

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES OF PLANNING AND WORK

Planning includes envisioning a better future, and increasing the probability of that better future becoming a reality. We need to plan to help us be successful and avoid failure (Luke 14:28-32). Apostle Paul and other examples in the Bible were planners (2 Cor 1:15-17; Phil 3:13-14).

As Christians, our plans (and goals) should be pleasing to God (II Cor 5:9).

Once we plan, then we need to **work** to carry out our plans (i.e. seek “fulfilled plans”). Just like faith without works is “dead” (of little value – see James 2:14-26), so is planning without follow-up work of little value.

Fulfilled plans can help us meet the great commandments to love God and love people – and help meet our five eternal purposes of Worship, Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry and Evangelism. Benefits from planning and work include:

- 1) means to express love for God, **represent Jesus**, and to **bring Him glory** (I Cor 10:31; Col 3:17, 22-24).
- 2) opportunity to **serve others** and meet their needs (I Thes 4:9-12; Eph 4:28).
- 3) ability to **meet needs of our families** (I Tim 5:8).
- 4) ability to **meet our own needs** (II Thes 3:6-15).
- 5) ability to earn money to **further the gospel and help the poor** (Phil 4:14-19; Gal 6:6; Eph 4:28).
- 6) means to be a **good witness to non-Christians** (Mat 5:14-16; Titus 2:9-10).
- 7) provides an **opportunity to apply biblical teachings and grow more like Jesus** (James 1:22-25; Eph 4).

Biblical principles related to how we should plan and keys to success include:

- 1) We should trust in the Lord for guidance and commit our plans to Him and seek His blessing (Prov 3:5-6; 16:1, 3)
- 2) Should realize that we should plan, but God is the one who ultimately carries out and His purposes prevail; success comes from the Lord (Prov 16:9, 19:21, 21:31)
- 3) Know that God weighs our motives (Prov 16:2, 21:2)
- 4) Avoid being presumptuous in our planning (Prov 27:1; James 4:13-17)
- 5) We should solicit advice from others (Prov 15:22, 20:18)
- 6) We should make noble plans and be plan with integrity and be righteous (Prov

10:9; 11:3, 5)

7) Avoid destructive plans, duplicity, hastiness and arrogance (Prov 11:3, 14:12, 21:5, 27:1)

8) We should plan sequentially (plan in measured steps – do first things first) (Prov 24:27)

9) We need to follow up our plans with action and work hard to carry out (Prov 6:6-11; 14:23, 21:5)

Biblical principles related to work include:

1. The concept of work is created and blessed by God (Gen 1:28, 2:15). God is a worker (Gen 1 & 2; Duet 11:1-7; Ps 104; Ps 111; Jn 4:34; Col 1:16-17; 2 Cor 5:17; Rev 21:5). God has created us to be His co-workers (Gen 1:26-29; Gen 2:15; I Cor 3:9; II Cor 5:20, 6:1).
2. Work is an integral part of life, and God wants us to work (Genesis 1:27-28, 2:15). Apostle Paul modeled ministry and vocational work; there is a place for full-time vocational Christian service (Acts 18:2-3; I Cor 9:1-14).
3. Jesus endorsed work (refer to some of His parables), and was a carpenter growing up (Mat 13:55).
4. A Christian should view any vocation as "full-time Christian service". Whatever we do should be done for the glory of God and with excellence as our standard (I Cor 10:31, Eph 6:5-9, Col 3:22-24, Prov 22:29).
5. Everyone who is able should work, and if a person will not work he should not eat (Ex 34:21, Prov 6:6-8, II Thes 3:6-13, Eph 4:28).
6. God has placed us in various work assignments (I Cor 7:17-24; Eccl 5:18-19).
7. We should work and provide for own family (I Tim 5:8).
8. Working hard is good and beneficial (Prov 10:14, 12:24, 12:27, 14:23), but excessive work is vanity (Ps 127:2). We should be content with our pay (Luke 3:14); loving money and hoarding need to be avoided (Eccl 5:10-20; Mat 6:24; I Tim 6:6-11, 17-19).
9. Work should be satisfying (Eccl 5:12) and enjoyable (Eccl 5:18).
10. Should recognize and respect people's different skills and abilities and the jobs that they have (Rom 12:6; I Cor 12).
11. Employers and managers should be just, fair and treat employees with kindness (Col 4:1; Eph 6:9; Lev 19:13).
12. Managers/Supervisors should be humble, servant leaders, focused on serving and meeting the needs of an organization's stakeholders (e.g., owners/investors, customers, employees, suppliers, community) (Phil 2:3-8; Mat 20:20-28).

13. Employees should be obedient and submissive (Col 3:22; Luke 3:14; Eph 6:5-6; Titus 2:9). Employees should be well pleasing, not argumentative, not stealing, and a good example so that the gospel is appealing (Titus 2:9-10).
14. We should consistently practice the “golden rule” (Luke 6:31) and “go the extra mile” (Mat 5:39-42).
15. Should maintain honesty in work (Pv 11:11, 20:17, 22:1).
16. Should work while there is opportunity (Pv 10:5, 30:25).
17. Should develop diligence in work (Pv 13:4, 21:5, 10:4-5, 12:24, 12:27, 18:9; Eccl 9:10).
18. If God blesses us with “wealth”, we should do good with it and bless others (I Tim 6:17-19).
19. We can be “salt and light” through our work (Mathew 5:13-16).
20. Should avoid the folly of laziness (Pv 6:9, 26:14, 20:4, 26:15, 22:13, 26:16) which can lead to poverty (Pv 6:11, 10:4, 20:4, 21:5, 24:33-34), hunger and begging for food (Pv 13:4, 19:15, 20:4), rule by unsatisfied desires (Pv 13:4, 21:26), difficult life (Pv 15:19) and ruin and death (Pv 21:25).
21. The lazy person does not start or finish things (Prov 26:14-15); is fond of sleep (Prov 24:30-34, 26:14), makes excuses and believes his excuses (Prov 22:13, 26:16) and chases fantasies (Prov 28:19).
22. Should avoid idolization of work, success and wealth and avoid excessive pursuit of wealth (I Tim 6:6-10).

Ambition

Signs of unhealthy ambition:

- 1) Serving your own ego (Jer. 45:5)
- 2) Grasping for position and power (Mt 20:25)
- 3) A desire to control others (Mt 20:25)
- 4) A motive to be rich (Pv 23:4-5; Eccl 5:10; I Tim 6:10)
- 5) Personal competition (Phil 2:3; James 3:16; Gal 5:15)

Signs of Healthy Ambition:

- 1) To influence society for God (e.g., Abraham, David, Elijah, Gideon, Jonah, Caleb)
- 2) To be used by God (Elisha, Col 1:10-11)
- 3) To lead spiritually (I Tim 3:1)
- 4) To best use your spiritual gifts (Rom 12:6)

Remember:

- 1) God is in charge – He promotes, prospers and places us as He desires (Ps 75:6-7)
- 2) We should strive to pursue what God desires for us (Eph 5:17; Pv 12:15)
- 3) All of our ability – big or small, is from God (I Cor 4:7)