

HABITS

**Have a Plan ♦ Affirm your Faith ♦ Be a Friend
Intentionally Choose Him ♦ Trust Him ♦ Surrender to Him**

Part One Have a Plan

The Importance of Planning

- What is the ultimate goal of our plans? See **John 17:1-3**
- Jesus Himself affirmed the value of planning See **Luke 14:28-32** The key here is that God's plans surpass our plans. We need to be humble enough to make our plans with His priorities in mind.
- It is a good, and some would say essential, practice to write a plan down – it becomes more solid and concrete. See **Habakkuk 2:2**

What areas do we need to plan?

- *Prayer* is abiding in God. This can be either through being still before the Lord in quiet time, scripture reading, set Orthodox prayers, or praying with your own words. There is no wrong way to pray. See **Matthew 6:5** We cannot abide in God without prayer. See **John 15:5**
- *Fasting* is about discipline, not deprivation. See **Matthew 6:16** Fasting was a part of many important biblical events (Moses on Mount Sinai, Jesus in the desert).
- *Worship* is corporate, structured prayer. Our highest expression of worship is the Divine Liturgy and Pre-Sanctified Liturgy, where we receive Christ in the Eucharist.
- *Generosity* of heart is sharing abundantly with others and reveals the disposition of our hearts. See **Matthew 6:2** and **Matthew 6:21**
- *Repentance* is the continual reorientation towards God. See **Matthew 4:17**

How do we make it stick?

- "Habit is a difficult thing, and it is hard to break and hard to avoid.... Therefore, the more you understand the power of a habit, the more should you endeavor to be rid of a bad habit and change yourself over to a good one." –St. John Chrysostom (quoted in Concerning Frequent Communion, p. 169)
- There are countless sources on the power of planning and creating habits that last.
- Understand your "WHY." See **1 Corinthians 10:31** It is important to define your purpose for the long term and the short term.
- Start with small steps. See **Proverbs 16:9** Small steps done consistently can have a big impact.
- Be specific. See **Proverbs 16:3**
- Be accountable. See **Ecclesiastes 4:9-12** Choose a trusted person to share your plan with who can help keep you on track.

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Questions

1. Why do we make plans? How do you feel when everything goes as planned? How do you feel when things don't go as planned? What role does God have in your plans?
2. How can I focus my work and everyday activities on glorifying God and serving others?
3. What small, measurable and specific improvements can you make in the following areas: prayer, fasting, worship, generosity, repentance? For example - *When will I pray? How will I stay consistent?* Which area do you think will be the most challenging? (See planning sheet)
4. Who do you lean on to hold you accountable to your plans?
5. If you have not already done so, prayerfully commit to writing your Lenten plan and share it with someone who can hold you accountable.

Scripture References

John 17:1-3	<i>When Jesus had spoken these words, He lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify the Son, that the Son may glorify You, since You have given Him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all Whom You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom You have sent.</i>
Luke 14:28-32	<i>For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build, and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends an embassy and asks terms of peace.</i>
Habakkuk 2:2	<i>And the LORD answered me: "Write the vision; make it plain upon tablets, so he may run who reads it.</i>
Matthew 6:5	<i>⁵ And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.</i>
John 15:5	<i>I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.</i>
Matthew 6:16	<i>¹⁶ And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.</i>
Matthew 6:2	<i>² Thus, when you give alms, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.</i>
Matthew 6:21	<i>For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.</i>
Matthew 4:17	<i>From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."</i>
1 Corinthians 10:31	<i>So, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.</i>
Proverbs 16:9	<i>A man's mind plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.</i>
Proverbs 16:3	<i>Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established.</i>
Ecclesiastes 4:9-12	<i>⁹ Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. ¹⁰ For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up. ¹¹ Again, if two lie together, they are warm; but how can one be warm alone? ¹² And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him. A threefold cord is not quickly broken.</i>

Lenten planning sheet

What is my WHY:

Long term: (hint: to Glorify God)

Short term:

What small steps can I make this Lenten season in the following areas:

- Prayer
- Fasting
- Worship
- Generosity
- Repentance

What specific things can I do to achieve these steps?

Who can I share my Lenten plan with who will keep me accountable to it?