking for this Thursday is that you would write the notes.

They'll give them the box to them for each one of them, so we get started on it early in the week. Proverbs 21, 31 says, The horse is prepared against the day of battle, but safety is of the Lord. I want to talk about the moral responsibility to plan. Moral just simply means right or wrong, the obligation to do right in regard to planning. This morning, I gave a lesson or an illustration about Brother John and I running at Fowler Park. We all know Brother John to be a runner now. I could call him a runner, but Brother John called himself a runner before he was ever a runner, all right? Because it's part of what, if you want to do something, you should begin to focus like that. And along the same way as I am a planner, all right?

[ 2 : 19 ] And some of you said, Well, I did not know that about you. Well, it is true, okay? It is true about me. I am a planner. Yes, I needed Greg to get me another iPad because mine was dying, but don't let that distract you from the fact that I am a planner, all right? And in 2022, I will continue to be a planner. And some of you in here have more of a tendency the plan than others. Some of you have that makeup more, or maybe your background, or you came up in a home that planned everything, whatever it was. But what I'm trying to tell you in here is that every one of us have a moral obligation on some level to plan our lives. You guys get enough preaching, so tonight I get a little bit for myself here, right?

Obviously, it's all for me. So I want to give you the advantage of planning. The first thing about planning is the fundamental goal in all of our planning is not that we would get the victory, but that God does. The horse is prepared against the day of battle, but safety is of the Lord. We want God to win. We know that He is going to win. He is giving the victory over there. He is finding the trees. He is gathering the hundred people. He is having the gospel move in people's lives. He is doing the work. And so in our planning, we fundamentally know that the battle belongs to the Lord, and He gets the victory. We pity the lazy man, and we strive not to be him. As we study in the book of Proverbs, we see so many things about the lazy man that we don't want. Every normal responsibility is they overwhelm him.

He is paralyzed by absurd fears, paranoia, Proverbs 22, 13. The slothful man saith, there is a lion without. I shall be slain in the streets. I can't even do the normal job I'm supposed to because there's, he looks out the blinds and he says, there's a lion out there in the street.

He's just paralyzed, can't do normal things. He cannot provide for himself or anyone else. Proverbs 20, verse 4, the sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold. Therefore shall he beg and harvest and have nothing. So he doesn't provide for himself or anybody else.

Just about anything is too hard for him. Proverbs 19, 24, a slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again. We've shared that verse many times, but that is just laziness at an all-time low, right? He can't even bring his hand to his mouth to eat. Those who once depended on him have learned not to anymore. Proverbs 10, 26, as vinegar to the teeth and as smoke to the eyes, so as the slugger to them that send him.

[ 4 : 45 ] If any of you have ever, how many of you when you're around the campfire, the smoke always comes to you, right? You have that natural ability, this naturally comes to you. That's just the worst, isn't it, right there, stinging in the eyes. A lazy person, that's what they become like, the other people. Or it's what I would become like as I'm lazy and the team that I'd be on, with the people I'm with, people depend on me, be like vinegar to the teeth.

Our cravings are never satisfied and will slowly destroy. In Proverbs 21, 25, the desire of the slothful killeth him, for his hands refuse to labor. And so his cravings never satisfy and he's slow to destroy him. So you say, well, I thought we started off talking about planning and then you took a sidebar and then you went over here and you talked about laziness and what does that have to do with planning. And I want you to know that a lack of planning is often a form of laziness. That a lack of planning can often be a form of laziness. And all of the things that you heard about the person who was hungry and that gave to his cravings and how his life was destroyed in a very literal and physical sense, in the same way your spiritual life can go if you're not a person that will spend some time planning.

I have a quote. It says, A lack of preparation is often just a subtle, more frenzy form of laziness. Some laziness lies on the couch all day, refusing the work at all. Other forms of laziness may keep busy, even frantic, but refuse to do the harder, earlier work of preparation. You know, planning takes work and laziness is something that would prevent us from it. In Proverbs, when it speaks about the slugger and lazy people, it does it in the form of speaking about preparation. Proverbs 6, 6 through 8, Go to the ant thou slugger, consider her ways and be wise, which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provided her meat in the summer and gathereth her food in the harvest. In the classic example that we know about a person that is not being diligent, it was not just that the person would not work, it's that the person would not plan and do what was supposed to be done at the right time.

It's awful quiet in here, and I don't understand that at all. You guys are planners. You go, I know this about you, all right? I told you this is for me tonight, all right? And maybe that's why you're looking at me with such pity up here, right? You're like, man, this must have been really hard for him to work through, all right? But we got to hurry. My iPad's about to die. All right, just, all right, so planning is necessary for us to prioritize our energy. All right, let me say that again. Planning is necessary to prioritize our energy. Proverbs 24, 27, Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field, and afterwards build thine house. So it was saying that there was a priority in the work that needed to be done. Before you are to set up and build that house, you need to make sure that there's going to be some food coming your way, because a house with no food in it isn't going to do you any good. So make preparations. And so maybe this was just in a real working in the field, but what mostly was probably being suggested here is that a young man would find his source of income and the work that he is going to do, be able to provide for his family.

Then he gets to go and make his home, not build his house, but go make his home, because that needs to be taken care of. Any of you men in here thinking about talking to a dad about a young lady? One of the questions that they're going to ask is, how would she ever live if she was to marry you? That is a question that you need to be able to answer, okay? And so making that priority of planning, which means that you have to prioritize your energy. If you don't have a plan for your day, who has a plan for your day? Everybody else, right? Including Satan. Including any of the other people in your life with good intention will not prioritize your energy the way that you should before God. So extreme prolonged busyness is often the fruit of not planning. So I've shared this before in my notes that I keep on my computer as I look at planning. At the beginning of the year, some warnings and some dangers that a lack of planning provides. Busyness can ruin our joy. Unless you're aware and intentionally fighting right now for next week's joy, you're in jeopardy of losing it. There's things that you can do right now for the beginning of next week that can help you fight for the joy that God has there for you.

[ 9 : 20 ] And the thing that prevents us from it, it's just laziness or the hassle of life that's always going around. I have a neighbor and I'm not sure that he ever watches these services, but in case he does, I love this joke, Mr. John. And he says, instead of saying, he says, our houses are our hassle, right? And not our castle. But he says, your home is your hassle. Because he's always seeing me do something, replace a hot water heater or do something all the time that's going on. And it's just, there's always something that seems to be needing maintenance in our lives, in our homes. And the same on our lives on individual level. There's always something that either you're providing ongoing maintenance for, or you're always in a state of emergency for. And so preparation will help you partake next week's joy. Busyness can rob our hearts. If worries don't swamp us, the upkeep will. One of the great examples of the consequences of busyness is showcased in Luke chapter number 10, with the story of Mary and Martha. If you ever think about a person who missed out on something wonderful, you can look at a lady who stayed too busy when she had an opportunity to sit at the feet of Jesus. And she wasn't the only one who missed out on something wonderful because of busyness. You and I are the same way as well. If someone was to record your life for a week and then show it to a group of strangers, what would they see? Would they recognize that, like with Mary, that you were about the good portion of your life? Or would they conclude that the one thing that you must get done every day?

What would people see that, how do you prioritize your life? Because you're getting to make a decision on that. And then lastly, busyness can cover up the rot in our soul. Busyness kills more Christians than bullets. I've seen this a lot through the years with teenagers, and I'm really grateful for the opportunity to get to work with teenagers, to work with teenagers. I know what real humans are, okay? They're humans who don't hide things as well as the rest of you do. You guys are just teenagers that have grown up a little bit and learned to hide things better than they did.

And one of the things that you can find in a teenager who's going through something, who's trying to avoid the pain in their lives or something that's going on, you're going to see a lot of noise and activity. You're going to see constantly headphones on the ears. You're going to find a person who can never sit still because it's the scariest thing in the world for them.

And then what do we do as adults? We can't sit still. We can't enjoy just being in the presence of God and the quietness because there's something going on in our lives. And so that busyness is trying to drown out the aching of our heart that we may have, and that's what we need to deal with.

And so here's a list of manifestations of pride. People-pleasing, pats on the back, performance evaluations, possessions, proving myself, pity. But here's one that you don't often think about. A manifestation of pride is poor planning, power, perfectionism, position, prestige, and posting.

[ 12 : 08 ] Always letting people know what is going on. So planning is necessary to being a good steward of our lives. If you want to manage the days that God has given you, it's going to require planning. 1 Thessalonians 4, 11 and 12.

And that you study to be quiet and do your own business and to work with your own hands as we commanded you, that you may walk honestly towards them that are without, that you may have lack of nothing. Study to be quiet and to do your own business. Quote by George Mueller.

Love George Mueller. He says, Why do I carry, and this is in regards to why do we do what we do throughout our days? And I would have encouraged people to answer in a certain way. And this quote has really brought to light what the scriptures would tell us. It says, Why do I carry on this business or why I'm engaged in this trade or profession? In many instances, so far as my experience goes, which I've gathered in my service among the saints during the last 51 years and a half, I believe the answer would be, he says, in 51 years of ministry, this is what people always tell me. I'm engaged in my earthly calling that I may earn the means of obtaining the necessities of life for myself and my family. That sounds like a pretty good answer. Why do I work is so that I can meet the needs of my family and I may obtain to these things. But here's the chief era from which almost all rest of the eras, which are entertained by the children of God relative to their calling spring. It is no right and scriptural motive to be engaged in a trade or business or profession merely in order to earn the means for obtaining the necessities of life for ourselves and our family. But we should work because it is the Lord's will concerning us. When we lay out our plans, we're not supposed to be pragmatic and say, I'm due this because it's just what's best for me and my family. That is not the goal of anything that any of you should do in our lives. Why do we work?

Because it's the will of God for us. And it's a wonderful thing. And so when you set out this week and you go ahead and say, I already know where 40 of my hours are going or 50 of my hours are going, well, you do that according to the will of God. It isn't the upon your own interest. And so God, I love this quote, God gives us with incredibly gracious dignity of real responsibility.

God gives us with incredibly gracious dignity of real responsibility. Well, with my kids, when they're little and with your kids, you make up jobs for them, right? You give them things and it doesn't really matter if they do. I'm not you, Selah, other kids, okay? And there's these kids and you're like, so, but when they get older, you give them like something that matters. You give them something that has a real responsibility to it. And when you do it and you say, I need you to do this. And if you don't do this, then we're going to be in problems. We won't be able to do, you know, something. We won't get to do what we want to do because you didn't do this.

[15:07] Teenagers and young people, do you know that when your parents give you a job and there's real responsibility connected to it, they're giving you dignity. They're giving you respect. They're saying that I see you as more than just a child. I see you as a person that can do things. That, you know, the God of heaven gives us real responsibilities in this world. He doesn't just give us busy work and moving something from one side to the other side just to stay busy, but he gives us dignity in our lives to give us real responsibilities. And so here's three irrefutable truths about planning.

First is I must set my priorities because if I can't, because I can't do it all. I can't do everything that is before me. Jesus set time aside to pray. He set his priorities of his life. He didn't let the thousands. He didn't even let the disciples decide what he was going to do. He set his own priorities.

Secondly, I must set priorities if I'm to serve others most effectively. If I don't set priorities, then I will not get to allow God to lead me where to serve and to whom to serve. And then lastly, I must allow others to set their own priorities. I must allow other people the same opportunity.

Knowing that it's wise to plan ahead and to prepare for tomorrow, we need to anchor all of our plans and a purpose. And that purpose is more than just meeting our own needs, but it needs to be in something much deeper than that. Consider him in every area of your life. Proverbs 3, 5 through 6, trust in him, trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not into thine own understanding and all the ways. Acknowledge him and he shall direct your paths. So in every area of your life, you should acknowledge him. In our 430 meeting today, we looked at how the work of sanctification in our life is easier and harder than you would think. It's easier because it happens in small, gradual, ordinary steps all the way throughout your life. You never have to climb Mount Everest in a day to grow in sanctification. It's a simple daily obedience. But what makes it harder is that it applies to every area of your life, is that there's no areas that are off limits to him. And so that makes it harder. You need to consider God in the planning of every aspect of your life. An effective plan that leaves us with less of God is not effective. Proverbs 15, 16, better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasures and trouble therewith. If you have planning in your life that does not include acknowledging him in all of your ways, there is no increase in life. There is only a loss. Anything that doesn't give you more of your life over to him is a loss and not a gain. And then here's some limitations of planning. It says, the horse have prepared against the day of the battle, but safety is the Lord. Our confidence should not be in the horse, but in the Lord. Proverbs 27, some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God. So we make our plans and they're informed by the word of God, but then afterwards we just have to trust him. Proverbs 19, 21, there are many devices in a man's heart. That means there's many plans in a man's heart.

Nevertheless, the counsel of the Lord that shall stand. And that's going to be okay with you. If you're acknowledging the Lord in your planning and your planning is only so that the Lord gets the victory, then no matter what happens, then your plan allows you to accomplish what you wanted to do, which was to make much of him, which was to know him better. So more timing for planning in our lives. Aim to do all of it for the glory of God and trust yourself into the hands of God and trust yourself and your plans to God. So my encouragement here is in your life, make more time for planning. What is the saying goes if you have so many hours, if I only had two hours of work, I would spend the first, how many? I had 10 hours? Somebody give me a number here. How many hours?

[19:05] Eight hours? You just made that up, Greg. That's why we work so well together. Eight. You all remember it was eight hours, you know? It says if I had eight hours of work, I spend the first seven of my hours sharpening the ax. I think you're going to get fired. I don't think that's going to work, okay? I shouldn't do that. Most certainly. But there must be a part of your life where you spend planning it because if you don't, you can't live prioritizing what he wants you to do.

If you run around always reacting to the things of this world, you'll never set the priorities that you need. So you need to set some time in your week to planning and you need in that planning and everything that you're doing in every area of your life. It doesn't matter if it's a work schedule or a sports schedule or if it's a meal schedule or if it's a schedule for scheduling other things, which some of you have, all right? No matter what the schedule is, aiming at knowing and worshiping him has to be at the center of that. And then when you're done, you entrust it to the Lord.

The righteous fear of God will cause a man or woman to long to do only what is the will of God. Proverbs 16, 3. Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.

Have you ever considered the time and planning could lead to worship? Commit your works unto the Lord, and your thoughts shall be established. Planning can really help with the battle of the mind. Much of our battle of the mind is we don't know what we're doing next. We're not knowing what we're supposed to be doing. Planning can help you have your thoughts established because you've already said in this moment of my day, this is what I'm going to do, which tells your mind, this is what I'm supposed to be thinking about. This is what I should be doing. And so I tell you, ever considered planning, it could lead to worship. Think about this. As you have your day planner, as you're planning, whatever you do, Google calendars, you're going to be reflecting upon the priority of your day as you're planning. So you think, what is a priority of the day?

Well, my family is. Why is it my family? Because they've been given to me from God. God, thank you for my family. Considering who and what should be included. God, in my life, I have not included those that are neglected. I haven't included those that don't know the gospel. I haven't included these people in my life. God, you've motivated me. I want to allow room for people. That can lead to evangelism. That can lead to obedience to God's word, which is worship. It could lead to you asking God for wisdom. God, I don't know what I need to do with this time on my calendar. This is what I've been planning to do, but I don't know if that's the most effective use of my time. God, I need wisdom. It could lead to you turning to God, asking for wisdom. Recognizing that we're unable to move the most important parts of the world. When you look at our lives and we plan, it brings us to a point and says, God, I'm going to do these things that you've led me to do, but I know they don't move the most important parts of this world. So it leads us to a time of prayer and say, God, I'm asking for these things, but I need you to do them in and through me because if you don't, they will not be done. So I'm not recommending that we replace our

[ 22 : 03 ] Bibles with daily planners in our devotions, but I do believe that it would be appropriate to lay it before the Lord and pray. Is to say, God, this is my life and you get to prioritize it and do with it what you want. And if we are lazy and careless with our lives, then we never take time to hear from him and to make a plan and to lay it out before him. I would like to encourage you to do that, to make it part of the regular rhythm of your life, that you would take your plans and your schedule and that you would not just react to the things of the world, but you'd sit down with God and say, God, based upon what you would have me to do in this world, would you let it be reflected upon my schedule and my priorities? That's why I love announcements so much at church because I believe that there are things that get announced here that are supposed to be part of your planning for your life, but not all of it. I am not the cruise, I'm not the entertainment director on the cruise of your life, okay? You are supposed to be doing things on your own. You're supposed to be with your own family. You're supposed to be in your own ministry. God's supposed to be moving you along those ways. But I get to be part of that and planning and equipping, planning opportunities for ministry, equipping the saints for the ministry. I get to be part of that, but you have the individual responsibility and a family responsibility to plan your life and to make sure that it reflects the priorities of making much of Jesus with it.