

# Making Plans for an Uncertain Future

*A Godly Response to a Pandemic – Part 10*

## Series Overview

Proverbs 27:1 says, “Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth.” The COVID-19 outbreak certainly shows that this is true. When 2020 began, we had no idea we would face this new kind of challenge. Though it caught us by surprise, we know God was not surprised. He knew this would happen and will guide us through this challenging time.

This study guide is the second in a new Faith Baptist Bible study series called “A Godly Response to a Pandemic.” Each lesson will provide biblical teaching that enables us to think, feel, and live in a Christlike way throughout this pandemic experience.

Together, we’ll tackle topics like fear, anxiety, and loneliness. We’ll also examine our behavior as a church. Most importantly, we’ll learn about our loving, sovereign God who is all-knowing, almighty, always present, and trustworthy in every way.

## Series Guidelines

This series will continue throughout our period of “social isolation” in New York City. To participate, please take the following approach.

1. A new study guide will be provided each Saturday at Shepherd Thoughts. You can follow the guide online or download and print it as a PDF.
2. Use each guide for an in-home Bible study from 9:30-10:30 a.m. on Sunday.
3. If you live with a Christian family, you can study together. If not, try studying together with another believer from Faith by phone or internet using a service like Facebook Video Chat, Google Hangouts, Skype, or Zoom.
4. For each study: (1) begin with prayer, (2) read the Scripture passage, (3) work through the study guide, then (4) end with prayer.
5. Then tune in early to the Faith Baptist Livestream on Facebook at 10:45 a.m. to post questions, feedback, and comments about the lesson. Pastor Overmiller will respond to your feedback before the 11:00 a.m. service begins.
6. You can also leave comments on the blogsite at the end of the study guide page and Pastor Overmiller will respond by sometime Sunday.
7. As a bonus, memorize a verse or more from the passage and think about it throughout the week ahead.

## Lesson Introduction

When it comes to making plans, there are at least two kinds of people in the world (though this may be an oversimplification to some degree). Like me, some are afflicted with the malady of perfectionism. We want to make plans and we work hard at making them, yet we struggle to actually put them into action because we never feel we have enough information or perspective to make good plans. There's always another angle, detail, or possibility to consider.

Then there are people with the opposite problem. They don't really make plans at all, or at least they don't think much about the plans they make. They just lunge forward and do things regardless of what may happen. No matter which approach you lean towards most, whether procrastinating or being hasty and impulsive, I think you'll agree that both approaches miss the mark of planning well, but why?

Both approaches are missing the main factor in wise planning, which is total dependence on God. When we stare into the fog of the unknown future that lies before us, we can't ever know exactly what's in store. Yet we can and *should* consult with the God who does, and that's what Proverbs 16:3 reminds us to do. So, let's take a look at this important proverb together as we make plans for our uncertain future as individuals, families, and a church.

## Proverbs 16:3

Commit your works to the LORD,  
and your thoughts will be established.

## Study Guide

### Consider the Background

This statement appears in the Old Testament book of Proverbs, which provides an extensive collection of insights for a wide variety of situations. They teach us how to live in a skillful, successful, and satisfying way.

Most importantly, they teach you how to make choices in light of what you know about God, for "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov 1:7). Since God is who he says he is, does what he says he does, and rules over every aspect of our lives, we should give him the respect he deserves by making choices with him in mind.

## Examine the Scripture

- The word *commit* is more descriptive in Hebrew than it is in English? It means something like “to roll way” or “to roll onto.” So, we should “roll” whatever we are about to do over or onto God.
- Read Psa 37:5. The word *commit* is the same word that means “roll onto” in Prov 16:3. How does this verse describe what it means to “roll” our plans over to God? What does this verse say about our attitude towards God when we make decisions?
- Read Psa 55:22. The word *cast* is the same word that means “roll onto” in Prov 16:3. What does this verse say about why we should “roll” our plans over to God? Focus on the first line and pay attention to the word *burden* which means something like “anxiety, care, distress, and hardship.”

## Ask Yourself Some Questions

- “Rolling” something over to someone else is a physical action that we perform towards a material object of some kind (like pushing a rolling pin over a lump of pie dough or handing over a heavy package to someone as a UPS delivery person). Since the plans we worry about and works we plan to do are potential, not actual (they’re in our minds, not our hands), how can we “hand them over” to God (see Phil 4:6 and 1 Pet 5:7)?
- What are some plans that you’re working out in your mind right now that you need to deliberately “roll over” onto God?

## Examine the Scripture

- How would you describe the relationship between the first line (A-line) of this proverb and the second line (B-line)? How does the second line relate to the first one?

The B-line gives a result of the A-line. So, if you learn to do what the first line teaches, then you will experience what the second line describes.

- The word *thought* means something like “intentions, plans, and meditations.”
- The word *established* means something like “durable, arranged, or sustained.” The idea is that the things we plan to do will generally be successful and play out well over time.

## Ask Yourself Some Questions

- As important and necessary as it is to “cast our burdens” on the Lord in prayer, trusting completely in his care, how do we also let God shape our thoughts and guide our plans according to his will (see Prov 3:5-6)?

## **Examine the Scripture**

We must do more than “pray” about our plans, though prayer is an essential but neglected expression of our faith in God. We should also put our faith into action by seeking God’s wisdom and guidance from which source (see Psa 119:105 and Prov 6:23)?

David’s (Psalms) and Solomon’s (Proverbs) poetic allusions to a “lamp” and a “light” refer to things like a handheld torch or a clay oil lantern used in biblical times to provide light for people’s nighttime journeys. Today, we use things like nightlights, flashlights, and headlamps. By knowing what the Word of God has to say about the kind of plans we’re making the things we’re planning to do, we can adjust and shape our thoughts and plans to God’s will and ways. Doing this doesn’t give you a perfect view of everything that’s in your future, but it gives you enough guidance to take the next steps with godly wisdom.

## **Ask Yourself Some Questions**

- Why is it not good enough just to make plans and then “pray” about them?
- Why are we (or should we be) more worried about the things we’re planning to do when we haven’t carefully evaluated our plans in the light of God’s Word?
- What are some plans you’ve made in the past that you worried about or that totally flopped because you didn’t adjust them to the Word of God?
- What are some plans that you’re making right now that need to be thought through with the Word of God in mind?
- What are some principles, truths, and priorities that should influence these plans that you are making for the future?

## **Conclusion**

Though our future is very uncertain right now, we know that if we base our decisions and plans for the next steps in our lives carefully upon God’s Word and then depend on him in prayer, we have nothing to worry about. In this way, let’s “roll” our burdens and plans over onto God and trust him to take care of the rest.

## **Share Your Feedback**

Now that you’ve finished this study, don’t forget to tune in early to the Faith Baptist Livestream on Facebook at 10:45 a.m. to post questions, feedback, and comments about the lesson! Pastor Overmiller will respond to your feedback before the 11:00 a.m. service begins.