

Speaking to the soul



Planning

A prudent person foresees danger and takes precautions. The simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences. Proverbs 22:3

Longing for more money and possessions is a terrible disease, but our materialistic society is built on the assumption that that is how we should all live. Long ago the Greek philosopher Epicurus wrote: “Nothing is enough to the man for whom enough is too little.” And yet the place of true peace and contentment is where you know you have enough, and have no desire to find more. The apostle Paul said that he had “learned how to be content with whatever I have. I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything” (Philippians 4:11-12).

This proverb, like so many of them, is just sheer good sense. It’s the kind of statement that could easily be turned into a good fridge magnet! At one level it is screamingly obvious, but we all know how incredibly easy it is to hurtle through life blindly without doing the necessary research. We live in a world that is full of potential risks and dangers and so it is sensible to come up with careful plans. This approach to wisdom is really helpful, so long as we put it alongside other wise sayings. For example, Proverbs 16:3: “Commit your actions to the LORD, and your plans will succeed.” It’s good to plan but, as we do so, we need to commit the whole process into God’s hands.

Jesus spoke about the importance of planning. He challenged people to follow him, but he didn’t want them to make this enormous step without first working out the implications of such a decision. He said: “Don’t begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it? Otherwise, you might complete only the foundation before running out of money, and then everyone would laugh at you. They would say: ‘There’s the

person who started that building and couldn't afford to finish it!" (Luke 14:28-30).

I wonder what your plans are for the coming year. No doubt some of them appear to be set in stone. Perhaps your work, family, church and social commitments are firmly fixed and there doesn't seem to be much flexibility in them. But look at them again. What changes might be happening and what challenges might you have to face? The truth is that life is always changing and as you look at the coming months you need to take hold of your plans and commit them to the Lord. Maybe things will flow in exactly the way you anticipate, but maybe they won't, and you need to be ready to adjust to the new ways in which the Lord might want to lead you.

QUESTION

What challenges might you face in the coming year, and how should you be preparing for them?

PRAYER

Father God, I confidently place my future in your hands.
Amen

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