Strategic Planning

(Failing to Plan is a Plan to Fail)

Lesson 1: Biblical Examples of Planning

The Big Idea:

God has given us a mission that requires us, His leaders, to plan.
And He has given us examples in His Word to follow.

“Give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may lead this people, for who is able to govern this great people of Yours?”
2 Chronicles 1:10

The key to great planning is focus. Solomon did not ask for great riches or fame for himself, but rather he asked for wisdom so that he could lead God’s people. Solomon demonstrates a key aspect of leadership – knowing where you want to go before asking others to follow you. Once your personal and organizational mission is defined, the methods become easier to clarify as well. All great human endeavors have included a God-factor and a leadership factor. God has given us a mission that requires planning on our parts as leaders.

A Question to Consider:
Why is it important for God’s leaders to plan?

PRAY! PRAY! PRAY!
Biblical Examples of Planning

Read the Scripture passages below, then discuss how each event in these Biblical examples of planning were planned, executed and successful.

What can we learn from these examples to apply to strategic planning today?

God Did It . . . Isaiah 37:26

"Have you not heard? Long ago I did it, from ancient times I planned it. Now I have brought it to pass."

Noah Did It . . . Genesis 7-9

Noah received explicit instructions from God to build the ark. God gave detailed measurements to Noah, and he was faithful to carry out the long-range plan. He finished constructions of the ark, exactly as God told him – in 120 years. The ark was build so well that it withstood 40 days of torrential rain, and then it floated a solid year as the floods subsided.
Nehemiah Did It . . . Nehemiah 1-5

The long-range plan of Nehemiah was to see the wall of Jerusalem rebuilt. He visualized the completion of the wall and then began plans for its construction. The work was completed in 52 days because each family was assigned a certain portion of the wall to build. He planned and organized the project with excellence.

David Did It . . . II Samuel 7; I Kings 5:2-3

The long-range plan of David was to build a temple. God did not allow David to build it because of his associations with wars. However, when Solomon was chosen to succeed him, David handed Solomon the completed plan for the temple and a list of materials on hand. After seven years of construction, the temple was completed, and the long-range plan of David was fulfilled.

Jesus Told Parables about It . . .

We often fail to notice that Jesus spoke about the necessity of planning and strategy frequently. In two of His parables, He explained it is foolish to neglect planning:

- The Wise and Foolish Builder: Matthew 7:24-27
- The King Planning for Battle: Luke 14:31-32
A Thought to Ponder:

1 Corinthians 16:5-6, 8-9

Paul had a plan to reach the major cities of his day. In a conversational manner, he describes his plan to start in Macedonia, then move south to Corinth, and finally visit Asia Minor and the major port city of Ephesus, where “a great and effective door has opened” to him.

Effective leaders don’t drift from one place to another, Paul had a plan to impact major cities that would in turn influence those who visited these cities. He focused on the metropolitan areas, knowing that well-trained followers would bring God’s message to the smaller towns and villages in the region.

Leaders can do anything, but they can’t do everything.
Paul did not spend his energies haphazardly, but charted the course to reach the Roman Empire in his lifetime.

~ from The Maxwell Leadership Bible

What Difference Would It Make:

What difference would it make in the life and ministry of your corps and community if the leadership team in your corps followed these Biblical examples to create and follow a strategic plan for God’s mission for your corps?
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Lesson 2: Effective Strategic Planning

The Big Idea:
A good plan will enable great results!

Steps to Effective Strategic Planning

1. **PLAN TO _________________.**

   A frequent mistake churches make is the failure to follow this step. A certain amount of time and energy must be allotted in the weekly agenda for the planning process. Everyone agrees strategic planning is important, but we often feel we’re wasting time when we take long hours to do it. The opposite is usually true. Look at the diagram below. When very little planning happens it takes more time for execution due to changes and unexpected events. When a good deal of time is spent planning, we may feel unproductive, but in the long run we will actually save time on the overall task. The graph below is not a scientific formula, but rather a picture of what can happen when we spend time planning our actions.

   \[ \text{– A Plan to Work Ratio –} \]

   ![Plan to Work Ratio Graph]

2. **DETERMINE YOUR ________________ _________________.**

   This involves big picture perspective. Before you can decide on daily agendas, you must determine what goal you want to reach. Strategic planning (long term) and operational planning (short term) both flow out of the answers to these questions:

   Why do We Exist? What Are We Trying To Accomplish?

   ![Leaders Notes]

   PRAY! PRAY! PRAY!

   1. Plan
   2. Primary Purpose
3. _________________ THE SITUATION.

A plan for the future based on an unrealistic view of the present will lead to disaster. One way to verify that we are seeing the situation clearly is to look at it from different angles. Take our eyes for example. Two eyes give depth perception because each eye sees the picture from a different angle. In the same way we can have a clearer idea of our present situation when we look at it from more than one angle. Listed below are four angles to consider when assessing your situation.

– **Angles of Assessment** –

a. _______________ the Organization
   
   *What are you doing from the perspective of those with whom you work?*

b. _______________ the Organization
   
   *What are you doing from the perspective of someone who does not know your strategy?*

c. _______________ Point of View
   
   *What does your situation look like from where you are now?*

d. _______________ Point of View
   
   *How does your situation look months or years from now? What trends are developing?*

4. _________________ THE NEEDS.

List team goals in the order of importance and priority. Results are left to chance when needs are not prioritized. More often than not, the easy things will get done, but the important things will not. We tend to do the urgent things, but not the important. When the ultimate mission is neglected we become a slave to the immediate.
5. **ASK THE RIGHT _________________________.**

   **Target:** Whom are we trying to serve and what needs are we meeting?
   **Leadership:** Do we have the right people at the top to accomplish our goals?
   **Counsel:** Whose advice do we need in order to succeed?
   **Direction:** Exactly what are we going to do short-range, mid-range, & long-range?
   **Organization:** Who’s responsible for what? Who will supervise whom?
   **Funding:** What are our expected expenses and income?
   **Reporting:** Are we on target with our progress?
   **Communication:** How can we effectively make known what we’re doing?
   **Evaluating:** Are we seeking the quality we expect or demand from ourselves?
   **Refining:** how can we keep improving in the critical aspects of this ministry?

6. **SET SPECIFIC ___________________________.**

   **Written:** Write out on paper what you want to accomplish. It will serve as a daily reminder of what should be completed next.
   **Specific:** A general plan may be easy to formulate, but objectives are easier to define when the goal is specific.
   **Realistic:** Set goals you can reach. Though it may be exhilarating at first when you set lofty goals, we need to remember that a goal is only worth while if it is completed.
   **Measurable:** A measurable goal is important because it allows you to evaluate how well you are doing. What specific progress is desired, by when?
   **Personal:** Personal goals inspire and motivate you. They need to connect at the heart level and move you to act.
   **Convictional:** You must be convinced of the worthiness of your goals. Only then will you invest in them.

7. ______________ AND CLARIFY.

   Communication is sharing a vision of the objective that is to be accomplished. Clarification is showing the steps that need to be followed. This does not mean specifically telling someone what to do. Instead, it means giving him or her guidelines for completing the goal. Every planning meeting should include the items below:

   A. **Written Conclusion**
   B. **Project List**
   C. **Time Line**
   D. **Resource List**
   E. **Next Steps (Action Steps)**
   F. **Responsibility (Project Leaders)**
8. IDENTIFY POSSIBLE ________________.

The next step is identifying possible challenges. Think of obstacles that might occur so you can develop ways to overcome them. Imagine a “worst case scenario” and how you would respond. With planning and forethought, you can avoid many of the obstacles that would normally take up your time. When you take the time to plan, it will take less time to execute.

   a. “The Mental Walk Through.” Mentally walk through the entire goal or event you are planning and note anything you might have forgotten.

   b. “The Next Steps.” Determine the immediate action you must take to accomplish your goal. This is the most important result of any meeting.

9. HAVE AN ________________ OF PLANNING.

Leaders must have an open system approach to planning that is aware of external influences. The decision-making and planning can adapt to these realities. A close system attempts to exist with no regard to these outside factors.

10. ___________ AND ___________ YOUR RESOURCES.

Other than people, our most valuable assets are time (schedule) & money (budget). Invest in both wisely and specifically.

   **Schedule:** Put your items on a schedule that is responsible yet productive. Without a schedule you can not keep track.

   **Budget:** Determine the cost of the project, and at what point costs will be incurred. Attempt to resolve any surprises you can!

11. ________________ AND ________________.

A river constantly changes and is never the same as it was before. Organizations are the same way. Regardless of how conscientiously plans are made, there is a constant need for monitoring and correction if the final destination is to be reached. Always have a plan, but have the understanding that the minute you stop adjusting and making changes your course will be altered and you will go off track.

12. _________________ THE RESULTS.

“Keeping score” is the only way to know if you're winning or losing. Develop vehicles to keep score. If you're making a change, you out to do it based on current information.
A Thought to Ponder:

Spanish novelist Miguel de Cervantes said,  
“The man who is prepared has his battle half–fought.”

If you want to prepare yourself so that you can help your team (and your corps) as it faces the challenges (ministry opportunities) ahead, then think about the following:

Assessment: Where are you and your team (corps) headed?
Alignment: Good alignment makes success possible. If you're not lined up right, you'll never get to your desired destination.
Attitude: To succeed in any endeavor . . . you need to have a positive attitude about yourself, your teammates and your situation.
Action: Being prepared means being ready to take that first step when the time comes. Remember this: Courage has no greater ally than preparation, and fear has no greater enemy.”

~ from The 17 Qualities of a Team Player

What Difference Would It Make:

What difference would it make in the life and ministry of your corps and community if your leadership team followed these steps when planning every aspect of your corps ministry? (events, corps programs, Sunday School curriculum & campaigns, etc.)
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Lesson 3: Our Corps’ Mission

The Big Idea:
Planning to effectively accomplish our corps’ mission.

The Changing Future

The Growth Curve
Charles Handy writes that most organizational growth occurs as the diagram to the right illustrates. Growth comes quickly (point A) but eventually peaks, and then decline sets in (point B). A leader must understand this, and make changes before the decline sets in. This means that a leader must begin change at point A.

Anticipating Change and the Period of Chaos
When change is initiated at point A, the followers will misunderstand what the leader is doing. When the change is made they often feel upset, resentful and in a state of flux. This is the “period of chaos” (the shaded area).

Thriving on Chaos
Because of rapid change of pace in an organization, the leader must constantly be evaluating, planning and making healthy changes. This means followers may feel unsettled like they’re in a constant state of chaos. Great leaders and organizations must learn to thrive on this.

Application
Leaders must prepare their followers for the period of chaos early in the long-term planning process. Followers must be continually informed of what is going on in advance of the implementation of any plans. Gain the trust of followers by including them on the plans, giving them ownership of their part, and encouraging them through periods of chaos.
Planning & Accomplishing Our Corps’ Mission

What is our corps’ Mission Statement? If you don’t have one, take time now to develop one. (For help in getting started, use the “Ten Probing Questions for Mission Planning” worksheet on page 5.)

A Question to Consider:

In the Army, change is a constant. How does your corps effectively plan for and deal with change?

What is our plan to accomplish this mission? How do we decide where to invest our resources and energies, and whose decision is it?
What are the factors that hinder us from accomplishing our mission?

What is my part in our corps’ mission?
As a good leader, Moses methodically arranged the tribal camps in the wilderness. We would do well to plan and organize as Moses did:

~ Give time for planning and organizing. Determine your primary purpose.
~ Understand where you are before trying to develop a strategy.
~ Prioritize the needs and goals of the team by asking the right questions.
~ Write goals that are realistic, measurable, and convicting.
~ Clarify goals and communicate with your team.
~ Identify possible obstacles. Have an open system approach to your planning.
~ Budget your cost and time by scheduling everything you can and setting deadlines.
~ Study the results. Evaluation prevents stagnation and exaggeration.
~ Remember, anyone can steer the ship, but it takes a leader to chart the course.

~ from The Maxwell Leadership Bible

What difference would it make in the life and ministry of your corps and community if your leadership team developed an effective plan and executed that plan to accomplish your corps’ mission?
Ten Probing Questions for Mission Planning:

1. What are 8-10 characteristics and values of your corps/ministry?

2. How does your leadership team reflect & represent your corps/ministry make-up (culturally, ethnically, economically, etc.)?

3. How do you measure the Christian maturity of the believers in your corps?

4. What verifiable, transformative impact has your corps had on: individuals, families and your community (including the leadership and organizational structures of your community)?

5. How do you monitor and assess the impact in each of these areas of mission influence?

6. What are the three primary missional objectives of your corps for the next 1-3 years?

7. What do you identify as obstacles (other than financial) to your missional effectiveness?

8. What will you simplify in order to ensure missional and relational effectiveness?

9. What are 5-8 ways you and your corps/congregation are blessing your neighborhood?

10. What will you need that you do not presently have, as you consider the following:
    A. The needs of your ministry area/community
    B. Your vision for transformative ministry
    C. The passions God has given you and your leadership team