

## LIFE AS A PLANNER

We live in a world full of people who call themselves "planners". In fact, many Christians wanting to distinguish themselves from those who live haphazardly will call themselves planners. And, because of the pace of life in our modern times and because of the number of commitments we make, if we did not have the skill of making plans for the use of our time we likely would never accomplish anything.

While all of these things are true, we must not forget the words of James concerning planning:

*"Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin". (Jam 4:13-17 KJV)*

There is a proper way to live in service to our Lord in these modern times. Often we attempt this by continuing to plan our lives and to merely recognize God at the conclusion of the plans. This is somewhat oversimplified, and there is terrific room for error in this practice. It is intended for us to prove what is according to the will of God and what is not. Likewise, we are not to be worldly, but we are allowed to use the tools provided us by the world. Searching the scriptures for the answers to these, we are better equipped to make our plans. Still, there is the clause "if the Lord will" that brings balance.

Our lives should be centered upon Christ and involve spiritual thinking with our decisions. This is far more than including God at the conclusion of our plans. Many feel confident by involving God in this way that their plans will work. It is assumed by merely recognizing the Father that He will automatically protect us and grant us our petitions. This is not the case. Offering the prayer "Thy will be done" is by no means a guarantee the things we pray for will occur. We may desperately want God to heal our loved one, to give us a new job, to remove problems from our family, to let us meet our future spouse, or to remove

pain from our bodies. And we may earnestly pray for these, including in our prayer "Thy will be done", but truly meaning, "this is what I want to happen". If it happens that our prayer is answered, no doubt we will praise God, though our incorrect practice of wanting our will and not His is reinforced. If our practice is to give lip service to God's will and the prayer is not answered, our faith is shaken, and sometimes destroyed.

It is not enough to pray according to the things we want. Our prayers—if we desire that they be heard and answered—should focus on what is the will of God.

*"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:"* (1 Joh. 5:14 KJV)

The question for Christians to seek when offering prayers or in planning the events of our futures is, "What is the will of God for my life, for my family, for my challenge, etc.?" It is intended for us to prove those things that are according to the will of God (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 5:10; Eph. 5:17; Phi. 1:10; 1 Thes. 5:21). This involves searching the scriptures, as did the Bereans (Acts 17:11). There are evidences of many works and actions that are according to the will of God (Acts 10:35; Rom 14:18; Phil 4:18; 1 Tim 2:1-3, 5:4; Heb 13:16; 1 Pet 2:5, 20). In giving us several fruits of the spirit in Gal. 5:22-23, Paul states, *"against such there is no law."* These things then are according to the will of God. Our desire should be to find those things that are according to His will, and for these to be the motives behind our prayers (1 John. 5:14). It is appropriate to seek counsel when facing major decisions; our own impurities can cloud our judgment (Pro. 3:5, 19:21, 20:9, 28:26).

Even when we discover what the will of the Lord is, our prayers may not be answered in the way we expect. The Apostle Paul spoke of traveling to Spain and even planned to go there (Acts 15:24-28). Certainly his intentions—to spread the Gospel in that country as he had done in so many others—were not outside of the will of God, but he never went to Spain .

We need to question ourselves concerning our worldliness. James says that whoever is the friend of the world is the enemy of God ( Jam. 4:4). There are groups who have rejected many forms of modernism because of the risk of becoming worldly by associating with the world. We know of communities where horse-drawn carriages and handmade furniture are the norm—as well as other fruits of this belief. It is accepted widely that Christians can

use those privileges afforded us by our modern world as tools. If we would use the roads of Rome , that alone would not make us Romans. Still, we are called to love God and not the world. In making our plans, we should question our intentions and our motives (1 Joh. 2:15-16).

Of note is the way James concludes his section on planning: "*Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*" ( Jam. 4:17 KJV) James has illustrated the need for us to seek the Lord's will. He has stated that all planning without correctly including God in the plans is foolishness. To follow these ideas with a statement such as verse 17 is to add great emphasis to the passage. If we know these principles and do not apply them, then we commit sin against God by our actions and delinquency.

The proper way to live in service to our Lord in these modern times is to seek His will above all other things (Mat. 6:33, 22:37-38; Joh. 6:27). Attempting to recognize God at the conclusion of our plans in hopes that our desires will be in accordance to His will is not scripturally correct. It is also not correct to assume that we will receive our requests if they are worldly in nature ( Jam. 4:3-4). We must realize it is within our reach to know what the will of God is. Search the scriptures (Mat. 7:7). If we align our hearts and minds to this, it is natural that our motives, desires, prayers, and plans will follow. "*A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps.*" (Pro. 16:9 KJV).

**CHAD PRINCE**  
**Oxford, AL**

## **APOLOGIA**

**QUESTION:** Is there ever a need to be baptized again?

**ANSWER:** The apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:5 tells us that there is one baptism. In order for us to answer this question it is necessary that we first ascertain the nature of the baptism of which Paul writes. One should realize that what man considers baptism and what God considers baptism are not always one and the same. There are a great number who believe that they have been baptized when in truth they have not received the one baptism of the Bible.

In understanding the one baptism of which Paul writes, one must know the Bible answers to the following questions: Who is to be baptized, for what reason is one baptized, and what is the mode of the baptism.

In answer to the first question, we turn to the words of Jesus in Mark 16:16. Jesus teaches us that only those who are capable of believing are to be baptized. He states "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*" If one is "baptized" before they are capable of believing in Christ, then they have not been baptized with the one baptism of which Paul writes about.

The answer to the next question is found in Acts 2:38. Peter in preaching Christ as a crucified and risen Lord states "...Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...". Also in 1 Corinthians 12:13, Paul writes, "*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body...*" From these two passages it is evident that one is baptized in order to receive the forgiveness of sins and to be added to the one body which is the Church (Eph. 1:22, 23). If one is baptized, for example, believing that they were forgiven before baptism or were baptized into a body other than the church of our Lord, they did not receive the one baptism of the Bible.

As to the mode of baptism, we turn to the writings of Paul in Romans 6:3-5, "*Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized in to Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in his likeness of his death, we shall be also in his likeness of his resurrection:*" Here, Paul speaks of baptism as a burial and a planting. Clearly the mode of the one baptism is immersion. If one has been sprinkled or perhaps had water poured over them, they have not received the baptism of the Bible.

From the above words we find that the one baptism of the Bible is one which is administered to believers who are immersed in order to receive the remission of sins and entrance into the one body, the Church. If one has not been baptized in accordance with these principles they have not been baptized. In fact, in Acts 19 we find a group which were baptized, but not in accordance with the above mentioned principles. Upon learning more they then were baptized by Paul. Thus in answer to the

question, it is necessary to be baptized according to the Bible plan.

**SAM DICK**  
Cave City, KY

## A CARROT, AN EGG, AND A CUP OF COFFEE

A young woman went to her mother and told her about her life and how things were so hard for her. She did not know how she was going to make it and wanted to give up. She was tired of fighting and struggling. It seemed as one problem was solved, a new one arose.

Her mother took her to the kitchen. She filled three pots with water and placed each on a high fire. Soon the pots came to boil. In the first she placed carrots, in the second she placed eggs, and in the last she placed ground coffee beans. She let them sit and boil; without saying a word. In about twenty minutes she turned off the burners. She fished the carrots out and placed them in a bowl. She pulled the eggs out and placed them in a bowl. Then she ladled the coffee out and placed it in a bowl. Turning to her daughter, she asked, "Tell me what you see."

"Carrots, eggs, and coffee," she replied.

Her mother brought her closer and asked her to feel the carrots. She did and noted that they were soft.

The mother then asked the daughter to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard-boiled egg.

Finally, the mother asked the daughter to sip the coffee. The daughter smiled as she tasted its rich aroma.

The daughter then asked, "What does it mean, Mother?"

Her mother explained that each of these objects had faced the same adversity: boiling water. Each reacted differently. The carrot went in strong, hard, and unrelenting. However, after being subjected to the boiling water, it softened and became weak. The egg had been fragile. Its thin outer shell had protected its liquid interior, but after sitting through the boiling water, its inside became hardened. The ground coffee

beans were unique, however. After they were in the boiling water, they had changed the water.

"Which are you?" she asked her daughter. "When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a carrot, an egg or a coffee bean?"

Think of this: Which am I? Am I the carrot that seems strong, but with pain and adversity do I wilt and become soft and lose my strength?

Am I the egg that starts with a malleable heart, but changes with the heat? Did I have a fluid spirit, but after a death, a breakup, a financial hardship or some other trial, have I become hardened and stiff? Does my shell look the same, but on the inside am I bitter and tough with a stiff spirit and hardened heart?

Or am I like the coffee bean? The bean actually changes the hot water, the very circumstance that brings the pain. When the water gets hot, it releases the fragrance and flavor. If you are like the bean, when things are at their worst, you get better and change the situation around you. When the hour is the darkest and trials are their greatest, do you elevate yourself to another level? How do you handle adversity? Are you a carrot, an egg or a coffee bean?

COPIED

## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Which tribe did God tell the Israelites was to lead them against the Canaanites?
2. In Esther, who suggested that Mordecai be given royal treatment for potentially saving the king's life?
3. What was the first miracle of Jesus that Mark mentioned?
4. According to 1st Corinthians, who is the last enemy that Christ will destroy?
5. Where did Paul leave Titus?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. According to Numbers, in case of war, who would serve as Israel 's soldiers? ALL MEN OVER THE AGE OF TWENTY (Num. 1:3)
2. According to Proverbs, what did Solomon say was the beginning of knowledge? THE FEAR OF THE LORD (Prov. 1:7)
3. In Nebuchadnezzar's dream about a tree which grew up into the heavens and then was cut down, what did Daniel tell the king that the tree symbolized? NEBUCHADNEZZAR (Dan. 4:20-22)
4. In Acts, who were the first two apostles to be taken into custody? PETER AND JOHN (Acts 3:1 and 4:3)
5. What did Paul say was the body of Christ? THE CHURCH (Eph. 1:22-23)