



God's Plan | Shawn Johnson | 01.13.2024

Weekly Study

SHARE

As group members get settled, take a few minutes to check in with everyone and see how life is going. Share an exciting story from this week, your highs and lows, an answered prayer, or something you're struggling with. If someone is really struggling, rally the group around them and take a few moments to pray over them.

Share a high, a low, and something interesting that you have experienced since we last met.

What are three goals you'd like to accomplish this year?

What is one new way you'd like to challenge yourself this year?

GROW

Welcome to week two of our January series, *The Story You'll Tell*. This week, Pastor Shawn built off of last week's message, *You Can Change*, by sharing HOW we can change and step into the plans that God has for our life in this week's message, *God's Plan*.

Each and every one of us has a story in mind that we hope to tell a year from now. A story of hope, blessing, breakthrough, transformation, etc. We often use the beginning of the year to think and pray about the plans and promises we hope to step into and include in our story. But what if we're pursuing these plans and promises in all the wrong ways? Many of us stop pursuing God's guidance as soon as we hear "what" his plan is, as Shawn suggests, and we never hear the wisdom he shares as to "how" we can step into those plans and promises.

Read Jeremiah 29:11-14 MSG, Psalm 32:8-10

As a group, take a few minutes to break down Jeremiah 29:11-14 MSG into three sections. Feel free to talk about it or write them down in columns. Some things may be explicitly stated, and others may require discernment/reading between the lines. Some things may also fit into more than one column. The three columns are:

1. What are the “plans” God shares that he is committed to seeing through?
2. What are the “promises” he makes to us?
3. What are the “plans” or “steps” he asks us to follow that will lead us to those promises?

What is something new that God might be trying to say to you through the above exercise?

Have you ever become so fixated on the promises God has for your life that you completely missed the plans he laid out as a map to help you step into that promise? Explain.

What’s a promise for hope and a better future that God has placed on your heart recently? What kind of “guidance” or “advice” (Psalm 32:8-10) could the Lord be trying to reveal to you to help you step into that promise?

M O V E

Read James 1:2-4 ESV, Isaiah 48:10, Isaiah 43:2

We might not be where we want to be, but if we were to look back a year, or five, or ten, we would likely find that we’re nowhere close to where we used to be because of God’s plan for our lives. But think about everything that you’ve been through between then and now. All of the pain, obstacles, frustration, tragedy, trials, failures, etc. If God told us everything that would happen to us to get us to where we are today, how many of us could say with confidence that we would have wanted to keep going?

We want the reward but often forget the work required that makes the reward worth having. We hope to experience freedom but forget the price that must be paid to walk in the fullness of that freedom. Gold and silver capture our attention, but we forget the violent process of refinement that strips away the dirt, dust, and things that don't belong so that the final product can become the purest, most beautiful version of itself - the version it was always meant to become. We won't ever know the entirety of God's plan for us because we couldn't handle the pressure. But when we call out to him, he answers; when we seek him, he draws near; and when we invite his powerful presence into our impossible situation, he walks with us through the fire and leads us into the fullness of his promises. The question isn't, "What promises does God have for me?" His Word makes it clear that he has favor and blessing beyond anything we could ever ask or imagine. The question is, "Are you willing to continually seek his guidance? How can you remain faithful and obedient at each and every step? And who is willing to help support, encourage, challenge, and hold you accountable along the way?"

Think about the greatest season of refinement you've ever been through.

What imperfections was God trying to strip away? What did you learn (about yourself and God) from this painful season?

What did the pure/transformed version of you look like when you made it to the other side of that season? How different was the final version/outcome from what you thought it would be in the beginning? Better? Worse?

Now, think about your current season/situation for a moment.

What is the promise you hope to step into, or the refined version of yourself that God has put on your heart to become?

What flaws, imperfections, or things that don't belong in your life could God be trying to strip away in this season? What comes up for you when thinking about those things being stripped away? Explain.

What are some small steps you can take on a daily basis to become “1% more faithful & obedient” each day this year? How can you partner with someone else to follow through with this commitment?

P R A Y

God, thank you for this year. May we live intentionally, seek you continuously, and pray dangerously. Will you strip away the imperfections and impurities in our lives so that we can become the healed, whole, and beautiful versions of ourselves that you always intended us to be? May stepping into the promises you have for us be sweeter than anything we ever could have imagined because every step of the process towards your promise was filled with an opportunity to experience your presence. Will you teach us how to take responsibility for the things in our control, let go of the things we cannot, and trust you every step of the way, even if we don't always understand. Will you surround us with a community of people committed to supporting us, challenging us, holding us accountable, and dedicated to lifting us up and pointing us closer to you.