

STRATEGIC FAITH PLANNING

Session 1



Dr. Bruce Cook

PITFALLS IN PLANNING

- The Lord admonishes us to plan.
 - The Lord says that planning is a necessity. If approached the right way, it can be very spiritual.
 - There is almost a feeling that planning is not spiritual, that we can't really trust God and plan as well.
 - **Pitfalls of Planning**
 1. Motion - "sit down"
 2. Motives - Have you ever wondered why some of your prayers don't get answered or plans don't work out?
Proverbs 15:22 Plans fail for lack of counsel. But with many advisors, they succeed. WHY? Because they can see things and help you uncover some motives that need to be evaluated and addressed.
 3. Methods -
Projection Planning
 1. Benchmark in the past
 2. Consider present resources
 3. Project into the future a percentage increase
Problems with Projection Planning
 1. Marketing myopia
 2. We tend to limit ourselves by our present resources
 3. There tends to be a focus on the past - we want to learn from the past, but not be anchored to it.
 4. It builds little or no faith.
- BIGGEST PROBLEM**
- No matter what you do in your business or personal life this coming year, if there is not an element of faith, real trust in God, there is no opportunity to please our Heavenly Father.
 - Observe the dynamic tension between Luke 14:28-30 and Hebrews 11:6, the integration of planning, which is necessary, and faith, which is essential in pleasing the Lord.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why should we "examine our motives" in starting or operating a business? What possible negative motives might exist? Does God see our motives in the same way as we do?
2. Does your business do projections or have a planning process it uses each year? Discuss this with your group.
3. What value (if any) do you believe there is in doing planning for the future?
4. Do you believe that there is a "tension" between planning and faith? What is it?



STRATEGIC FAITH PLANNING

Session 2

THE INTEGRATION OF FAITH AND PLANNING



Dr. Bruce Cook

- The Lord brings things into our lives so that we ultimately turn back to Him. Then, in His grace, He makes a provision for us.
- What does being called to do something that you are not equipped to do, do to your faith life? **It will BUILD your faith.**
- **Building a Faith Plan**
 1. Establish a purpose or mission statement. What is your purpose or mission?
- If you had to write a purpose or mission statement for your life, what would it be?
- **We have been created to bring glory to our Father in heaven.** How do we do that?
- We glorify God by doing the work we have been given to do.
- 1. Universal work – given to all believers.
 - Philippians 2:12 Work out our salvation with fear and trembling.
 - Matthew 28:19-20 Make disciples of all nations.
 - Love one another.
 - Be salt and light.
- 2. Unique work – our daily occupation.
- **YOUR CHALLENGE:** To identify your unique sphere of influence and recognize you accomplish your universal work through it.
- **Mission Statement Workshop**
 1. Identify your product or service.
 2. Identify your major market or customer.
 3. Identify your distinctives.
 4. Identify your anticipated results.
- Weave these four ideas together to create your Mission Statement. Ask God to show you what needs to be in these four areas for your business.



Shoe Leather



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. At the beginning of this session, Dr. Cook asks the question, “What does being called to do something that you are not equipped to do, do to your faith life?” How would you respond to this question?
2. The first step of building a faith plan is: Establish a purpose or mission statement. Does your business have a purpose or mission statement? What is it? Does it meet the 4-part criteria described in this video?
3. In what way does your business bring glory to our Father in heaven?
4. Before this video, had you thought much about the difference between your Universal work and your Unique work? What do you think about it now?



STRATEGIC FAITH PLANNING

Session 2 - Workshop

MISSION STATEMENT WORKSHOP



Dr. Bruce Cook

It is recommended that this workshop be done in the group setting the week following Session 2 (between Session 2 and Session 3).

Complete the following in a few words:

1. Identify your product or service: _____

2. Identify your major market or customer: _____

3. Identify your distinctives: _____

4. Identify your anticipated results: _____

Write a brief mission statement (one sentence) using these four elements as demonstrated in Session 2.

Discuss this with your group. In particular, discuss how doing this with excellence can bring glory to God our Father in Heaven.



STRATEGIC FAITH PLANNING

Session 3



Dr. Bruce Cook

PARTNERING WITH GOD

Review: Have a plan that integrates faith into our lives and businesses.

1. Have a purpose or mission statement.

- Form a partnership with God whereby you are both involved in such a way that you, together, are accomplishing the mission to which He has called you.
- Partnerships don't mean that the partners are necessarily equal, it means that each is providing their distinctive.

• God's promises in partnership relationships with us:

GOD'S PART

1. He promises to direct us.

Psalm 25:12

Psalm 32:8

2. He promises that He will provide.

Philippians 4:19

Psalm 34:10

3. He rewards us.

Hebrews 11:6

OUR PART

1. Live by faith - trust Him.

Romans 1:17

Colossians 2:6

Hebrews 11:6

PARTNERING WITH GOD

1. God's part

2. My part

• *Without faith it is impossible to please God.*

• **BIBLICAL FAITH:**

1. It tends to be the opposite of what you can see.

Hebrews 11:1 2 Corinthians 5:7 Hebrews 11:7

2. The object of that faith is God and His Word.

Hebrews 12:2

3. Biblical faith always involves action.

James 2:17 Hebrews 11:8

• We want to see the "whole plan" to see if we agree rather than trusting Him.

• The object of faith is what matters.

• Do you have faith in faith --- or faith in God?

Anxious and Fearful

Vs.

Excited

Faith

Vs.

Intellectual Assent

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. To what extent do you consider the work you do (personally and professionally) to be part of God's plan for your life? Can you identify parts where you definitely see this and other parts that don't quite "fit" that idea? Discuss this with the group.

2. How do we "fix our eyes upon Jesus" as Dr. Cook describes it in this video? And, why should we do so?

3. Prior to hearing viewing this video, have you considered the possibility that your actions could be done within the concept of "partnering with God on His plans"? What are your thoughts about the differences between God's part and your part? Can you trust Him to do His part? What if He doesn't - from your viewpoint?



STRATEGIC FAITH PLANNING

Session 4



Dr. Bruce Cook

DEVELOPING A VISION AND CONVICTION

REVIEW: Have a plan that integrates faith into our lives and businesses.

1. Have a purpose or mission statement.
2. Form a partnership with God.
3. Develop a vision and conviction. (The internalization of the mission.)

- **VISION:** A mental picture of a future event taking place. = Motivation
Encouragement
- The vision comes from the Lord.
- Why is conviction so important? 1. You will have trouble while implementing the plan. 2. Your faith will be tested.
- How to know if something is from the Lord.
 1. John 16:13 & 14 But when He the Spirit comes He will guide you to all truth.
 2. Habakkuk 2:3 The vision is waiting for the appointed time, though it lingers, wait for it.
 3. Psalm 37:4 Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.
 4. Philippians 2:13 For God is at work within you. (If it from the Lord it will intensify over time.)
 5. Colossians 3:15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your heart.
Proverbs 2:10 For wisdom will enter your heart and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.
 6. Proverbs 15:22 Plans fail without many advisors ...
Proverbs 20:18 Make plans by seeking advice.
- A Goal is:
 - Attainable
 - MeasurableIt is an action step that gets you closer to that vision becoming a reality.
- A vision needs to have an opportunity to translate into a measurable plan that affects what you do next week.
- Take your vision and begin to identify a number of 12-month or yearly faith goals in each category.
- A faith goal is taking the partnership and dividing the goal into two parts:

GOD'S PART	MY PART (Action Step)
1. Deal with the response.	1. Contact 50 individuals
- Isaiah 55:8 & 9 My ways are not your ways, and your ways are not my ways.
- When something goes in God's column, leave it there.
- We get into trouble when we try to go over and help out God.

FUZZY

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Can you think of a time (event) when you had to totally trust the Lord for the outcome of the situation (where there was "no human way" to see something accomplished? Did you trust the Lord then? Did you try to "help" the situation (thus "helping the Lord"). What happened? Share your experience (both positive and negative) with the group.
2. Talk about Dr. Cook's statement that a goal is "attainable and measurable" Vs. "a Fuzzy." How many things that you consider "goals" are really fuzzy's (i.e., "I plan to ... "more or less" this year.")
3. Where does discouragement fit into the "My Part"? Is it possible to be discouraged with our part? What does that mean if we are?



STRATEGIC FAITH PLANNING

Session 4 Workshop



Dr. Bruce Cook

DEVELOPING A VISION AND CONVICTION

1. Write a Vision Statement for your company or your personal life. A Vision Statement is a series of mental pictures of a future event taking place – think 5 years out. _____

2. Write some one year faith goals – what you need to accomplish this year to move toward your vision including My Part – the action steps I can take and God’s Part – what am I trusting Him for?

GOAL: (be sure it is attainable and measurable):

MY PART

GODS PART

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

GOAL: (be sure it is attainable and measurable):

MY PART

GODS PART

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

GOAL: (be sure it is attainable and measurable):

MY PART

GODS PART

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



STRATEGIC FAITH PLANNING

Session 5



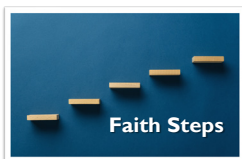
Dr. Bruce Cook

FORMING A FAITH STRATEGY

REVIEW: Faith Planning Process

1. Mission Statement
2. Active partnership with the Lord
3. Vision and conviction
4. Goals - action steps

- **PURPOSE STATEMENT:** To glorify God.
- 135,000 Midianite soldiers Vs. 300 Israeli soldiers + a partnership with God = God gets the glory.
- **FAITH STRATEGY** How do you take your limited resources and accomplish a goal that is much bigger than you ever imagined you could accomplish?
- Listen!
- Faith strategy is the process of discerning how God has preceded you and taking advantage of that.
- Sitting outside the tent = taking the time to discern what is going on.
- “Let me tell you about the Chief in Heaven Who sent His Son to this earth so we could have peace through Him.”
- In every culture, in every age, there is a Gospel equivalent (a way to share the Gospel) that culturally communicates it. Learn what that is before we go and present. How has God preceded you?
- **APPLICATION:** Getting close to your customer to understand their needs. Then figure out how to respond to their needs.
- Determining the critical events of your strategy -
 1. Who is the key person that will make the determination of your success in terms of accomplishing your goal?
 2. What does that person have to do?
 3. Why should they do it?
- What is the problem? Help them solve their problem with our product or service.



- In our faith strategy from a human standpoint there is an element of risk.
- It is only when we start taking the faith steps that we are exercising Biblical faith.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. If our purpose for being here is to glorify God, do you recall how Jesus said had done that? It was by doing the work He had been sent to do. Does this speak to how/why we should be strategic in doing our work? Discuss this with the group.
2. In the video the question, “How do you take your limited resources and accomplish a goal that is much bigger than you ever imagined you could accomplish?” was asked. What response can you offer? Are your goals limited to the resources you have or can presently “see”?
3. Faith strategy is the process of discerning how God has preceded you and taking advantage of that. How would you know that God has preceded you? In the stories contained in the Bible, it appears that people actually “heard” what the Lord specifically told them to do. We have to use another way. What is it? What experience have you had in this area? Discuss this with the group.



STRATEGIC FAITH PLANNING

Session 5 Workshop

FORMING A FAITH STRATEGY



Dr. Bruce Cook

For each of the three faith goals from Session 4, complete the following:

Goal # 1 _____

Who is the key person that will make the determination of your success in terms of accomplishing this goal? _____

What does this person have to do? _____

Why should they do it? (What is their felt need that you can resolve?) _____

Goal #2 _____

Who? _____

What? _____

Why? _____

Goal #3 _____

Who? _____

What? _____

Why? _____



STRATEGIC FAITH PLANNING

Session 6



Dr. Bruce Cook

MAKING MID-COURSE CORRECTIONS

REVIEW: Faith Planning Process

1. Mission Statement
2. Active partnership with the Lord
3. Vision and conviction
4. Goals - action steps
5. A God-given faith strategy
6. **Mid-course corrections**

- Gideon is a SUCCESS ... Except 15,000 enemy troops escape! What happened to the faith plan?
- The faith plan gives you direction, a way to focus your energy and effort. But in the execution of real life, there is a need to make mid-course corrections.
- Aspects of a mid-course correction:
 1. Develop an attitude of endurance
Hang on ... keep going to the end

When in the middle of a task you think you can't go on, pull away from the task and ask yourself, "Can I take 'one more stroke'?"
 2. Evaluate your progress
Put performance indicators in place (difference between good and poor performance)
Frequently measure and make the results known, don't "hide" them
Be proactive - make changes as soon as you know you are "off track"
 3. Make the change (mid-course correction)
- Conclusion - With a Strategic Faith Plan three things will happen:
 1. Personal growth will be experienced - James 1:2-4
 2. The goal will be reached, but not necessarily in your time table. Nehemiah 6:15
 3. God gets the glory. Nehemiah 6:16
- **CHALLENGE:** In what we do in faith planning it is done in such a way that God gets the glory. And we fulfill our purpose and mission in life as the result.
- Put the 7 principles of Faith Planning into practice, create an adventure where you experience personal growth, where faith goals are accomplished and God gets the glory.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you generally make strategic plans for your business or personal life? If so, how detailed are they? Do they include incremental measurements to determine if you are "on the right path"? Discuss this with the group.
2. How do you decide to make changes in your business activity? Would you say you are proactive or reactive to changes? Discuss why you select the answers.
3. Discuss the question, "Can I take one more stroke?" as it pertains to your business or personal endurance. On a scale of 1-10, how strong do you believe you are in the endurance area?
4. Can you see how using Strategic Faith Planning could help your business and strengthen your "faith muscle" at the same time? Discuss this with your group.



STRATEGIC FAITH PLANNING

Session 6 Workshop



Dr. Bruce Cook

MAKING MID-COURSE CORRECTIONS

Consider three areas of your business that are critical to your business (e.g., product/service sales goals, employee turnover, customer satisfaction goals, quality control goals, etc.)
Focus on ones where you have struggled in the past.

Complete the following:

1. Critical success factor/area:(name) _____

Howdo/willwemeasurethisfactor? _____

What are the levels of success/failure that tell us that we need to make a change (mid-course correction) within this area? _____

What will we do if we reach the lower levels of our measurement (before total failure)? _____

2. Critical success factor/area:(name) _____

Howdo/willwemeasurethisfactor? _____

What are the levels of success/failure that tell us that we need to make a change (mid-course correction) within this area? _____

What will we do if we reach the lower levels of our measurement (before total failure)? _____

3. Critical success factor/area:(name) _____

Howdo/willwemeasurethisfactor? _____

What are the levels of success/failure that tell us that we need to make a change (mid-course correction) within this area? _____

What will we do if we reach the lower levels of our measurement (before total failure)? _____

Reflect upon the six sessions of **Strategic Faith Planning**. Could you now take all six components and write a specific Faith Plan for your business using these principles? Consider a group workshop day or weekend to do exactly that and watch what the Lord will do with it. Report back to one another along the way as you watch God perform miracles where He gets the glory and your faith muscle grows.



STRATEGIC FAITH PLANNING

APPLICATION & COMMITMENT

James 1:22-25 NIV *“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it-- he will be blessed in what he does.”*

John 15:5 NIV *“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”*

Don't try to do this alone ...

Prayerfully consider what was taught in this series how you could best be used for God's purposes as you apply what you have learned. Select one change in your behavior as a result of your prayer time.

Date Series Began: _____

Date Series Ended: _____

Participant's Name: _____

A Biblical truth (principle) I learned from the lessons was: _____

I intend to apply this truth (principle): _____

With the help of the Holy Spirit, I will begin applying this truth immediately. I ask and expect my group to hold me accountable for this and to check with me periodically to determine if I am doing so. Please ask me: _____

Signature

Date

