

LIVING WELL #13: PLANNING WELL

ESV TCL 2026/07/12

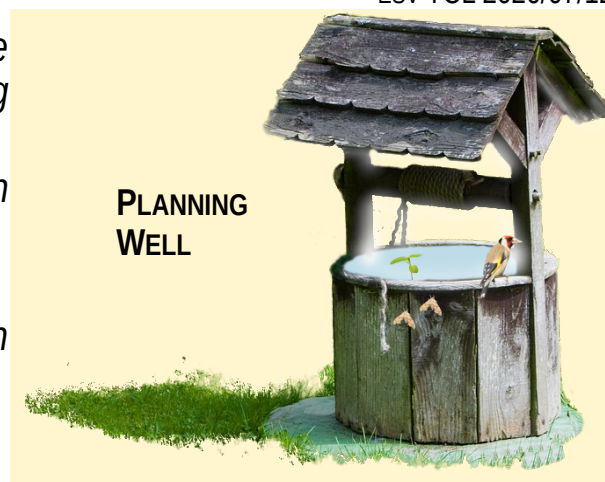
a. 'The nicest thing about not planning is that failure comes as a complete surprise, rather than being preceded by a period of worry and depression.'

b. 'Failure to plan on your part does not constitute an emergency on mine.'

c. 'To fail to plan is to plan to fail.'

d. 'It is better to have a plan that you depart from than not to plan at all.'

Q1. Discuss the worldly wisdom and humour above.



1. TRADITIONAL APPROACHES

Traditionally, many Christians have been suspicious of planning.

Matthew 6:34 Take therefore no thought [μεριμνάω (merimnaō) to worry] for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. AV

Q2. What is the (perceived) problem with this verse?

Nevertheless, there are many well-known Bible passages about planning:

Proverbs 15:22 Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed. ESV

These include warnings:

James 4:13-15 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit"— ¹⁴ yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. ¹⁵ Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." ESV

2. THE IMAGE OF GOD

Acts 2:23 This man [Jesus] was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan [βουλή boulē] and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. NIV

Q3. What is the scope of God's plans?

Westminster Confession 1646/7 Chapter 3 – Of God's Eternal Decree

1. God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass

If God plans, then shouldn't we too? It is also clear that both Jesus and the apostles planned:

Mark 1:38 And he [Jesus] said to them, "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is what I came for." ESV

1 Corinthians 16:5 I [Paul] will visit you after passing through Macedonia, for I intend to pass through Macedonia, ESV

Romans 1:13-14 I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles. NIV

Q4. Did the apostle Paul's plans always work out?

*Job 28:28 And he [God] said to the human race,
'The fear of the Lord – that is wisdom,
and to shun evil is understanding.' NIV*

Q5. What broad principles should affect or control our plans?

3. FITTING IN WITH GOD'S PLANS

When we plan things, we should remember that maybe God has some plans in place already¹ with which we must fit in!

*Proverbs 16:3 Commit your work to the LORD,
and your plans will be established.*

*Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
and do not lean on your own understanding.*

*⁶ In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths. ESV*

Q6. What warnings and encouragements about our plans are in these verses?

¹ He definitely does: Psalm 40:5.

Matthew 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Q7. What do we learn here about worry and planning?

Matthew 28:19-20 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. NIV

Q8. What is the main plan that we should fit in with and follow?

Proverbs 16:9 The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps. ESV

Q9. Nevertheless, we are not God! **Discuss.**

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. ESV

Q10. How should we feel when our plans fail due to sin or weakness?

Q11. What examples can you think of for which you are currently making plans?

HOLIDAYS	EDUCATION	FAMILY	RELATIONSHIPS	EXPENDITURE
INVESTMENT	CHILDREN	PARENTS	FRIENDS	A PROJECT
WORK	CAREER MOVE	CHURCH	SPIRITUAL	_____

Q12. How can you image God better in how you plan these things?

Q13. How can you fit in better with God's plans?

Q14. How might your priorities need to change?

Q15. How certain should you be about the outcomes?



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