

2. Trust God as you set and carry out your goals: Remember that your plans are subject to His will.

“The preparations [plans] of the heart *belong* to man, But the answer of the tongue *is* from the Lord” (Pr.16:1, NKJV).

“A man’s heart plans his way, But the Lord directs his steps” (Pr.16:9, NKJV).

A frustrating reality in business—as well as life in general—is the fact that things do not always work out as planned. Looking back at unmet goals, unfulfilled objectives, and disappointing results can be overwhelming and discouraging. And, in many cases, the disappointing outcomes are due to human failure, including:

- a failure to plan adequately
- a failure to follow through with plans
- a miscalculation or mistake in planning
- a failure to assign the right people to certain tasks
- a failure to foresee or overcome obstacles
- a failure by some to put forth their best effort
- a failure to oversee or properly manage a job

Human failure, however, is not always the cause of our lack of success or change of fortune. You and everyone involved in a project may do your absolute best and still fail to achieve expected results. In such cases, some other factor—perhaps a Divine factor—may be involved.

The truth of the two proverbs above is commonly summarized as, “Man proposes, but God disposes.” In other words, you can make excellent plans and set reachable goals for your life or business and move forward to fulfill those plans or attain those goals, but God may have different plans entirely.

As a wise business owner or manager, you will plan your calendar and schedule according to your short and long-term goals. You will chart detailed plans of action that are well-thought-out and then seek to follow those plans precisely, making necessary adjustments along the way. Ultimately, however, God determines your course. When your plans do not work out as you had hoped, it may be that God has a different plan for you. Out of His great love for you and those whom you lead, He may overrule your plans to accomplish a greater purpose.

When you have done your best but still fall short of your goal, you may feel as if you have failed. During these times, you need to remember this fact: God works through all the lives and affairs of this world to accomplish His will and purpose for the good of those who truly love Him (Ro.8:28). Trust God! Continue to follow Him! He will take care of you! Keeping in step with *God’s* plan is crucial for every Christian, but especially the Christian leader. Why? Because of the impact and influence you have on other people. Every day, you should ask God to direct you as you yield to His guidance. Notice that the Lord directs your *steps* one step at a time. This means He works in and cares about the *de-tails* of your life. He has not only a calling for you and your business but also a plan to

take you there. At times that plan—His plan—may look very different from yours. And God’s plan will always be far better for you than any plan you could have ever developed.

It is crucial that you grasp this truth: God does not reveal in advance the entirety of His plan for your life. Nor does He reveal His complete plan for your business or area of responsibility—He only reveals *the next step*. In fact, Scripture issues a strong warning against boasting of long-range plans:

“Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will travel to such and such a city and spend a year there and do business and make a profit.’ You don’t even know what tomorrow will bring—what your life will be! For you are like smoke that appears for a little while, then vanishes. Instead, you should say, ‘If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.’ But as it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil” (Jas.4:13-16, HCSB).

Making plans and setting goals for your business or some aspect of it is a vital part of leading a company and doing so successfully. But, as you do so, remain aware that God may overrule your plans. Every plan you make and goal you set is subject to God’s will.

Now, does the fact that God guides or directs our paths mean that our free will is worthless, that God will do what He wants to do regardless of what we want? No, absolutely not! God guides and directs according to what is in our hearts. If we choose to rebel against God and His plan for our lives, God will not violate our free will. He will allow us to doom ourselves. But He will take our evil ways and use them to accomplish His purposes for the world and for the good of those who truly love Him. Remember, God knows everything about you—your desires, your thoughts, and even your motives. So, if you desire to please God and seek His plan for your life and business, He will enable you to accomplish this.

God reveals His will to you through His Holy Word, and He will reveal His *specific* will for each day, each step of your life and work, if you will study His Word and seek Him through prayer. God will then direct your steps, one at a time. This is the very reason God has given you His Holy Word and His Spirit who lives within you as a believer. As you study His Word and ask the Lord for His direction, the Holy Spirit will lead you every day, guiding you in decision after decision and helping you carry out operation after operation.

Wise leadership is *seeking* God’s will and plan in every decision and then *stepping forward* in faith and obedience to God’s direction. God is perfectly good, and you can have confidence that He has a good plan for your life, both personally and professionally.

Note these Scriptures that speak further to God’s plan and direction for you:

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (Ro.8:28, NIV ’84).

“‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future’ ” (Je.29:11, NIV ’84).