

What Does God Have Planned for Me Next?

Experience
all of it.
Miss none
of it.



**DOUG
WEKENMAN**



FOREWORD BY SHAWN JOHNSON
senior pastor of Red Rocks Church

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To Chappo, the lifeguard who pulled me from the waves at Bondi Beach. You gave me the chance to find out what God had planned for me next. On behalf of myself, my wife, and my mom—thank you.

For the one needing to make a big life decision.
For the one stuck in a passionless job.
For the one trying to pick the right person to marry.
For the dreamer who doesn't know the first step to take.
For the practical planner who lacks vision.
For the wanderer too scared to put down roots.
For the overthinker paralyzed with self-doubt.
For the worrier who lets fear call the shots.
For the new Christian wanting to get closer to God.
For the old Christian who hasn't loved life in far too long.
For the one trapped in the mundane.
For the one desperate for direction.
For the one who believes the best is behind them.
For the one disenchanted with the world's empty promises.
For the one who's fine but knows there's more.

*God is closer than you think, and your next chapter is waiting.
It's time to figure out and step into the plans God has for you.*

Trust in the LORD with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways submit to him,
and he will make your paths straight.

—Proverbs 3:5–6

FOREWORD

Doug walked into my office for the very first time a decade ago. He shook my hand with a confident smile and sat down on the couch. We talked about everything—sports, marriage, sneakers, and why in the world God calls guys like us into ministry. Then I asked him about God’s plans for his life. I remember telling him to feel free to “dream out loud.”

His eyes lit up, and he shared about his dreams of starting a church. Little did we both know then, our dreams would collide, and in a matter of a few years, he would move across the country with his wife and group of friends to plant a Red Rocks location in Austin, Texas.

I love this guy. I’ve known Doug for a long time now—worked with him, pastored with him, traveled with him, laughed with him, dreamed with him, and played a lot of mediocre golf with him—and I can tell you with full confidence that he’s a leader you want to follow. Not because he’s perfect (trust me, he’s not, and I have the stories to prove it),

but because he's a man after God's own heart and he's not afraid to risk everything to follow God into the unknown.

Put me on a polygraph test and I'd tell you he's one of my favorite people in the entire world to listen to when it comes to how to pursue, get close to, and actually hear from God. Doug has this extremely rare combination of brilliance, humility, and humor. He has a way of sharing what God is doing in his life in a way that everyone can take in and apply. I have no doubt that as you read this book, God will use Doug's words to inspire, challenge, equip, and guide you through whatever phase of life you find yourself in today.

That's what I love about this book. It's not theory. It's not cliché. This is Doug—real, honest, passionate, rowdy Doug—writing about the question all of us wrestle with: *God, what do you have planned for me next?* He's the perfect man to write this book because none of this information was learned in the classroom—it was experienced in the real world. He's lived out this content by trying, failing, believing, doubting, dreaming, and doing.

If you know Doug, you know he doesn't settle for the status quo. He's bold enough to step out when God says go and stubborn enough to keep believing when it looks impossible. And the stories, insights, and faith he shares here are going to push you out of your comfort zone in the best way.

So let me give you a little heads-up: Don't read this book if you're looking for safe, predictable, easy faith. That's not Doug's style, and it's not how God works. I don't know what you or your loved ones might be going through right now, but I'm confident that if you read this book, something inside you will come alive. I believe God's going to use Doug's

words through this book to remind you that God's with you, that he's working in your life even when you can't feel it, and that he's got plans for your life that are going to blow you away.

But what I think I love most about this book is that it's going to build your excitement and faith levels as Doug teaches and reminds you that you really can hear from God.

It will take you from *I hope God has plans for me* to *I know God has plans for me, and I now feel equipped to hear what they are and go chase them down!*

I'm so proud of Doug, and I'm so excited for you. God's not done with your story. And by the time you finish these pages, I believe you'll be more convinced than ever that the next thing God has planned for you is bigger, better, and wilder than you thought.

—SHAWN JOHNSON, senior pastor of Red Rocks Church

CONTENTS

Foreword by Shawn Johnson 000

A Note from the Author 000

Introduction 000

Part 1: Getting Ready for God's Plans 000

Chapter 1: God Might Ruin Your Plans 000

Chapter 2: God's Plans Are Better Than Yours 000

Chapter 3: God Wants You to Know About Him 000

Chapter 4: Vision or Die . . . 000

Part 2: How to Hear the Voice of God 000

Chapter 5: This Is Definitely God's Will for Your Life 000

Chapter 6: The Fast Pass into God's Plans 000

Chapter 7: Hearing God's Voice (Part 1) 000

Chapter 8: Hearing God's Voice (Part 2) 000

Part 3: How to Make a Big Decision with God	000
Chapter 9: The Predestination Paradox	000
Chapter 10: Scout the Decision	000
Chapter 11: Make the Decision	000
Chapter 12: Own the Decision	000
Part 4: What God Has Planned Next Now	000
Chapter 13: The Three Secret Superpowers	000
Chapter 14: Made on Purpose, for a Purpose	000
Chapter 15: Play the Long Game	000
Final Thought: One Day You'll Look Back . . .	000
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	000
<i>Notes</i>	000

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

I believe the following pages will equip you with everything you need to step into what God has planned for you next. Hearing from God can be intimidating, especially when making big life decisions with him, and I want to offer you everything I have to support you.

Throughout the book, you'll find opportunities to journal your journey. At the end of each chapter, you'll also find a QR code that will take you to a short video of me suggesting some practical next steps.

All my cards on the table—I'm a pastor before I'm an author. I wish I could sit with you in my office, face-to-face, because gritty conversations about faith and life are my favorite thing in the world. But since we can't do that, I believe this book and the related videos will be the next best thing!

INTRODUCTION

Let me let you in on a little secret: I know who knows all the things you want to know about your future. The job you should take. The person you should marry. The city you should move to.

The only problem is he's invisible. Oh, and when he speaks to us, it's inaudible.

So, that's cool—but we'll get to that later.

For now, here's my question: Do you ever wish you and God could sit down at Starbucks over a venti three-pump iced caramel macchiato, pretend it's coffee and not a milkshake, and chat through every question you have about his plans for your future?

Imagine the conversation.

Hey, God, thanks for meeting me. I know you're busy. How's managing the universe? How's heaven? Are the

streets really made of gold? By the way, who should I marry? And what's my calling? And while I have you here, what is a calling? And what college should I go to? Should I break up with my girlfriend? Should I move or should I stay? Should I buy or should I rent? Should I invest? Is crypto even real?

How great would that be? It would make this whole life thing, with all its crossroads and questions, much easier.

It can be challenging (if not seemingly impossible) to know what God has planned for us next. That's the problem. You want to know what's ahead. You know God has more for you and you don't want to miss it, but you have no idea how to figure it out and step into it.

I get it. I've been there a million times before, and I'll be there a million times more. That's why I wrote this book. Because God has good plans for you, and I don't want you to miss them.

Welcome to My Office

I sunk down into the driver's seat with a full heart after a long day of back-to-back pastoral meetings. It was the good kind of exhaustion, where your brain's running on caffeine fumes and your body's a blob with nothing left in the tank—but your soul is alive with passion and purpose.

I love what I do. I'm made for it.

Five meetings.

Five different people.

Five very different stories.

First, a successful young woman stuck in the lingering aftermath of childhood trauma, trying to figure out how to heal, forgive, and move on.

Second, a terrified college senior with eighty thousand dollars in student debt and a soon-to-be art history degree, desperate to know whether or not he should propose to his pregnant girlfriend.

The third was a recently widowed, brokenhearted, middle-aged man in a Cowboys T-shirt, wrestling with how the heck to mourn and start over again.

Fourth, a twenty-five-year-old techie living in the heart of downtown Austin, stuck in a ten-year marijuana addiction, wanting to get clean, but wondering if he'd ever love life again without his drug of choice.

The fifth and final meeting was with a thirty-six-year-old woman (one of the best people I know) wondering if God planned on answering her lifelong prayer for a husband.

Each person on their own journey, asking a different version of the same question: What does God have planned for me next?

I've had a few thousand meetings like these in just over ten years of pastoring people through all the highs, lows, twists, and turns life has to offer. Each situation is beautifully different in its own way, but they're similar in many ways as well.

"I know God wants me to heal, but I have no idea where to start."

"I've been dating her for two years, but how do I know she's the one?"

'I'm restless in my current season, and I know God has

more for me, but I can't figure out what it is."

"Do I take a leap of faith and start the company?"

"Do I finally take the severance package?"

"Should I move again or should I stay and put down some roots?"

"How do I figure out and step into God's plan for my life?"

Does any of this resonate with you? I'd be shocked if it didn't. After all, if pursuing God's plan for your life were easy, you wouldn't be reading this book. As Christians, we're called to follow a God we can't see, with a voice we can't hear, into a future we don't know. If you're wondering what God has planned for you next, welcome to the club.

And, metaphorically speaking, welcome to my office. It's one of the greatest honors of my life to sit with amazing people as they ask their most honest questions, make their most important decisions, and try to figure out God's divine direction. Over the years, I've picked up some insights and language that have helped people just like you.

This topic is personal to me because I've experienced the full spectrum of God's plan for my life. I know how it feels to hear so clearly from him, but I also know how it feels to pray and get crickets. I've stayed stuck in the struggle. I've been held up in my hurt. I've been confused about my calling and desperate for direction. I've waited on the Lord through seasons that felt like they'd never end. Yet I've also felt the guidance and goodness of a very real God, who I believe has good plans for you too.

My Hope for You

Throughout these chapters, I hope to share both practical insights and inspirational lessons I've learned about God and his plans. I've divided this book into four sections.

The first section is *Getting Ready for God's Plans*—because big expectations should lead to even bigger preparation. God has rhythms and Scripture has patterns, and the more you get to know God's ways, the easier it gets to discern God's plans.

The second and third sections—*How to Hear the Voice of God* and *How to Make a Big Decision with God*—are the crux of the content. These sections offer practical advice on how to hear from God and make big life decisions with confidence and vision.

Finally the fourth section—*What God Has Planned Next Now*—concludes the content. This section unpacks theological tools and helpful hints for walking with God today, so you can thrive on the journey from here into eternity. Eventually, what God has planned for you *next* becomes what God has planned for you *now*.

I tell you this because you might be at a place where you need to hear from God and make a big life decision now. Feel free to read out of order or skip ahead to some of the later chapters, if that helps. By all means, go ahead!

However, if you follow the outline of this book, I think you'll be better equipped to discern what God has planned for you next. Hidden in these pages are phrases, insights, and lightbulb moments that will change your life forever. I believe this book will christen you with the confidence to face your future with faith and follow God into the next chapter of your life.

From the smallest of choices to the biggest life-changing decisions, I hope these chapters help you figure out and step into the good plans God has for you. I can't make decisions for you, but I *can* give you the biblical guidance and tools that will equip you on your journey.

My prayer is that as you read, you will find yourself knowing God in a deeper, more life-giving way. That discovering his plans would simply be a wonderful by-product of a better relationship with him. That it would not only equip you to discern the plans of God but also help you encounter the *heart* of God.

I pray this book won't add to the noise of a world already overloaded with content. Instead, may these words refresh you like a breeze in the desert, leading you to the God beyond them.

With that said, what does God have planned for you next? Let's find out.

Bonus Content

Use your smartphone to scan the code for a bonus video offering some practical next steps.



<https://sites.prh.com/what-does-god-have-planned-for-me-next-book>

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PART 1

**Getting
Ready
for God's
Plans**

CHAPTER 1

God Might Ruin Your Plans

Everything's perfect. I still remember the sensation because it was the last time I would ever feel it.

Okay, maybe that's dramatic. Don't worry, this isn't a tragic chapter. It's actually really good news if—and that's a really big *IF*—you're okay with God ruining your plans and replacing them with his.

Everything really was perfect. It was the last week of my sophomore year at the University of Colorado Boulder, and I was walking home from Norlin Library on the sidewalk behind the best football stadium in the nation. (Google “Folsom Field at sunset” and you'll see exactly what I mean.)

It's hard to beat late springtime in Boulder. The last of the stubborn snowstorms had officially moved out, and it was “sunny with a high of 75.”¹ Relient K and Switchfoot were the soundtrack of my spring. I smiled, took a deep breath of the freshest air in the world, and thought, *This is*

*my life, am I who I want to be?*²

Yes. Or, at least I thought.

I had the rest of my life planned out. Halfway done with a biochemistry degree. Medical school in my sights. The grades to get in. The determination to make it happen. Dreams of being an orthopedic surgeon for a professional sports team. The mountain house in Vail, the beach home in Laguna, and a white picket fence around both.

I've always been a dreamer, maybe to a fault. You know the people who romanticize their plans until they idolize them and can't picture life happening any other way? That's me.

Guilty as charged.

I was a brand-new Christian, just a few months into following Jesus, eager and enthusiastic about all the ways my life was changing.

The guys in my small group and I had just memorized Jeremiah 29:11, perhaps the most quoted Bible verse of all time. "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."

As I walked up to my apartment, I could feel it in my soul. God had more for me. Good plans for me. Plans to prosper me and give me a hope and a future. I would have bet all the money in my bank account (though the stakes were low) that I already knew the *exact* future God had in store for my life. I smiled, squinting in the warm sunshine, and then whispered a prayer that only God and I could hear.

God, I've been thinking about all the plans you have in mind for my future. And I want you to know that I'm in. I

don't wanna miss a thing. I want all of it.

I had no idea how dangerous that prayer would be, or that over the next decade, God would ruin every single one of my plans.

Breaking Bad Theology

Okay, let's rip the Band-Aid off.

Jeremiah 29:11 might be the most *misunderstood* verse in the entire Bible. But if you have it tattooed on your ribs, don't panic—it's going to mean even more to you by the time you finish this book.

Behind every word, there's a rich background of historical context that gives it a specific meaning. A verse takes on a deeper meaning when you appreciate why it was written and who it was written for. The more you understand the bigger story of God, the more weight the words of God will hold in your life.

In the Old Testament, hundreds of years before Jeremiah, God established a covenant with a man named Abram and made him some pretty epic promises. Here's the quick and casual version: *Abe, I'm going to make you into a nation more numerous than the stars in the sky. I will give you a land to call home, and through your people, I will bless the entire world.*

No big deal.

All God has wanted since the beginning of time is to bless us. He's a good father with good plans, and he always has been. God wanted to bless the world through the Israelites, but time and time again, they chose *their* way over his. Until

God finally gave them over to what they wanted.

Like C. S. Lewis once said, “There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, ‘Thy will be done,’ and those to whom God says, in the end, ‘Thy will be done.’”³ Following their own ways and plans, the Israelites were eventually conquered by the Babylonian army and carried into a seventy-year season of exile.

That’s where the book of Jeremiah comes in. It was written by an Israelite priest named—you guessed it—Jeremiah. As a prophet for God’s people, he delivered a message to the Israelites in exile, complete with a sobering lesson on the dangers of disobedience and a beautiful reminder that God’s plans were, and still are, better than theirs.

So, there you go—a little bit of context. Because as the saying goes, Jeremiah 29:11 *cannot mean for us what it did not mean for them.*

Now, are you ready for a couple of fancy seminary words? There are two ways to interpret a verse like this. *Exegesis* means to pull truth out of the Bible. And *eisegesis* means to read ourselves into the Bible. When we interpret a verse through the lens of the latter, we often see ourselves as the main character, without even thinking about it.

For example, if you’re anything like me, when you hear a verse about how God “knows the plans he has for *you*,” something in your soul feels warm and fuzzy.

Because you hear the word “you” and you think “me.”

That doesn’t mean you’re a narcissist trying to make the Bible about you or a bad person who doesn’t love Jesus—not at all. It just means life is challenging at the moment and the future is unclear, and you’re looking for a bit of direction

and hope.

Maybe life *has* been painful or your heart's been broken. Maybe the last few years have been marked by grief, loss, betrayal, or divorce. Maybe you've been waiting in what seems like a never-ending season of infertility or singleness, and you don't know how much more disappointment you can endure.

It could be that life hasn't lived up to your expectations, or you feel like the best is behind you—and then you read a verse like Jeremiah 29:11 and you feel hope for the first time in weeks, months, or even years.

And you know what?

Good.

In fact, *praise God*.

With every cell in my body and every ounce of wisdom God has given me from years of pastoring people through different circumstances and seasons, I believe God wants you to read Jeremiah 29:11 and be filled with hope for the future.

And the more hope the better.

Yes, this verse is a specific promise made to a specific group of people in a specific situation roughly 2,600 years ago, but it's overflowing with general implications that are true for me and you today.

Be encouraged! You *are* a child of God, and he *does* have good plans for you. As a pastor, I want to help guard your heart from the fallout of false expectations, so you don't get hurt by God for not giving you something he never promised you in the first place. We need to break bad theology before bad theology breaks us. I want you to be encouraged

by the incredible implications of Jeremiah 29:11, while also interpreting it responsibly in light of the full counsel of God's Word.

The more you know the story of God, the more you'll know the heart of God. And the more you know the heart of God, the easier it will be to discern his plans.

Follow Jesus, not Your Heart

With that said, the rest of this chapter is a lesson in letting go of control, which isn't easy to do when you're a low-level control freak—I mean, human being.

Because it's true: You have a good God who has good plans for you. But there's something else I need to tell you. And remember, I'm just the messenger, so if you don't like the message, you can take it up with my boss.

Insert cheesy Christian laugh track.

Here's the "something else" you need to know about this God with all the good plans: He might ruin your life.

And by that I mean he might change every detail you've already mapped out. After all, they're *his* plans, not yours. Remember when God said, "I know the plans *I have* for you"?

Exactly—God is the one with the plans.

Last week, my three-year-old daughter, Kinsley, painted a picture for me. It was a magnificent portrait of me, her, and a flamingo. I only know because she told me. You could have given me ten thousand guesses and that wouldn't have been one of them. It made the fridge for five days, and then we threw it away. She never noticed.

I mean this in the most kindhearted way: That's what God thinks about your plans. They're like the watercolor painting your kid brought home from Sunday school. He loves them because you made them and he loves you. He thinks you're cute and your plans are adorable.

However, he also knows this: His plans are better than your plans.

But we'll talk more about that in the next chapter. For now, let's just acknowledge a few things. God cares about your passions and preferences, and he loves that you're a planner. He made you that way. But let's not make the all-too-common mistake of assuming God's plans are a buffet, where you can take what you want and leave what you don't. If it were, then they wouldn't be God's plans; they'd be yours.

Sometimes Christians do the same thing with the Bible, treating the holy Scriptures a bit like a Build-a-Bible Workshop, where they pick and choose the verses that affirm their actions, validate their feelings, and endorse their opinions.

The problem is, when you attempt to make God look like you, you forget he created you to look like him. God is eternal—he always has been and always will be. God is truth, and truth is true every day of the week, regardless of whether you believe in it or agree with it. You can't change truth; you can only choose to align with it.

I know this isn't a popular idea these days. The world tells us to follow our hearts—to "live *your* truth." Who cares what anyone else thinks, right? However, the book of Jeremiah tells us the opposite:

The heart is deceitful above all things
and beyond cure.
Who can understand it?⁴

Following our hearts has led to some of the worst decisions ever made. Adam and Eve followed their hearts in the garden. My friend's mom followed her heart out of a marriage and into an affair, creating a cocktail of lingering resentment and regret. We could pass a microphone around all day and tell a million stories just like this.

And we'd all be guilty.

The reason "follow your heart" is terrible advice is because the heart is deceptive. We often want things that God doesn't intend for our lives, just like the Israelites did. Many of the things I want today will not lead to the plans God has for me tomorrow, even though sometimes it *really* feels like they will.

Feelings aren't false, but they're also not facts—they're information.⁵ Emotions matter because God designed them and gave them to you. But in this fallen world, they're not always true. As Christians, we have access to something greater than our feelings: truth.

Truth is a person, and his name is Jesus. He is "the way and the truth and the life."⁶

His words, not mine.

Therefore, as his followers, we have the option to live by what's true even when it's not what we feel.

This is not a book about following your heart; it's a book about following Jesus. If anything, question your heart and lead it to him. Seek the Planner, not the plans. After all,

Jesus is not a supplement to give your life a facelift—Jesus is the Savior, here to give you a completely new life. He is the Alpha and Omega who sees the end from the beginning.

This isn't about bringing God into our dreams; it's about surrendering to his. And that takes two things: (1) The faith to believe God has good things in store for your life, and (2) the trust to open your hands, even if it means God might ruin your plans.

Ten Years Later . . .

A decade after my picture-perfect walk home from finals, almost everything about my plans had changed.

I never went to medical school. And instead of homes in Vail and Laguna, I owned a two-bedroom condo in Littleton, Colorado. (The beach house is still a dream. I'm just playing the long game.)

I'll share more about this in later chapters, but my professional plans quickly changed from orthopedic surgeon to pastor just a few months after I graduated from college. God called me, my brother Ryan, and my best friend Ethan into ministry—and the rest, as they say, is history.

God then downloaded a new dream into our hearts to start a church, and the more we dreamed, the more we started filling in every detail. The plan was to move to San Diego and start Harbor City Church. It's a good name, right? Feel free to steal it if you want. I still have a thumb drive full of vision, plans, and graphics in the top drawer of my nightstand.

But just like my biochemistry degree, I never used it.

The short version of the story is this: Slowly but surely, God changed all the details, including our dream city on the beach, and we ended up planting a different church in Austin, Texas, three hundred miles from the nearest ocean.

But don't be fooled by this condensed editor's cut. The full story—including all the pain and the tears, the wrestling and the waiting, the praying and the decision-making—is scattered throughout the coming chapters.

Scripture tells us there's power in our testimonies⁷ because our stories are the living and breathing evidence that God is working. And I think you'll find *your* story in *my* story in a practical and meaningful way.

This is my testimony: God ruined my plans, and it was the greatest thing that ever happened to me.

I remember driving with my pregnant wife and our anxious dog from Denver to Austin in a Chevy Equinox packed with everything we owned. When we passed the **Welcome to Texas** sign, I said a big, little prayer: "God, please let this crazy dream work."

And in that moment, something significant happened—a thought crossed my mind that filled my heart with a rush of confidence for the rest of the drive: *This is God's plan, not mine. All the details are now his.*

Like Scripture says,

A man's heart plans his way,
but the LORD directs his steps.⁸

That couldn't be truer. For your dreams to grow into their fullest form, hold them with open hands. After all, God can't

place his plans in your hands if they're clenched shut.

My brother-in-law, Taylor, and his wife, Sophia, moved to Austin a few years after us with their newborn son, to help us build our church. Taylor had been a pastor in Denver for years and planned to one day work at the church in Austin. Until then, he held the details in open hands. He drove Lyft to make money and ran our online campus.

And then God changed Taylor's plans.

He's now a police officer. His years of pastoral experience perfectly prepared him for meeting people on their darkest and most desperate days. On top of that, he knows the city like the back of his hand because he logged so many hours driving Lyft.

God never wastes anything.

So, here's a thought-provoking question: When it comes to God's plans, can you get out of your own way? If you can't, your commitment to your own details will eventually limit what God wants to do. Trust me, when you step out in faith and follow God into the unknown, you want to know in the depths of your heart that it was *his* idea.

Because then the outcome is on him.

And that's the feeling of gratitude I felt as we crossed the Texas state line. *God, thank you for ruining my plans.*

I challenge you to turn your plans into a prayer and surrender the outcome to God. Open your hands and release your grip. He's a good Father with good intentions and your best interest at heart.

Five Years After That . . .

Just five years after we planted the church, I was in a packed

auditorium, worshipping in a sea of voices to these words by Red Rocks Worship: “There’s no way, no way you’re gonna let me down. You never have, you never will, and you won’t start now.”⁹

The words couldn’t be more beautiful and true, but as I stood in the front row with a microphone in hand, I felt God’s conviction in my heart.

Pastor my people to sing this song and truly mean it.

It wasn’t the audible voice of God. That’s never happened to me. I’d probably pee my pants if it did. It was a nudge from the Holy Spirit, and this was the conviction: If you are dead set on *your* plans in *your* timing, then truthfully, God will let you down constantly. He loves us far too much to let us get our way every time.

It’s not until you can pray the same prayer of surrender Jesus prayed minutes before he was arrested to be crucified—“Father . . . not my will, but *yours* be done”¹⁰—that you can sing with confidence about a God who will never let you down.

David once wrote,

Take delight in the LORD,
and he will give you the desires of your heart.¹¹

But it’s an interesting conundrum, because Jeremiah said the heart is deceitful and can’t be trusted. In other words, what you *think* you want today, you probably won’t want tomorrow, or a year from now, or especially a decade from now.

What you want *now* isn’t necessarily what God wants for

you *most*. You might think it is, but it's probably not. Getting ready for God's plans looks like learning to let go of control and surrendering your future to God's will.

That's why David's formula begins with delighting in the Lord. As you enjoy him, your heart begins to change. Then, in his time, God will give you the desires of your *changed* heart. Sometimes he downloads new dreams into your soul. Often, he'll replace your desires with better ones. And every once in a while, he'll ruin your plans.

And you'll be so glad he did.

If you can get out of your own way, it will open up a whole new world and a dazzling place you never knew.¹²

Letting go of control takes a lot of trust, so let me give you a thought worth thinking about: God loves plans. He loves strategies and systems—from the intricacies of your body's circulatory system to the splendor of our solar system. Just in case you're hyperventilating at the panic-inducing idea that God is a loose cannon Enneagram 7, who does everything spontaneous and couldn't care less about the details, let me calm your nerves.

God loves plans.

So make your plans.

Then hold them with open hands.

The more you know him, the more you'll come to trust him. And the more you trust him, the more you'll hear him. And the more you hear him, the more you'll discover what he has planned for you next.

Journal the Journey

Before you continue, take a moment and write down the plans you hope God has for you next.

You know, the ones you're thinking about right now as you read this chapter: getting married, having kids, quitting your job, planting a church, launching a clothing brand, paying off your debt, retiring and moving to Maui, becoming an influencer and traveling the world—write it down!

And write down the real answers, not the “correct” ones. You're not going to trick God into giving you what you want by telling him what you think he wants to hear. God already knows your heart better than you do, remember? So you might as well get honest with him and with yourself.

If you want to “have it your way,” put down this book and go to Burger King. But if you want God's best and you trust him with your future, then invite him into your dreams and ask him to invite you into his.

And then do the most daring thing you could ever do: Give God permission to ruin your plans. He might not—you never know. Sometimes he changes things; sometimes he doesn't. Sometimes he's all about our plans—he just wants to add some purpose to them. But your hands need to be open for that to happen.

As you'll soon find out, his plans are better than yours. When people ask me about my life, I tell them God ruined all my plans in the best way possible. But he didn't ruin them without my permission. He simply asked me if I wanted to trade my good for his best.

And I said yes.

Following God into the unknown is anything but easy, and it's certainly not the road most traveled. But like my

mom once told me: The best place to be is right smack-dab in the middle of God's will for your life, even if it's nothing like what you had planned.

Journaling your prayers and documenting the journey might be one of the most underrated ways to hear his voice:

“All this,” said David, “the LORD made me understand in writing, by His hand upon me, all the works of these plans.”¹³

Get your heart out of your chest and onto the paper in front of you, and then take a deep breath and pray the same prayer I prayed fifteen years ago: *God, I believe you have good plans for me. I want to experience all of it and miss none of it. Amen.*

Bonus Content

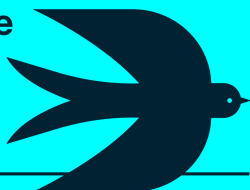
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FOREWORD BY SHAWN JOHNSON
senior pastor of Red Rocks Church

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