

Wisdom Challenge for Pastor's Wives- January 5, 2021

Have you ever invested a lot of passion, time or money into a ministry idea that just didn't go? Man, I could write a book just about my failures in that area. At the time of those flops I wondered, "Why didn't God bless this and give it wheels." I didn't understand back then how to join God in *his* work. May I help you avoid that scenario?

This month I want to challenge you to study and memorize with me, many of the verses in Proverbs that discuss the differences between our plans and ideas and God's. This week lets' start with Proverbs 19:21 and make it our memory verse too.

*"Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand."*  
(ESV)

In our early ministry days, and in some recent days my husband and I have made the mistake of grabbing hold of a ministry idea that's been super successful in another church without properly vetting it. By vetting, I mean thoroughly searching out God's opinion on whether this idea is HIS idea for our people, in our place, at this moment. We've learned the hard way that God works uniquely in each body of believers. A huge success at another church can be a massive flop in yours if it's not on God's agenda for your people.

God is under no obligation to bless and prosper plans that might be good but aren't HIS plan right now for your church. Wisdom observes where and how God is already working and blessing and joins him in that work. He gives clues to help us by providing people and resources to carry out his ideas.

What is God's main idea? To bring lost people to his son, Jesus Christ, and train them to be disciples. The specifics of how he will use you and your church are as varied and numerous as the stars. So how can you know where you and your church fit in to God's agenda right now? For surely, we can see the dawn breaking of what might be the greatest spiritual awakening the world has ever seen. I'm not kidding.

Wise leaders will be at the front lines of the awakening. Fools will be running church programs that have a sheen of success but aren't part of God's creative work right now. How will you know the difference? The fruit. What's bringing people to Christ in measurable ways? What's growing people as disciples who then bring even more people to Christ?

Ladies, we don't need fresh ideas. We've had plenty of them. I'm sorry but we've wasted valuable time trying to be relevant when we should have been revelational. Trying to be cool when we should have been consecrated. Trying to be hip when we should have been holy. Enough. We want God's ideas and to align ourselves with his agenda for our church.

If we want our churches to be the cities on the hill that Jesus describes in Matthew 5:14, we are going to need to need to do two critical things:

1. Become way better listeners to and observers of God's methods and ways and his specific vision for our individual churches.
2. Dig deep into the treasure God calls wisdom.

These two ideas are kissing cousins. If we are digging deep into Proverbs, God's book of wisdom, we are going to begin to internalize and understand much about his ideas for successful life and ministry. Listening is hard. It requires quiet and focus, something I will probably struggle with til the day I die. I'm a doer who wants to jump right into the next fresh idea.

On the other hand, some of you are over-pondering things and lagging behind God's ways and methods. He is always, always, always on the move with fresh creativity and methods for reaching each new generation for Christ. Jumping ahead of God or lagging behind him both demonstrate a lack of wisdom.

So, here's your assignment for this week. Whether you are a lead pastor or an associate, examine honestly, how your ministry is rolling. How is it contributing to God's main idea? I'll use my husband and I as an example. Former senior pastors, we are now associates who oversee all ministries for everyone 50 and older in our church. Here are the big questions we've asked our Baby Boomer ministry leadership team to consider for 2021.

For our "Encore," leadership team:

1. How can we step into a felt need of this age group? (Health concerns, aging parents, wayward children, etc.) How can we combine the gospel with that need?
2. How can we participate in community events for Baby Boomers so we can connect with them and build relationships that will earn us the right to share the gospel?
3. Can we host a community event that would attract Baby Boomers? What would that look like? How can we present the gospel at this event in a way that resonates with this age group?

You get the idea? Now, we are researching to see what other churches are doing in this arena, but we will NOT run with an idea simply because it's successful at another church. Additionally, we know God will give us creative ideas unique to our people, resources, and geography. We want to be certain we are doing God's stuff for our place, for this time in history.

I love what Matthew Henry says in his commentary about our memory verse, Proverbs 19:21. "What should we desire, but that all our purposes may agree with God's holy will?" Isn't that what your heart desires the most for your ministry? To do God's will? Then let's get busy learning his wisdom principles. Here's more verses for you to ponder this week, about God's ways and plan, all from Proverbs: 10:29, 14:12, 16:3,9, 25, 33, 20:24, 27, 21:2-5.