



FAITHFUL SEASONS WITH GRACE

# Holding On and Letting Go

*A guide to the line between faithful stewardship and self-reliance*

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding."*

Proverbs 3:5 (ESV)

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## Planning Is Not the Problem

*God calls us to be faithful stewards. The problem comes when our plans meet His plans and we grip tighter.*

Scripture speaks well of the ant who prepares without being told, stores in summer, and gathers at harvest. Proverbs 21:5 says the plans of the diligent lead to abundance. Jesus himself praised counting the cost before building a tower. Planning, preparing, and using time and resources wisely are not failures of faith. They are faithful stewardship of what God has given us.

*"Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest."*

Proverbs 6:6-8 (ESV)

*"The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty."*

Proverbs 21:5 (ESV)

The problem is not the plan. The problem is what happens in our hearts when the plan does not go the way we expected — when what we want meets what God is asking of us, and we discover we were holding on more tightly than we realized.

### *Where stewardship becomes self-reliance*

Stewardship says: I will prepare faithfully and trust God with the outcome. Self-reliance says: I will prepare, and then manage the outcome to match what I have decided it should be. The first is faithfulness. The second is where the grip tightens.

## Where Does Your Grip Tighten?

*Not where you plan — where you cannot release the outcome to God when it does not go as planned.*

Check any that feel true right now — not where you are preparing or planning, but where you find yourself white-knuckling the outcome.

- ☐ **My children's choices or futures.** I have prayed, planned, prepared — and now I am managing to make sure it goes the way I believe it should.
- ☐ **My marriage.** I am working to engineer outcomes rather than be faithful in my own role and trust God with my husband.
- ☐ **My finances.** Planning has crossed into anxiety and constant management of every possibility.
- ☐ **My health or someone I love.** The preparation is good but underneath it is fear driving the wheel, not faith.
- ☐ **A relationship or conflict.** I keep rehearsing, replanning, trying to control how it turns out.
- ☐ **My plans for the future.** I have decided what the right outcome is and I am working to make sure God cooperates.
- ☐ **Something else.** Write it below.

### NAME IT BEFORE GOD

*What is the specific area where your planning has crossed into gripping the outcome? Write it plainly.*

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# Releasing the Outcome

*Faithful stewardship plans well and trusts God with what comes next. Surrender names the specific thing and releases the outcome.*

Use this table for the specific areas where your planning has become gripping. Name what you are holding, what fear is underneath it, and what you know to be true about God that your fear is arguing against.

| WHAT I AM HOLDING ONTO | THE FEAR UNDERNEATH IT | WHAT I KNOW TO BE TRUE ABOUT GOD |
|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| AREA 1                 |                        |                                  |
| AREA 2                 |                        |                                  |
| AREA 3                 |                        |                                  |

*"Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act. He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday."*

Psalm 37:5-6 (ESV)

A NOTE ON RETURNING

*When you reach back for something you have surrendered — and you will — do not add shame to it. Notice it, name it again, hand it back. Stewardship continues; the grip is what you release. Share what you are working to release with a trusted friend. Accountability tends to outlast willpower.*

## The Line Between Faithful and Fearful

*The contrast is always clearer in the Word than in the middle of the moment.*

### FAITHFUL STEWARDSHIP

- Plans diligently and prepares well
- Uses time and resources as gifts from God
- Works with focus and intention
- Releases outcomes to God when plans meet resistance
- Trusts God's wisdom when His plan differs from hers
- Peace that does not depend on outcomes

### SELF-RELIANCE

- Plans and then manages to ensure the right outcome
- Uses energy to control what belongs to God
- Carries what was never meant to be hers
- Grips tighter when things do not go as planned
- Treats God's different plan as a problem to solve
- Anxiety that does not resolve

### *Scripture to hold when your plans meet His plans*

*"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."*

Isaiah 55:8-9 (ESV)

*"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."*

Romans 8:28 (ESV)

*"Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand."*

Proverbs 19:21 (ESV)

## Keep Planning. Keep Releasing.

*Faithful stewardship and open-handed trust are not opposites. They belong together.*

The goal is not to stop planning or preparing. The ant is commended. The builder who counts the cost is praised. What we are working toward is the ability to plan faithfully and then hold the outcomes loosely — to do our part well, and trust God with what comes next.

This is not a one-time practice. It is what sanctification looks like in the area of control. Every season brings new things to plan for, new places where our hands want to grip, and new opportunities to release the outcome to a God whose ways are higher than ours.

*"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*

Philippians 4:6-7 (ESV)

### BEFORE YOU GO

*Where is the line between faithful stewardship and self-reliance in your current season? What specific outcome do you need to release to God this week?*

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*What is one faithful step of preparation you can take this week, and one specific act of releasing the outcome to God?*

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*Grace and peace to you, in whatever season you are in.*

— Keri