

LIFE PLANNING | Handout

1. Introduction.

- a. “I committed one fatal error in my youth, and dearly have I bewailed it. I started in life without an object, even without an ambition. ...From all the profitless years gone by I seek vainly for something to remember with pride, or even to dwell upon with satisfaction. I have thrown away a life; I feel sometime as if there were nothing remaining to me worth living for. I am an unhappy man.”¹
- b. Text: “The plans of the diligent lead surely to advantage....” (Pr 21:5).
- c. Big idea: Establish priorities, set SMART goals, get others to help.

2. Definition.

- a. Life planning is “the ongoing, intentional, collaborative process of determining, with the help of God, Scripture, and close family members and friends, one’s objectives in the long-, medium-, and short-term and creating a clear step-by-step plan how those objectives are to be achieved, in order to make the maximum positive difference in our world and in peoples’ lives.”

3. Biblical Case for Life Planning.

- a. Proverbs (Pr 16:3, 9; 19:21; 20:5, 18; *21:5).
- b. Paul’s ambitious plans as the apostle to the Gentiles (Ro 15:18-24; 2 Co 10:13-16).
- c. Every YWAM biography is about a Christian who planned and executed.
- d. Our planning must obviously be openhanded and not closedfisted (Ja 4:13-16).

4. General and Special Calling.

- a. General calling: the same for every human being.
 - (1) The Creation Mandate (Ge 1:26-28).
 - (2) The Great Confession (from unbeliever to believer)(Mt 16:16; Jn 3:16; Jn 20:31; 1 Co 15:3-8).
 - (3) The Great Commandment (from believer to disciple)(Mt 22:37-39).
 - (4) The Great Commission (from disciple to disciple maker)(Mt 28:19-20).
- b. Special calling/station: unique to each individual.
 - (1) “The Lord enjoins every one of us, in all the actions of life, to have respect to our own calling. He knows the boiling restlessness of the human mind, the fickleness with which it is borne hither and thither, its eagerness to hold opposites at one time in its grasp, its ambition. Therefore, lest all things should be thrown into confusion by our folly and rashness, he has assigned distinct duties to each in the different modes of life. And that no one may presume to overstep his proper limits, he has distinguished the different modes of life by the name of callings. Every man’s mode of life, therefore, is a kind of station assigned him by the Lord, that he may not be always driven about at random.”²

¹ Robert Dale Owen, quoted in F. B. Meyer, *Religion in Homespun*, 175.

² John Calvin, *Institutes*, III.X.6.

5. Assessment.

- a. Am I becoming the person Jesus wants me to be?
- b. How do I get unstuck?
- c. What bad habits do I need to eliminate?
- d. Am I following through on those big dreams I once had?
- e. What addictions do I need to end?
- f. Where do I need to stretch myself?
- g. What's my great object?

6. Priorities and Goal Setting.

- a. Principles.
 - (1) Balance and grace is required. We always need to be able to adjust our plans.
 - (2) Remember the seasons of life. Not everything needs to be done now.
 - (3) Include your spouse, your children, and your friends in your goal-setting.
- b. Priorities:
 - (1) Relationship with God.
 - (a) Bible study, prayer, weekly sabbath, spiritual retreat.
 - (b) Areas of weakness.
 - (2) Relationship with spouse (quality time, prayer, date nights, sex life).
 - (3) Relationship with children (quality time, listening).
 - (4) Health (diet, exercise, fasting, sleep).
 - (5) Finances (paying off debt, giving, savings).
 - (6) Church (discipleship, evangelism, service).
 - (a) Life group, D group, Precept group
 - (b) Evangelism: who's your one?
 - (7) Work or study (promotion, new qualification, start or sell a business, complete degree, get research grant).
 - (8) Community (relief of the poor, foster care, school board, pro-life advocacy).
 - (9) Hobbies (body, mind, spirit).
- c. SMART goals are: (1) specific; (2) measurable; (3) accountable; (4) reasonable; and (5) time-bound.
- d. Time management tips.
 - (1) Kill two (or three) birds with one stone.
 - (2) Master your screen time (turn off app notifications; delete accounts).
 - (3) Make progress on one \$10,000 project every day.

7. Application.

- a. Make life planning and goal-setting an important part of your spiritual life.
- b. List your priorities in order and set one or two SMART goals in each area.
- c. Share your priorities and goals with those you trust and ask them to pray for you.

8. Conclusion.

- a. "What do I care about? How do I approach intentionally living my life? How does God accomplish His mission in His world through His people like me? Through my network of friends and associations, how might God call me to care for them in this season of my life? What do I have to offer to those whom I love?"³

³ William L. Craig, *Reasonable Response*, 360.