

The Greatest Plan

God is our Highest Priority - All Heart, Mind, Strength, Soul

If God is our highest priority we will think about God constantly. Since we all sin we will seek other things and reduce God as a priority, will need reminders and prompts to get us back on track. We will need support and accountability from others as well as self-discipline.

Having a plan to bring us back to God is central to growing with God. Not following a plan to bring us close to God is following or at least condoning destruction. Time will tell. If we can taste the good of God we will better understand the taste of evil. If evil is all we ever know then we won't understand the difference. So let's taste the Good of God and learn.

Build and follow a plan correctly with God

Plan Requirements

1. Clear measurable objectives - When, where, who, what, how,
2. Why - Understood purpose - the reason for the plan. What is the plan to produce or create?
3. Daily or improved frequency - to be good or great at anything we must do it regularly.
4. Correctly - We must be correct in how we do it. Practicing incorrectly can make us efficiently incorrect. We can do it wrong really well.
5. Building, growing, developing - we ought to be challenged
6. Peaceful Pace - We pace ourselves with peace and love

We ought to develop a better understanding of God's intangible character through experience. The process will require trial and error. It will take some patience, courage, honesty, dedication, correction, and persistence to grow.

God's character applied correctly develops sincere love & peace. For many of us it can be challenging to engage with each other in sincere, honest, and compassionate conversations. Yet this is what living with God involves. That

said, there may be some challenging resistance within us. We must move safely and carefully more and more into such spiritual conversations. Our fear will present itself in different ways. We ought to take note of how we convince ourselves away from God's sincere love and pray for help to have it corrected.

Plan Requirement #1 Clear Measurable Objectives

We ought to unpack each character trait of God into more specific descriptive details. We ought to see how we can add God's patience, compassion, truth, and mercy in all our activities. We can listen more with compassion and empathy, slow down in our responses, avoid faultfinding of other's weaknesses and learn to sincerely compliment them on their strengths speaking encouraging truth.

If we have particular struggles; sarcasm, lies, lust, fear, false flattery, selfish-ambition, resentment, etc. we can practice prayer to let these thoughts go and replace such thinking with sincere love, truth, empathy, servitude, and forgiveness. It can benefit us greatly to meet and create together such goals.

We must set aside time and effort to create these goals. If we do not, then God is not our highest priority. How can God be our highest priority if we won't put time and effort to see how we can better serve God?

Plan Requirement #2 Understood Purpose for the Plan - The why

Knowing why we are doing things affects how we do it. If we are doing this primarily because our friends are doing it we may not be applying our best efforts. We may in fact just go through motions to say we did it. Why we do things affects the outcome of doing them. We ought to reflect upon this question to keep in mind our purpose, to learn about God and ourselves. We ought to be continuously learning about God and ourselves.

Plan Requirement #3 Daily or improved frequency

Anything that will be our highest priority will be taking up the most time in our thinking. If we are giving our all to God then not only are we doing more each day, but throughout each day. At the days end we ought to see how we have participated with God in some challenging ways.

Regular and frequent correct practice is needed for mastery of anything. Ask a few professionals how much of their day they devote to their work in thought and practice. It can be consuming and obsessive. We can be this way with God when we see the Good behind God and the giving of ourselves over to righteous activity.

If we are just beginning in this journey it could be challenging to get ourselves to do it every other day. Let's not beat ourselves for imperfections. If we do we will forever beat ourselves, because we will never achieve perfection. Instead, let's seek gradual improvements. Mercy and forgiveness is universal meaning we ought to apply it to ourselves too.

Meeting together with a partner is very helpful to encourage motivation, stay committed to our goals, and uncovering personal bias. Let's examine ourselves to ensure Good imperfect progress.

#4. Correctly

God's collective character must be present within our focus. If we speak truth without mercy it could be from resentment or selfish-ambition. If we love without truth it could be from fear, guilt, or shame. Are we applying God's justice/impartiality or are we showing favoritism?

Leviticus 19:15 'You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor.

God is just, impartial, objective, and staying with spiritual principles of God. God's ways do not change. It's like a law of physics, intangible physics we can't yet measure. It's like riding a bike. No one has created a physics formula for riding the bike, but yet we all know we can through trial and error. We see others do it, believe we can too, then begin our learning through experience. Yet the bike is tangible and we can see the results. With God everything is intangible so we must use and strengthen our intangible senses to measure and gauge our production.

Since we all sin, our sin will be present within our actions. We will have fear, resentment, pride, vanity, envy, etc. Yet we continue to grow with God while accepting the truth of our sin. The glass is half full and half empty.

Our goal is to make persistent gradual improvements with God's character and instead of eliminating sin, our improvements with God's character will automatically reduce sin. If we spend more time thinking and acting in alignment with God's Goodness sin subsequently decreases.

Honest sincere evaluation of ourselves is essential to stay true and correct with God's righteous ways. Speaking spiritual truth about our goals and struggles frequently with mentors or partners goes a long way to keep us real and right. Being regularly transparent with others sets us up to be known through and through. Others will know when something is off. If we stop showing up or become superficial, others will easily take notice and will be able to help. We will feel wrong and distant. We ought to attend our support groups regularly to stay in the know and to be known.

Daily self assessments will help guide us in self awareness. Regularly reviewing our productivity in thought and action with God's character ensures we stay focused to grow with God.

#5 Build, grow, develop, and increase

Growth does not happen over night. Persistence and endurance are key. This means we struggle more and more over time with practice and participation in God's ways. We avoid getting stuck in the contemplation phase of God and instead move diligently into taking Godly action. We are active learners with God.

If we aren't feeling challenged then we probably aren't growing. Let's say we start off with a goal of giving a sincere and honest compliment to someone each day. After a couple of weeks it can begin to become easier. After a month it can become a habit, meaning we are doing it with much less effort, focus, and conscious thought. The challenge of this goal has been greatly reduced and we are now ready to raise the bar.

As our goals become accomplished, accommodated into our minds, normalized into our bodies, and struggle is reduced, we ought to set a new goal to continue our growth. God wants our all. Moses and Jesus made this very clear that we are to give our all to God. That means we ought to continue seeking God with every effort.

#6 Peaceful Pace - We pace ourselves with peace and love

Gratitude is another word for see the Good. Yet we ought to see God's Good happening in our lives and sense/know it is Good. Does it feel good? Does it bring us good feelings, peace, compassion, and joy?

Our minds can concentrate on many things which distract us from feeling good. A peaceful mind will create thinking rules to guide itself toward peace and after a while it can do it without much effort. In the book Alcoholics Anonymous there are a few great points for peace, "Argument and fault-finding are to be avoided like the plague," and "we have ceased fighting anything or anyone— even alcohol." Pg. 98 and 84

The word accept in the Serenity Prayer is a guide toward the previous stated two points. In the prayer we are asking for serenity in order to be able to accept things. Serenity is peace and God is peace. To be with God is to be with peace.

Perspective on this principle for many spiritual reasons is essential. We ought to make time to create a place for peace each day, preferably as we begin our day. Getting right with God in our minds and hearts each day in meditation and prayer can save not only our souls but others' too.

How we are in our minds and hearts has an impact upon all those we are around. As we grow we may be able to impact others with gentle compassion, refresh the hearts of others, and encourage them to grow spiritually. Our demonstration of being more pure in heart and sound in mind carries with it much influence for God's goodness.

Making a cake

Ingredients

To make a cake or other dishes as well there are ingredients. If an ingredient gets left out it can affect or even ruin the whole thing. A line used in scripture "a little yeast works its way through a whole batch of dough" refers to this idea. Therefore, every ingredient must be right and with the right amount for the cake to taste good. To have the right amount of ingredients we will need to measure. It needs to be accurate.

Instructions

There will be instructions to guide the process correctly. There will be a series of steps and if we take on action in the wrong order it can mess everything up.

Context

If we are new at cooking it can be a bit overwhelming. People who don't cook can oversimplify the process. The oven we use will cook differently than other ovens and altitude can make a difference. The pan we cook with can affect the process. Context is always important. Sometimes we may need to use some foil on the edges to avoid burning. A good cook will watch as the cake is baked to assess for needs and adjustments.

Toothpick Test

Although we have ingredients which we have measured carefully and instructions we have followed well we still must be able to test the work to ensure it is done right. With a cake and other baked goods there is a toothpick test to ensure the middle of it is done. If we pull out the cake because the instructions say 20 minutes and its been 20 minutes we may be pulling out a cake without the center being fully cooked. This will not go well at the birthday party. Sticking the toothpick in the center of the cake all the way down and pulling it out can show us how wet the inside still may be. If it comes out dry and clean the cake is done.

Our toothpick test is the affect others sense from us. Are we affecting others with compassion, sincere love, and peace? We will easily see this over time. It's not difficult to love and care for others in a way that stands out and if we are growing with God it will stand out.

Love and peace are not experiences we entertain within ourselves and for ourselves. They are practices we ought to engage in with others. We are all joined with one spirit. Our words, attitude, and demeanor ought to be blessings and spiritual gifts and not measure by comfort. This is the finished product. Like making the cake it is a process. We may need to make a few cakes to learn how to do it well. Every great cook has made many mistakes which have helped them become better cooks.