

I can tend to have a lot of anxiety when comes to making decisions. Especially when it seems like both of my decisions are good ones and I don't know which way to go. I remember as a kid my dad asked me if I wanted to go to work with him that day. I cried hysterically in our driveway because I couldn't decide which would be more fun. If I went with my dad, it would be awesome. I do stuff that I don't really get to do just me and him at the church and that would be so cool and sometimes he goes on errands so I might get to do that. My siblings are home though. If I'm there, I'm gonna miss out on that. But if I stay home, then I won't get to over here and they both could be great so how am I supposed to decide and it was just paralyzing.

Trying to discern what God will is can feel like that. Maybe won't lead to you crying in your parents driveway. But it can paralyze us. How do I know what the right thing to do? How do I know God wants to take this opportunity and move to this place or to say no? How do I know God wants to marry this person or he wants to marry that person instead or maybe has somebody else that I haven't even met yet?

This morning we are going to look at proverbs chapter 19 verse 21. And this is gonna show us how we can be wise and our planning. I hope we will find encouragement so we don't have to be paralyzed.

Turn with me and your Bibles to Proverbs 19:21

## **I. Our plans often fail.**

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

We are going to start by focusing on the first half of this verse.

What does this verse have to say about the plans that we make?

The first part of the verse says we have many plans.

All of us make plan after plan after plan.

But these plans are only in our minds.

Because the second half of the verse says only God's purpose will stand.

We will talk about God's purposes and plans in our next point.

But what does this imply about our plans?

If God's plans stand, then ours don't.

The Proverb is telling us that we can and do make lots of plans.  
We make plan after plan after plan.  
But they fail.  
They do not work.  
They fall apart and don't come to pass.

We have all seen and felt this happen.  
Just think about your own plans for your day.  
And how often those simple ones fall apart.  
I am someone who makes a lot of plans.  
I often make too many plans.  
One of the first things I do in the morning is start making plans.  
I don't want to eat breakfast before I have decided and planned out what  
all the rest of my meals that day are going to be like.  
Our kids are young and we both work full time.  
So we have to chat about how the day is going to go.  
What is our plan for lunch?  
Do you have any meetings today?  
Who is going to pick up the kids?

I leave in the morning with a plan.  
But it doesn't take long for the plans to be ruined.  
I get in the car and it won't start.  
The school calls and Calvin is sick.

I'm sure you have had this happen to you as well all the time.  
The boss gives you an extra project.  
You get a phone call that turns the day upside down.  
It doesn't take long for our plans to be ruined.

We probably had plans growing up of what life was going to look like.  
Maybe you had certain dreams in high school of what your job was going  
to be.  
Or in college you had a career path and then

You picked out a major and you had something that you wanted to be in work towards.

But then things didn't work out.

You had to change your majors or something else.

You weren't able to get a job and the place you originally thought.

You get laid off from Haliburton unexpectedly.

Marriage doesn't always work out like we plan.

Some of us may have planned on getting married and we thought we would be and for one reason or another it just hasn't worked.

Maybe you have had somebody that you were really thinking and planning on marrying and then the relationship didn't work.

Had a wonderful marriage and you were happy with it, but she didn't plan on them dying first.

We're dying as early as they did.

Some of you went into marriage with lots of plans and how long it would last and how wonderful it would be.

And he never thought you'd end up being divorced.

Never planned on never never thought you'd be abused.

You never thought you would end up as their caretaker.

None of us plan for death.

We never wake up in the morning, hoping that today will be the day we get a phone call with someone that we have died unexpectedly.

The death of those that can't be scheduled or planned.

Sometimes it comes at the very worst times.

We can't figure out and plan around death or when it will be.

I get to choose when we get cancer or what kind.

This is a problem with our plans.

They fail a lot.

They get interrupted.

Sometimes it's because of the enemy and wicked evil people.

Sometimes they get hijacked by just life.  
Just because we live in a fallen world and we are perfect and we don't have it all figured out things don't always work like we wish they would.

This is one of the most frustrating experiences of life.  
We can make plans.  
And we do.  
But they fail.  
Life does not turn out how we hoped it would.  
Sometimes everything falls apart.

What do we do?  
How should we respond?  
First, we should not be surprised.  
I hate when my plans are ruined.  
I don't think anyone particularly likes it.  
But it can really throw me out of wack.  
I don't know how to respond.  
I am a creature of habit and routine.  
When things happen out of order I can hardly think straight.

Yet, it happens all the time.  
You think I would get used to it.  
But I don't.  
I get frustrated.  
I get angry.  
I blame others and take it out on other people.

[Transition] But this is not how we should respond.  
We have to recognize that it is going to happen.  
But the answer is not just to pull ourselves up by our bootstraps.  
We need something more.  
And what we need to remember is this.

## II. But you cannot mess up God's purpose.

Listen, you cannot mess up God's purpose for your life.

You can't.

Your bad planning can't do it.

Picking the wrong choice, can't do it.

Sometimes you might look back and wonder maybe God didn't want me to move here.

Maybe God didn't want me to take that job.

Maybe God didn't want me to marry that person.

Whatever that is for you.

It might've been an unwise decision.

It may have been a sinful decision.

But none of our choices mess up God's purpose.

Now I think it is important to note what the proverb says.

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

Two ideas are parallel to each other.

Our plans, and God's purpose.

I think the word change is intentional.

This is not just a poetic changing of words to keep things interesting and from being repetitive.

It is not that God's plans always work out.

It is that God's purpose will stand.

Because when we talk about God's plan.

When we say things like, "well this is all happening according to God's plan."

I think that causes us to get confused and discouraged.

Because if we are not careful that language can lead us to dangerous places.

What I mean by this?

What is the difference between God's plans and God's purpose?

There is a difference.

And we are trying to hold different truths in tension.

God is in control and we are free to make our own choices.

We believe that God is in control of the universe.

Nothing can happen that He does not allow.

Nothing can challenge His power or hold over our lives.

And yet, we also believe that we have free will.

We can make our own decisions and God does not force us to do anything.

We also believe God is not the author of evil.

Which means, He does not make anyone sin.

He may allow evil to take place, but He does not cause it.

He does not make people murder one another.

He does not force people to sin.

But when we talk about God's plan.

We can make it seem as if God was rooting for evil to happen.

Or as if God wanted people to sin.

God is not actively planning and forcing evil things to happen so that His marvelous plan can fall into place.

Now God allows it.

God knows that it is going to happen.

And God finds a way to use it for His purposes.

Romans 8:28 **"all things work together for good for those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."**

And it is God's purposes.

And He can use all things, even evil things.

But He does not plan them.

This is an important distinction.

And we need to get it right.

God did not want or cause Joseph's brother's to sell him into slavery.

But he allowed it.

And God used the evil they intended for good and for the salvation of the Jewish people from a famine.

Let me use a personal example.

Before I was born.

God was not sitting there deciding that I would be a pastor.

And then He thought, you know what?

I think I am going to have David be sexually abused as a child.

I think that will help him be more compassionate and have a voice.

So I will do that.

But what God did do.

He knew it would happen.

And He did not let it derail His purpose in my life.

This might be too complicated and heady for some of you.

That is okay.

What you need to know and understand,

Is that you cannot mess up God's purpose in your life.

Because this is what we can worry about.

Especially when it comes time to make a big decision.

Like whether it is time to retire or not.

Should I keep working because things are going well and I don't know what to do?

Or trying to decide if you should take one job or another?

Is it time to move our family or not?

Whatever you decide, even if it is the wrong choice.

God's purpose will stand.

I had a pastor friend who called asking for advice.

He was trying to pray through and decide whether he should stay at His current church or leave and move to another one in a different state.

And I've been there.

How do you figure out what God wants?

What is his will?

What is God's plan for my life and I need to make sure that I make the right decision.

Because what if I leave this job and I was supposed to stay?

What if I moved to be closer to my grandchildren and then they move somewhere else after I've just left everything that I know?

What if I retire early and I hate it but now I can't go back to work or do what I wanted to do?

Want to understand is that you might make a bad decision.

You may even pick wrongly and regret it.

But you cannot mess up God's purpose for your life.

You cannot stop what he wants to do with you and you and you.

God is not done with you.

It is not like God is sitting up in heaven as your wrestling between two decisions and God goes wow I really hope they make the right thing.

Otherwise they're gonna ruin all of my perfect plans.

It stands because nothing can knock it over.

No storm can blow it off course.

None of your mistakes are powerful enough to change what God wants.

If you think that you can mess up purposes for your life, then you have a much higher view of yourself than you should.

You must think that you are stronger than God.

You must think that you are so incredible and so brilliant that you can outsmart God.

You can come up with something that he never thought before.

You can make a decision that God could've never taken into or thought of in 1 million years.

As if the God who created time hasn't had enough time to figure out how you think.



As the God who fashioned you and made you in your mother's womb with tender, loving care and who holds your body together, as if you are strong enough to defeat Him.

You couldn't stop God's purpose for your life even if you tried.

Even if you walked away from God.

Even if you went and you converted to worshipping demons.

Even if you started building alters in your house and you started doing blood sacrifices.

Even if you were actually possessed by demons and somehow became the antichrist.

And you got all of Satan all of the demons together to work to come up with plans to stop what God wants to do because purpose in this world.

Even if you did all that you're gonna fail and it's not gonna work, and God purposes will stand.

An extreme ridiculous example.

I really don't think the antichrist is among us.

I doubt that any of us will start making those choices.

But all of us make choices and have moments where we wonder if we messed up and ruined what God wanted.

You mess up, you aren't gonna be able to do it.

We just can't.

And this should bring us comfort.

It should ease or worrying our anxiety.

You cannot mess up God's plan for your life.

**He who began a good work in you will bring it about to completion.**

That is Philippians 1:6

He is not finished.

He will keep working on your sanctification.

He has factored in your failures and mistakes.

You cannot stop Him.

God's primary purpose in your life is to make you like Jesus.  
God's purpose for you is that throughout your life you would continue to be sanctified.

That he would make you more and more holy.

That he would draw you closer to himself as you grow in your faith.

That you would continue to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

His purpose is that you would continue to grow and bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit in love and joy and peace and gentleness and self-control.

Purpose for you is that you would be made perfect.

That you would grow as a human being that God loves and continue to turn into the person that he made you to be.

Your sinful nature and your sinful tendencies would disappear.

The things that are beautiful, and that are wonderful about you and how God made you.

They would become even more pronounced.

And that you would be restored as God has always intended to be.

That is God's purpose for you.

That we would glorify Him and enjoy Him forever.

That is his purpose for your life, and there is nothing that you can do or nothing that enemy can do.

There is no wrong that can come into your life.

There is no mistake that you could make.

You notice here there's nothing in there about the particulars of where we live or how our kids turn out or even if we have any.

Whether you are married, single, divorced, separated, or widowed.

Whether you have a thousand grandchildren, or no children at all.

Whether you live here or move across the globe.

Whether you are a pastor or a plumber.

Whether you are retired or just tired.

There is nothing that can push God off.

His purpose, for you will stand.

Because no matter what happens no matter what you experience, God has not done with you.

And God will continue working in you until you're perfect.

Look at the cross of Christ.

God was born as a child.

Our Savior came in flesh and walked among us.

The enemy threw everything they could at Him.

But every demon ran away and couldn't resist.

Every sickness was cured.

The enemy even tried to kill Jesus.

They plotted and thought this would stop Him.

But His death was all a part of the plan.

The enemies best shot led to the resurrection of Christ.

What Satan thought was his moment of glory, was our deliverance.

The story of the gospel itself reminds us.

You cannot stop God's purpose.

The enemy will throw all they can at God again at the end of the world.

But it will not lead to the destruction of the world.

Jesus will be victorious.

The world will be restored.

The heavens and earth will be remade.

And shalom and peace will return.

The enemy cannot mess up God's plan.

Neither can you.

[Transition] So we know our problem.

We know our hope that God is in control.

But practically how should we respond?

How should the truth of the gospel change how we life.

### **III. Make plans with faith in God's purpose.**

So how should we respond?

Our plans are going to fail, but God's purpose will not.

Our temptation may be to just give up and not make any plans.  
Temptation might be to become lazy.

I am someone who firmly believes in the sovereignty and the control of God and every aspect of our lives.

So you might call me a Calvinist.

So one of the charges or one of the things people will bring up anytime you talk about God's providence is that fit it means we don't have to do anything.

I'm not there. I'm gonna do nothing and let God do everything.

That is the wrong idea.

And I think when we have that attitude, it reveals the true motivation of a lot of of what we do.

We don't do what we do out of the deep love for God and a devotion to him. We do it for ourselves.

We do to accomplish some thing for ourselves.

As soon as we are unable to take the credit.

As soon as we are unable to take the glory.

As soon as we are the one who aren't responsible then suddenly we're not so interested in doing it anymore.

No, this should be freeing.

This should remove our anxiety and our worry.

This should not make us stop planning. It should make us planned with Faith and joy.

It means no longer do I need to sit and stress and come up with 57 different ways to handle the elder meeting.

It means you no longer need to come up with 1 million different plans and how you're gonna handle the next stage of your life.

We just need to do our best come up with one try to follow Jesus and then trust that God is in control.

There is a prayer I pray over and over when it comes to big decisions.  
I took it from the Bible so you can take from me.

Jeremiah 10:24, he says "**Correct me Lord, but in justice not in your anger, lest you bring me to nothing.**"

So I pray, "Lord, I am making this decision. I hope it is the right one. If it is not, please correct me, but not in anger."

That's it.

You just pray and then do your best.

Because our plans are going to fail.

And God does not expect us to have it all figured out.

God does not need you to have the perfect plan.

He just does not.

God doesn't want you to be perfect. He does want you to be faithful.

This idea of God's control and sovereignty and God's purpose being sure should help our feet to be sure.

It should help us to have confidence and walk forward and faith.

We should make plans trusting that if it's a bad plan, God help it break down and his purpose will still come.

I don't know about for you but for me I find this so freeing.

And it's a lesson that I have to continue to remind myself about.

It's a lesson that I have to continue to take to heart.

God is in control.

His purposes will stand.

We can plan and we can fail.

But God's purpose will stand.

#### CONCLUSION:

1. [Summary] Our plans will fail. God's purposes will stand. Plan with faith in God's purpose.

I went to a professor at Dallas Theological Seminary and I was trying to ask him for advice.

I was really trying to ask him for advice because I was trying to figure out what church I was going to end up at.

Applying for hundreds of different churches and doing all these different interviews and going to visit places.

I was trying to Will make a plan.

So I went to ask this professor been teaching at Dallas for close to 40 years.

He seen hundreds, if not thousands of guys like me I wanted to see what he would say.

And I told him I conundrum gave him the rundown, a couple different churches that I was looking at things that I did and didn't think we're great and kinda on the fence.

That would give me some insight and wisdom on how to know.

I assumed and thought he would say something really profound that would help me be able to figure out what God's plan for my life was.

But Dr. Burns told me that if a church calls and asked you to be there pastor then that's got to be their pastor.

I was really frustrated with his answer.

I couldn't tell if it was just just a generational divide maybe things were different in his day when he was a pastor.

Or maybe he just has a really different view of made.

It took me a while to understand what he was getting it.

Trying to get to know it really doesn't matter.

It matters it significant, but you can't make a wrong choice.

Do your best let God lead you.

Purpose for your life to work itself out as long as you were trying to follow him.

I didn't like it at the time but now I get it.

This is the same thing with us.

We all have lots of decisions and plans, travel plans to lunch plans.

A lot of our plans are gonna turn out the way that we want them to. That's OK.

Because God's purpose for our life to glorify him for him to sanctify and make us like Jesus will stand.