

HOW TO EFFECTIVELY FACE YOUR FUTURE

By: Dr. Rick Warren

No matter what the pollsters, pundits and prognosticators may claim, no one can accurately predict all that is going to happen in the next 365 days. Even our best, most informed forecasts are just educated guesses. There are too many variables, too many unknowns, to be able to project with any degree of accuracy what lies ahead for us, individually and in the world as a whole.

Changes in our society have not only increased in terms of speed and intensity, but also in their unpredictability. Who would have predicted the dramatic shifts and jolts the economy has undergone in the past year? Doing business in this volatile environment is what author Michael Annison has termed, "*Managing the Whirlwind*." How can anyone succeed when the future is so uncertain?

The Bible suggests three timeless principles to help in facing your future:

1. INCLUDE GOD IN YOUR GOAL-SETTING.

Frankly, it is foolish to make plans without consulting God first. He is the only one who truly does know the future – and He is eager to guide you through it. The Bible says, "*We may make our plans, but God has the last word*" (Proverbs 16:1). In other words, planning without praying is presumption. Start by praying, "God, what do YOU want to do in me and through me today, this week, this month, this year?"

2. LIVE ONE DAY AT A TIME.

While you can *plan* for tomorrow, you can't *live* it until it arrives. Most people spend so much of their time regretting the past and worrying about the future, they have no time to enjoy today! Someone once made the witty observation, "Life is what happens to you while you are making other plans."

Decide to make the most of each moment of every day. Live life to its fullest, without agonizing over what will or will not happen tomorrow, or next week, or next month. Jesus said, "*Don't be anxious about tomorrow – God will take care of your tomorrows. Live one day at a time*" (Matthew 6:34).

3. DO NOT PROCRASTINATE – DO IT NOW!

The Bible counsels us, "*Don't boast about what you're going to do tomorrow, for you don't know what a day may bring forth*" (Proverbs 27:1). Procrastinating is a subtle trap. It wastes today by postponing things until tomorrow. You promise yourself that you will do it "one of these days." But "one of these days" too often turns into "none of these days."

What did you plan to get done over the past six months that you have failed to do? When do you intend to start working on it? "*Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act. Don't say to your neighbor, 'Come back later; I'll give it tomorrow' when you NOW have it with you*" (Proverbs 3:27-28). In other words, DO IT NOW!

Consider these words of assurance from God: "For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "*They are plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope...You will find me when you seek me, if you look for me in earnest*" (Jeremiah 29:11, 13).

Adapted from a column by Dr. Rick Warren, the author of numerous books, including the highly acclaimed, The Purpose-Drive Life, which has been translated into many languages and sold throughout the world. It affirms the importance of having a carefully considered, clearly expressed purpose to guide everyday life. Most recently, he also has written The Purpose of Christmas.

CBMC INTERNATIONAL: Robert Milligan, President
1065 N. 115th Street, Suite 210 • Omaha, Nebraska 68154 • U.S.A.
TEL.: (402) 431-0002 • FAX: (402) 431-1749 • E-MAIL: info@cbmcint.org
Please direct any requests or change of address to: www.cbmcint.org

Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. How much validity do you put in forecasts and predictions made by so-called "experts" these days? Has your attitude toward such projections changed much over the past 12 months?
2. Does the ever-escalating pace at which change is taking place in our world concern you? Why or why not?
3. Dr. Warren suggests including God in goal-setting. What would be the value – if any – of doing that, in your opinion?
4. Why does it seem so difficult to live life one day at a time? How successful are you at doing that?

NOTE: If you have a Bible, consider these other passages that deal with this topic:

Psalm 37:4-5; Proverbs 3:5-6; Matthew 6:6-8, 25-33; James 1:22-25, 4:13-17