

All In

When Jesus is your Plan "A"
you don't need Plan "B".



Magnolia Bible Church Men's Group

Thursday Nights at 6:30 PM | October 11 – November 15, 2018 (Lesson #2)

In this series we're talking about the "All In" concept. *All in* means totally committed, no turning back, reaching the point of no return, burning the boats, and leaving it all on the field (these are just a few of the phrases we use in today's world). To be brutally honest, as men very few of us are *All In* when it comes to our commitment to Jesus. Vying against our commitment to Jesus are a tremendous number of distractions and pressures that seem to pull us in every direction except the one that counts.

In this 6-week series we're going to take a real, hard look at what we need to do to **make Jesus Plan A**. Provided below are topics we'll be covering in this series. Each topic has been specifically selected to drive us towards building a life where we don't have to make any excuses.

1. October 11 Finding the "Why?" in your life.
2. October 18 **What's Your "game"? Discovering God's specific plan for your life.**
3. October 25 Roadblocks: areas of sin and weakness that prevent success.
4. November 1 It's all about TRUST: Making the leap of faith.
5. November 8 Developing God's *Game Plan* for your life.
6. November 15 Putting it all together and living with purpose for Jesus.

In tonight's lesson we're going to explore "What's your game?" Last week we discussed finding the "Why?" in our lives. Once we figure out the "Why", the "How" and the "What" will take care of themselves. For those of us who are followers of Jesus, His message in Matthew 6:33 to "seek first the Kingdom of Heaven" should be to us a rallying cry.

In some regards, asking the question "What's your game?" is another way of asking what's God's plan or will for your life. I think far too many Christians use trying to find God's Will for their lives as an excuse for inaction. While there are specific times God has very direct plans for us, I think the vast majority of the time God has a "pervasive will" that gives us the freedom to honor Him in ways that reflect how He has "wired" us, as opposed to a cookie cutter formula where all Believers are expected to do the same thing. In other words, God might have a 10-lane highway planned for you, as opposed to a two-lane country road!



The goal tonight is straightforward: **To explore God's plans for your life using the skills, passions, interests, and background He has given you.** We are going to study two very different Old Testament heroes and look at how the Lord worked in the lives of those who have gone before us, Moses and Daniel. God used both of these men in very mighty ways to not only impact the nation of Israel, but they continue to impact us today as modern-day Believers in their examples as men who were "All In."

Moses

Among the nation of Israel, Moses was clearly the first leader who galvanized the Hebrew people as a nation. He was the son of Amram and Yochebed of the tribe of Levi. His sister and brother were Miriam and Aaron. He was born in Egypt during the period in which the Hebrews had become a threat to the Egyptians, primarily because of their large population. Moses 120-year life can be broken into three divisions: the first 40 reflected independent living, the next 40 were preparation years, while the last 40 years were focused on service to God. We read about Moses in the Books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Jesus referred to Moses, as do some of the New Testament authors.

Moses was unique in many ways, but three major points stand out. First, he had an incredibly intimate walk with God. He spoke to God face-to-face (so to speak) in a way no other person had up to that point. This was essential as God used Him in powerful ways to lead the Hebrew people. Secondly, Moses led a tremendous number of people with no formal training. Moses was a reluctant leader who really didn't want the job. He had a level of humility rarely seen among great leaders. Numbers 12:3 tells us he was the most humble person; in fact, the Bible says he was *more humble than any other person on earth*. Lastly, and probably most important for us, God had a specific plan for Moses. While there was certainly some latitude in the choices he made, it seems as if the Lord's Hand directed the major decisions in his life.

What was Moses' game? While Moses was certainly not perfect and struggled trusting God (as we all do from time to time), Moses had tremendous humility and was reluctant to take on leadership. How many international leaders do you know today who are characterized as humble. Usually, it is just the opposite. At one point God was so frustrated with the disobedience of the Israelites that He threatened to wipe them out and start over with Moses (Exodus 32:9-10). In true Moses fashion, he was humble and encouraged God to forgive their sin. In the end Moses illustrated that God can use us when He calls us for specific purposes. When God calls us for a task, rest assured He will equip us to accomplish that task!

Daniel

Daniel has always been one of my favorite men in the Bible. Like Joseph, Daniel was very much focused on God and we see nothing but Godly-living in his life. Daniel was not sinless, but had a life that was very much characterized as one who sought to honor God. We read about Daniel in the book of Daniel. The opening chapters describe how he was brought into Nebuchadnezzar's palace and chose to not defile himself with the royal food (Daniel 1:8). This very much seems an appropriate phrase to describe Daniel, as one who "chose to not defile himself". In other words, Daniel was a man focused on purity. In Daniel 9:23b (emphasis added) we read words spoken to him by the angel Gabriel: *As soon as you began to pray, a word went out, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed*. How incredible is that!

It seems to me the Lord gave Daniel a brilliant mind. He was able to interpret dreams and on occasion was even given the dreams of others as a way to illustrate God's awesome power. I also believe the Lord gifted Daniel with the ability to understand complex subjects like math and science. The wise men who came from Babylon to find the baby Jesus were direct "intellectual" descendants of the educational system likely started by Daniel.

What was Daniel's game? From the get-go he was a young man focused on honoring God. He had incredible heartache and challenges throughout his life, yet he remained focused on serving God. He was also gifted by God in ways that distinguished him from those around him. He used his brilliant mind and pursuit of God to demonstrate to the world the unlimited potential of God. Further, he did this to a pagan nation who at times, ironically, honored God because of Daniel's influence on their lives.

Exploring God’s plan for our lives is an ongoing activity, requiring that we are in constant communication with Him. As illustrated in the “Game Plan” graphic to the right, there are several significant elements in your life that will influence your assessment of God’s plan for your life. Provided below is a brief explanation of each.



God’s Game Plan Graphic

- **Life Challenges:** these are areas in your life that are associated with difficulties. Often times that are areas of weakness such as physical limitations, difficulties in learning, or even struggles growing up with abusive parents.
- **Abilities and talents:** these are things that are “uniquely you”. Every one of us has abilities the Lord has given us, including humor, intelligence, discernment, ability to make money, mechanical aptitude (fixing things), and athleticism. However, it is important to not get hung up on what we can’t do. Remember that *God doesn’t call the equipped, He equips the called*.
- **Significant events in your life:** These could be called “milestone” events; things that have changed your life. It could be a time of great embarrassment, a failure, or death of a loved one. Sometimes they can be successes, but more often than not they are areas of darkness, sadness, or frustration.
- **Where do you see God working?** This is huge. Jesus was the best we have ever seen in this area and His entire life was characterized as one who was always looking to see where God was at work. In some regards we could call these “Divine Appointments”. As followers of Jesus, we need to constantly be on the lookout for steps God has prepared in advance for us (Ephesians 2:10).
- **What step of faith requires that you trust Him?** This is where the *rubber meets the road*. It’s not enough to seek, plan, and pray – at some point we have to act. While it is possible to be ahead of God’s timing for us, many Christians lag behind and just don’t act; typically, out of fear or due to *paralysis by analysis*.

Small Group “Tabletop” Discussion Questions

1. As a review from last week, what’s the “Why?” in your life? Consider the “All In” graphic (shown to the right) we discussed last week in developing your answer.
2. In considering the “Game Plan” graphic (top right figure), what area has the most significance for you (i.e., challenges, abilities, events, where God’s working, or step of faith)?
3. Have you taken a step of faith in the past that didn’t turn out as you expected?
4. Although this is the first night we’ve discussed it, do you sense God has a specific plan for you at this point in your life? Why or why not?

