

Leah Redling: 8/18/20

Pandemic Planning

The other day I responded to a friend on Facebook who was looking for recommendations for a paper planner. I discovered the planner I like to use about 3 years ago and have recommended it several times to others. I love this planner. I like that I can see a month at a time for a big overview. I like that I can see a week of appointments at one time. The weekly view gives plenty of room for me to document my activities for the week. I can't tell you how satisfying it is to look at two pages completely filled with ink. There are pages in this planner devoted to setting annual and monthly goals and documenting a plan to achieve them. I get pretty excited about these pages when it is time for me to set my goals for the year. But I can also tell you that every single plan I prepared for meeting my goals in 2020 has been interrupted this year. Every. Single. One.

This is the time of year when many of us are creating plans in relation to goals that we want to achieve. We figure out what we want, we devise plans to achieve it - and then life happens. If 2020 has taught us anything it might be that we are much less in control of our lives that we pretend to be; and that our planned and premeditated existence is much more fragile that we would like to admit. It only takes one domino to set in motion what feels like catastrophic collapse.

But having our plans interrupted or even changed all together does NOT mean that we cannot or will not achieve our GOAL. Especially what our goals or purposes align with God's purposes. Even though my plans for achieving my goals for this year have been interrupted and needed to change, I am still inching toward them.

Proverbs 16:9 NRSV - The human mind plans the way, but the LORD directs the steps.

Proverbs 19:21 NLT - You can make many plans, but the LORD'S purpose will prevail.

Proverbs 16:1 MSG - Mortals make elaborate plans, but God has the last word.

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

I especially like the way the Message paraphrases this verse: "Put God in charge of your work, then what you've planned will take place." Friends, this means that we must not only trust God with the "what" and the "how" but but also, and more importantly, the "why."

The overarching purpose of God is for his glory to be revealed - for all of creation to recognize him for the good, gracious, and loving God that he is - and for all of creation to respond appropriately - to worship him by reflecting his image. Psalm 23 - He leads me on paths of righteousness for HIS NAME SAKE.

So as we make plans, let's be sure to include the Lord's purposes in our process. How will my....

Academic achievements

Athletic achievements
Performance and artistic achievements
Business achievements
Financial achievements
Professional achievements
Personal achievements
Relational achievements
Parenting achievements

.... reveal God's glory? How will these achievements lead us and others to see our good, gracious, and loving God; and inspire them to appropriate response?

When our goals are focused on HIS purposes, we can be sure that even if the "what" or "how" gets interrupted or changed, the "why" never will.

How will we respond when our plans are interrupted? Jesus tried to prepare the disciples for this in John 16. He tried to prepare them for the difficult road that was before them, for the disappointment they would feel when God's plan looked much different than theirs, to give them hope that even when everything they could see, hear, touch, taste, and feel would confirm that the enemy's purposes had prevailed,

Jesus said: "I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."

May we all remember that the LORD will always have the last word, and that his purposes will prevail. We are confident in this because his purposes prevailed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.