

Being Overly Passive Is Bad

by Tim Conway

This sermon discusses the balance between making plans for the future while acknowledging the need for humility and submission to God's will. It emphasizes the importance of seeking counsel, being sent by God, and having a vision rooted in God's revelation. The speaker highlights the significance of having goals, plans, and vision in various aspects of life, including family, business, church, and personal growth.

Scripture: James 4:13, Proverbs 12:20, Proverbs 15:22, Isaiah 32:8

Topics: "Planning with Humility", "Seeking God's Guidance"

Description

This sermon discusses the balance between making plans for the future while acknowledging the need for humility and submission to God's will. It emphasizes the importance of seeking counsel, being sent by God, and having a vision rooted in God's revelation. The speaker highlights the significance of having goals, plans, and vision in various aspects of life, including family, business, church, and personal growth.

Transcript

He feels like the James verse about not planning out our life because all such boasting is evil. And I would just say this, is the passage from James actually saying that any sort of planning for the future is necessarily wrong? Or what is it saying? Does somebody want to look it up? Instead, you ought to say, if the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that as it is you boast in your arrogance, all such boasting is evil. So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

Does that forbid planning? Or is what it's actually forbidding is saying what you're going to do with such certainty where you should actually check yourself with the humility to say, well, look, this is what I'm planning to do, but if the Lord wills. I don't know if you all have experienced this, but when I'm talking about the future, if I am too assertive about the future, I have noticed that as soon as I will say something too certainly about the future, it's like right there, God's going to say, no, it's not going to happen that way. I recognize that pattern.

Maybe you haven't. I don't think James is teaching that we can't have plans. Because even in the Proverbs, even though, okay, I'll grant, maybe Proverbs 29:18 isn't the place you want to go when it comes to being a visionary, but I would say this, there are other Proverbs that definitely talk about making plans and talk about it in a positive way.

Let's look at some of these. Proverbs 12.20. Whoever gets there, just go ahead and read it. The seed is in the heart of those who devise evil, but those who plan peace have joy.

There's nothing wrong with planning right there. If I've got plans of peace, plans of good, plans of righteousness, certainly there's nothing wrong or twisted about that. How about Proverbs 15.22? Plans fail when there is no counsel, but with many advisors they succeed.

Yeah, that's not denouncing plans. That's saying if you want to be really wise, not only make plans, but make them with counsel. Get other people's opinions about things.

Wise people's opinions. Somebody look up Isaiah 32.8. "...But He who is noble plans noble things, and on the noble things He stands." Don't you love that? That certainly isn't condemning making plans. Not in the least.

And you remember the Apostle Paul? Remember he ran into an issue with the Corinthians where they were kind of questioning him because he had made plans to visit them, and then it didn't work out? Anybody remember that? And he said, what am I saying? Am I saying yes and no? Am I going back and forth here? And he's saying, no, I made plans to come to you and I meant to come to you, but it didn't work out. Look, let's talk about this for a second. I really believe that overpassivity is bad.

I believe it's bad in the family. I believe it's bad in business. I believe it's bad in the church.

I believe it's bad for countries. Overpassivity, where there aren't plans, where people are not looking to the future. You know what? Things do not happen by accident.

People who are most godly in the Christian walk don't end up that way by accident. You want to look at the most godly people in history. You want to look at the ones whose names you know.

Read their lines. Look at them. Do you think Hudson Taylor ended up on the foreign mission field by accident? Do you think he got there? Do you think William Carey just happened to jump on a boat one day and it just mistakenly took him over to India? Do you think that happened? These guys planned.

You know this, that men and women who have sought to walk most closely with the Lord, they're like Mueller, who said, it is my aim to get happy in the Lord each day. He had a plan. He had a goal.

And he sought certain means to get there. How about John Wesley, who said, I am going to pray until I pray. And that was his practice every single day.

You know, people don't accidentally end up with great prayer lives. They don't accidentally end up reading their Bible through once a year or twice a year. They don't accidentally get to where they walk really close with the Lord.

You don't accidentally fast. You don't accidentally end up being a godly person with a godly walk. That doesn't happen.

And you know what? We should not go through life not asking questions like, where do I want to see my family in ten years? Where do I want to see the church in five years? Those are the questions you have to be asking. Because what? People with goals, people with no goals, people with no vision, they don't do much in life. They flop around because they never know where they're going.

People who succeed in this world, whether it's in the realm of Christianity or whether it's in the realm of business or sports, they don't get there by accident. And people who succeed in the family, they didn't get there. I mean, look, I remember when Ruby and I got married and when we were raising children, if Ruby saw a family where they had their act together, if Ruby saw where the children were well-behaved, the children were all saved, Ruby was over there speaking to that mother and finding out what she did.

Why? Because she knows that doesn't happen by accident. She knows that this lady did something, this family did something to get where they are. Look, if you don't have goals, you don't ever achieve them.

Why? Because they didn't exist. People who don't have goals and people that don't have plans and people that don't have vision, they just end up sitting and passively waiting. And oftentimes, they just end up going nowhere.

These things don't happen by accident. Paul had a vision. Paul had a plan.

Paul was moving. I mean, you look at it and you can see Paul had a strategy. And you can hear his strategy.

Do you ever hear? There's times when he's saying, you know what, there's no more room for me over here. I'm not going to build on another man's foundation. I got to go over here.

Why? He had a plan. He had a strategy. What was his strategy? His strategy was take the Gospel to the big cities, to the highway crossings, the harbor cities, the influential cities, the places of commerce, the places of travel.

Let's take the Gospel there to these main arteries. Let's preach it. See churches planted there.

He didn't evangelize everybody. No, but because that wasn't his plan. His plan was you plant churches.

Okay, now work's done. Work's done for him. Now you move on somewhere else.

There was a plan. There was a purpose here. There was a trajectory he was aiming at.

Now, it's true. Okay, my purpose is this. He would tell people, I don't want to go up there because I've got a purpose.

I want to get back to Jerusalem by this time. Well, it's true. It's true.

He planned to get to Rome and they were going to help him on his way to Spain. Well, he got to Rome another way than he thought. The Lord intervened.

People with plans, those plans always get interrupted, but it's not bad to have plans. It's not bad to make your plans with counselors. The Lord may interrupt it at any time.

And we're always, as Christians, we're going to be humbled, submitted to that by will be done. But because His will's going to be done doesn't mean that we don't do anything. It means that we're always in the place where if the Lord wills, I'm going to do this tomorrow.

I'm going to go over here. I'm going to go over there. What's wrong is when you leave if the Lord wills out.

Not just in word. Not just because it's this little appendage that you add on. It's this incantation that you say.

It's not like that. It's coming from a heart that's surrendered. This is what I'm planning to do, but what you're expressing to people is the same thing you've expressed to the Lord in prayer.

Lord, I want to do this and we want to do this. Lord, our objective is going to be this if You would have us to do it. If You don't want us to go in that direction, then show us which direction You want us to go in.

Just like Paul. He had a plan. We're going to go up there into Asia.

And then he was prevented. Okay, now what do we do? And then he has a vision. It's going that way.

This is what Scripture says. You acknowledge the Lord, He'll direct your paths. So we're constantly making plans.

We're strategizing. We're looking. But we constantly lay those plans before the Lord.

I think all the time, saying, Lord, this is what I plan to do. This is the direction we're headed. And if You don't want us to go in that direction, we serve the Christ who opens doors and nobody can shut those doors.

And He closes and nobody can open them. And He directs His people. I've had numerous conversations with John Sykesma where he's talked about American Christians and regards to going on the mission field.

That so many of them are hindered by this idea that if God is calling me to the mission field, I'm going to have some big dream or get some special revelation from that. And I think he was just more taking the approach Matthew 28 tells us just to go. And maybe that's a little different.

Well, I would say this, that as we're looking, there are things in my life where I'm making plans, but this thing about counsel, even though you might not consider this to exactly be counsel, I think it's roughly that. But if I'm thinking about doing certain things, but I recognize that the thing that I'm thinking about doing also requires that I be qualified to do it, then there would be an expectation that the church would back up my desire to do that. There would be a confirmation amongst the people of God that yes, brother, you should be doing that.

Just to launch out and go run around and do things that the people of God, the community of God's people are not recognizing you ought to be doing, I think that's like running without counsel. Here's one of the things about the plans we make. One of the things about the plans I make is I would really like to succeed in doing those things.

And I think you're on your path to not succeeding if you're running without being sent. And there is a sense in Scripture of being sent. There's no question about that.

In fact, that's really where that apostolic word group or the missionary word group comes from. One being Latin, one being Greek. But it has that idea of being sent.

You know the well-known passages in Romans 10. There's that sense of being sent. I think that there's something to that.

The reality is that the foreign mission field will chew people up and spit them out if they're not ready and called to do that. Do I think that everybody in the church should just head off to the mission field? Do I believe that there's a sense in Scripture that everybody is called to that just because Matthew 28 says what it says? That therefore, everybody's qualified for it? I don't believe that at all. And I believe that if you send people to the mission field that are not qualified, you're going to end up with problems.

And I know a lot of you don't know the early history, but they had Americans in the Far East and they had to send them all back because they just were not prepared to be there. And the reality is, Glenn is not a missionary. He's not over in the country he's in doing missionary work.

He's over there working. The reality is that the people going forth from our church, there has been a sense of calling, a sense of sending. It may be true that you don't need to see it written in the stars, but in the same way that a man senses a call to the ministry, there are ways that God communicates that.

And I would say one of the primary ways is just through the support and recognition of God's people. If that's lacking, I would have a real difficult time believing that a person should run because it doesn't have the feel that they're actually being sent. Pastor Tim, what confirmed it for you that you were called to be a pastor? See, that was a big thing.

God's people. I remember driving to the church the day they were going to vote on me out at Community Baptist Church. And I was saying to Ruby, what if five people don't vote for me? And she finally just said, there's no sense worrying.

I don't even know if you remember that. Do you remember driving there that day? For some strange reason, we came that little road. I don't know if we missed our turn.

The day they were taking the vote. What I remember saying is, maybe you don't remember this, but it just struck me the way of it, and I said, is it too late to change your mind? Here's the thing. The Lord took me to Stockdale, and as I preached and sought to lead the group down there, God filled that little place to the point where Pat asked me if I wanted to pastor it.

My desire was for the inner city, so I declined. But it was apparent that God was doing something. And then I had a real... there was one night, I was walking the streets of Floresville.

That's where I lived. We were planting the church in Stockdale, but we were living in Floresville 30 minutes away. And walking the streets one night praying, it was just like the Lord really confirmed.

There was a real settled sense that He was taking me into the ministry. But I think ultimately it came down to God's people saying, yes, brother, we believe that's what you should be doing. And so the first step was the church unanimously, it was 100% voted, yes, we believe you should be in the ministry.

And then it was the elders, the four, probably three other elders at that time in-house who said, go plant a church in the inner city. And the church stood behind me. And 11 others were willing to follow me.

And so the Lord confirmed that. But you know one of the things that He has said is that one of the things that God does in somebody that He's raising up to lead and to preach to God's people is they have a unique relationship with this book. And there's no question about it from the time the Lord saved me, I had such a hunger for the Word of God.

I was in it all the time. Listening to sermons about it all the time. It was just such an insatiable hunger.

Anyways, there were other factors, but those are some primary ones. Where there's no vision, the people perish. Well, you can look at that like, oh, when we have governmental leaders, you have family leaders, you have church leaders, we talk about they're visionaries.

Oftentimes inventors or somebody. They've got these goals. They've got a vision.

We talk like that. And that's how that text is often looked at that way. If you don't have people with a vision for the future, the people perish.

But that's not the meaning of vision in Scripture. I mean, vision in Scripture has to do with revelation. It's more like the reality that if you don't have... What's a vision? A vision is like a prophecy.

A vision is God giving revelation. The contrast is given. Blessed is he who keeps the law.

So it's like people without a knowledge of God's Word. Right, exactly. People without a knowledge of God's revelation.

They perish. My people perish for a lack of knowledge. That's the idea.

And so, I would agree with him that that couple there, and this is common for people to take that passage out of the King James Bible and misinterpret it. If you just hear it from other translations, it is a bit more obvious. The ESV, no prophetic vision.

The people throw off restraint. The New King James, no revelation. People cast off restraint.

The New American Standard, no vision. People are under strain. The Holman Christian, without revelation.

People run wild. You like that? With no revelation, people run wild. And yes, it's over against the Proverbs.

Oftentimes, they're comparing opposite ideas there. So, somebody look at 1 Samuel 3. You remember in those days, that revelation was lacking. In that day, there was an absence of visions.

Somebody read that. 1 Samuel was ministering to the Lord in the presence of Eli. The Word of the Lord was rare in those days and there was no frequent vision.

The Word of the Lord, rare. No frequent vision. Yeah, that's bad.

That's bad when the Word is absent. When God's not raising up preachers. When God's not giving revelation.

When the Word of God is not taken seriously, people run wild.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/w8AhnN-zv1o.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/tim-conway/being-overly-passive-is-bad/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net