

December 2017

Theme: When Plans Change Because of Culture

“Embrace the Detour”

Summary: God has His ways of changing our plans. The Bible is replete with examples from Noah to Abraham, Moses, and Samuel. Sometimes He requires great courage of His people, such as Esther; sometimes He requires we leave a prestigious job, such as Nehemiah, to step out in faith to work for the great Commander. However, God’s plan is always best. As Joseph experienced, the way to best may be long and arduous. Jonah learned the hard way that resistance is futile. Are we willing to let God change our plans to His plans? We can empathize with those who have been snatched from their homes and cultures, like Daniel and the Hebrew Children. This lesson encourages us to step out from comfort and bring comfort to those in similar situations where change is tough but God is always sufficient.

Scriptures: Many Scriptures are referenced in this program. Individual verses include Proverbs 15:22; Luke 14:28, 22:42; Genesis 35:18, 37:4, 41:46, 50:20; Hebrews 11:4, 4:15, 13:21; Acts 10:13-14; I Samuel 20:31-33; Matthew 6:10, 11:3, 6; John 1:29; Jeremiah 29:5-7; Daniel 1:4, 10.

Entire chapters for context make good individual study, such as Genesis 4, 6, 22, 25, 39, 46; Exodus 2, 3; I Samuel 16, 31; Esther 5; Nehemiah 1; Jonah 1; Daniel 3, 6.

Songs: “Faith Is the Victory” (REJOICE p. 625); “Living by Faith” (REJOICE p. 416); “My Faith Still Holds” (REJOICE p. 420); “Never Once” by Matt Redman; “Your Grace Is Enough” by Matt Maher; “Our God” by Chris Tomlin

Publicity: Make a display of some of Dr. Edward J. Moody’s books (listed in “Study” section below) as a way of creating interest in the upcoming program. Include a poster with date, time, and location announcement. Download publicity items from WNAC website. Consider a barrage of invitations to the women.

Presentation: Begin the presentation by asking the women to think back to when they were in high school and relate the plans they made for their lives. Did any of them come true? Why or why not? Which was better, the dream or the reality?

The week before the meeting, write the Scripture references on sticky notes and distribute to someone to read the chapters referenced and be ready to give a one-two sentence summary of the chapter when appropriate in the study. Be prepared as a backup in case their “plans change.” During the presentation, make sure the individual verses referenced are read.

Think about and be prepared to explain during the presentation the importance of the differences between *good*, *better*, and *best* when it comes to our plans and God’s will. Dr. Moody writes about resisting God’s plans and references the story of Isaac preferring Esau from Genesis 27. Yet, Jacob receives the blessing in a deceptive way when he masquerades as Esau by putting goat’s hair on his (Jacob’s) arms. If someone has access to goat’s hair (the hair only), display a small amount of hair in a sandwich bag. Those who are not allergic can feel the goat’s

hair and decide if they would be deceived as Isaac was. How about a sample of camel's hair in illustration of John the Baptist's wardrobe? Remember that some people learn tactilely.

Icebreaker: Hand out a survey to women as they arrive. The survey can be simple and include a few questions about the future, such as the following examples:

1. What food did you hate as a child that you like to eat now?
2. Did you stay at the same career as your first job?
3. Are you living in your first home you bought?
4. Are you a member of the same church you first joined?
5. Do you still have the same best friend that you did in grade school?

Summarize the surveys during the refreshment time and share with the women for their enjoyment.

Breakout Groups: After the presentation, take time in small groups to think of those who may need practical assistance as they go through change, such as moving to assisted living, babysitting tiny tots, moving, etc. Make plans to help during the coming weeks. Be sure to have group prayer.

Testimony: Arrange for someone to relate a testimony when God changed her plans and she had to step out of her comfort zone.

Study: Like Daniel and the three Hebrew children, in the last 2,000 years many Christians have been torn from their homes and resettled in an alien and godless culture. *The Hiding Place* is a life-changing story by Corrie ten Boom about her family's sojourn in Nazi concentration camps. It is available in book or movie format. Make sure your church library has both.

Dr. Moody has written several books, including *First Aid for Emotional Hurts*; *First Aid for Your Emotional Hurts for Veterans* (along with Chaplain David Trogdon); *Ministering In A Changing Sexual Landscape*, published by Randall House. These can be additional group studies.

Missions: If someone in your area has toured the Ark Encounter in Williamstown, Kentucky, ask them to share pictures and highlights of that tour. If your church is close enough, you may want to plan an outing for your women's group to the replica Ark and to the Creation Museum 40 miles to the north; both owned and operated by Answers in Genesis. This would be a great opportunity to coordinate with the youth group leaders and include future WAC members in your ministry. Check their website (www.arkencounter.com) for directions and costs.

Many persecuted Christians have fled their countries to come to the United States for asylum. Their young children may be in local schools. Perhaps your women's group can be catalysts to get a ministry going in your church to reach out to Christians from other countries who are living in the United States. You can help teachers and coordinators of English as a second language provide needed books for the church and school libraries. Search for EL resources on Pinterest for helps and recommendations. This can lead to a much larger ministry of assisting

with home and family needs with translation and understanding the ins and outs of living in your community. You are the expert there.

Service: Caroline Ferriday, descendant of Free Will Baptist founding fathers in the Woolsley family, ministered during World War II and its aftermath to many women who suffered in concentration camps. Research her life and times for inspiration as to what we can do to help Christians in other countries who are being persecuted. Voice of the Martyrs 2013 book *Hearts of Fire* relates the stories of women who serve in the underground Church. Gospel for Asia is also an organization currently working with persecuted Christians in difficult countries. Check websites for ways you can get involved: www.persecution.com and www.gfa.org

Take Dr. Moody's challenge and network with Hispanic and African American groups. Explore exchanging speakers with other women's groups.

Prayer: Take time to pray for those who are undergoing a change of plans. These may include new parents, those who have lost a job, the seriously ill, and those who are grieving the death of a loved one. Take time to send a card from your women's group and have everyone include a personal message of concern as well as her name. In these days of instant communication, taking time to send a hard-copy card via US mail can convey a sense of caring to the recipient.

Ministries may be going through a change of plans as well. Some missionaries may be concerned because of financial support changes. Remember them in prayer. Let them know, and send a special offering to encourage.

Refreshments: serving refreshments that "change" could be a lively way to spark conversation after the program. For instance, *Impossible Pie* that starts as a liquid and bakes into a crust and custard filling would be an entrée, and Jell-O that starts as a liquid and gels to a Jiggler solid would be an interesting possibility as dessert. For drinks, serve individual water bottles and individual flavored additives, such as Crystal Light. Then attendees could make their own "changes."

Recipe: **Impossible Pie** (www.food.com/recipe/impossible-pie-424705)
Ready in 1 hour 5 minutes

4 eggs ½ cup margarine
½ cup flour 2 cups milk
1 cup sugar 1 cup coconut
2 teaspoons vanilla

Directions

Blend all ingredients in a blender for a few seconds, until well mixed. Pour mixture into a 10" greased pie plate. Bake at 350° for 1 hour or until center tests firm. The flour will settle to form crust, the coconut forms the topping, and the center is an egg custard filling.

Extra (Poem):

United With God

So often we must decide,
The way our path should travel.
Each day we make decisions,
As our life, we unravel.
It's often hard to really know
If we are wrong or right.
We can only see each day,

And can't perceive the night.
Many times we make mistakes,
And sometimes we will fail.
Our endeavor to survive
Will help us to prevail.
The lesson we can learn,
As we seek certainty,
Is that we are all alone,
When we should never be.

God created each of us,
To know His sweet assurance.
He left a spot in our soul,
Where He can give endurance.
When we ask Jesus to forgive,
This spot, His Spirit fills.
We then become complete,
And live the way God wills.

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January 2018

Theme: When Plans Change Because of Leadership

“Necessary Adjustments”

Summary: When plans change regarding leadership, our first response is often why?!?! Leadership in our lives, whether in our homes, our place of employment and especially in our churches can often stir panic. Changes in this category, whether planned or unexpected, often result in our comfort zone changing. I can think of no better case in Scripture for that than Joseph. This young man goes from favored to slave. Then just a little later, he goes from respected to prisoner. No matter what changed in his life, we see a man obedient to the will of God. This is someone we need to imitate when we find ourselves facing leadership changes.

Scripture: Genesis 27-37; 39-41

Songs: “When God Has Another Plan” by The Greenes; “Great I Am” by Phillips, Craig & Dean; “Remember” by Passion; “We Won’t Be Shaken” by Building 429; “Shoulders” by King & Country; “Farther Along” (REJOICE p. 573); “I Surrender All” (REJOICE p. 483); “Great Is Thy Faithfulness” (REJOICE p. 8); “It Is Well With My Soul” (REJOICE p. 433).

Suggestions and Helps

Promotional Helps

Invitation: Download the printable invitation available from www.wnac.org (under *Treasure/Program Helps* section).

Leadership is all around us. Use prominent leader’s pictures to promote your meeting (e.g., pastor, president, governor, mayor, and denominational leaders). Encourage women to come to your meeting with a fact or photo of one of their favorite leaders. It will be an opportunity to learn about your sisters in Christ on a topic that doesn’t usually come up in casual conversation.

Presentation Ideas

If possible, invite your pastor or prominent member of your church leadership team to your meeting. Set the stage like a TV talk show. Prepare questions ahead of time. (It would also be helpful to share these questions with the interviewee ahead of time.) What a great opportunity for women to get to know your pastor. They can learn about how he has adapted to change in his life and ministry. This will also be a great opportunity to show him appreciation and learn how your group can pray specifically for him.

Refreshments

If you go with the presentation idea of interviewing your pastor, use the refreshment time to have some of his favorites. Maybe he loves chocolate pie or peanut butter cookies. This will be

another opportunity to show him he is appreciated. (It's nice for pastors to feel appreciated beyond October/Pastor Appreciation month.)

Missions

Both North American Ministries and International Missions have undergone leadership changes in the last five to six years. Ask seasoned missionaries about the challenges and adventures that came when plans changed because of new leadership. Ask how to pray specifically for them when change happens.

Another option would be to reach out to former church planters whose work has gone self-supporting. Ask about the changes that occur when leadership passes to the church body. Ask how to specifically pray for a church when it goes self-supporting.

Service

A lot of cities and townships have service projects that your group might be able to join. It would be a great opportunity to witness for Christ and promote your churches standing in the community.

Another option is to make some baked goods or snacks for your local Police and Fire Departments. These men and women are leaders in communities and this small act of kindness can go a long way to show your appreciation.

Study

If you would prefer to focus more on leadership, you can also check out *Failing like Jesus* by Kevin Riggs or *Mission Drift* by Peter Greer and Chris Horst.

Prayer

1 Timothy 2:1-2 urges us to pray for those in authority over us. While we often remember to pray for our pastor and president, we should pray for local leadership. Take time to pray for your mayor, governor, state representatives, and senators. All of these roles are leaders that have a form of authority over us and we should be diligent in praying for them as well.

Extras

New Year resolutions are often common this time of year. Often we focus on eating healthier or exercising more, challenge your women to make spiritual resolutions. Encourage them to think of one or two obtainable goals they can make regarding their relationship with Christ. Have them write these down four times. One to take with them after the meeting to put somewhere they will see daily. Have them place the other three in separate envelopes. Collect the envelopes and pass them out to the women at your April, July, and October meetings. These will be reminders of the goals they made to grow in their relationship with Christ.

February 2018
Theme: When Plans Change Because of Relationships

“Reality of Relationships”

Summary: Relationships have the power to build you up or break you down. Often, relationships depend on what we are willing to put into them. The Bible is filled with lessons for every relationship we encounter. However, the most important lesson we can learn is that love has redemptive power.

Scriptures: The book of Ruth

Songs: “The Love of God” (REJOICE p. 65); “Love Lifted Me” (REJOICE p. 335); “How Can it Be” by Lauren Daigle (YouTube); “Broken Together” by Chris Tomlin (You Tube); “How He Loves Us” by David Crowder Band (You Tube).

Suggestions and Helps

Promotional Helps

Resources: Resources are available from www.wnac.org (Under Treasure/Program Helps section).

Decoration: February is a great time to focus on God’s love and how we should display His love to others. Consider decorating with traditional valentine décor.

Poster: Create a poster to hang in the church where people can write messages of friendship and Christ’s love to one another.

Presentation Ideas

Ice Breakers: Prior to the meeting, ask the women to bring boxes of valentine cards. Have them write on the cards expressions of love and encouragement.

Project: As Christian women, one of our prime objectives should be to show others the love of Christ. One way to live out this love is by serving others. Consider asking the entire church to help you throw a Valentine’s Day celebration at a local orphanage or homeless shelter. Research organizations in your community open to having your group come in and serve.

Missions: Missionaries pour so much of themselves into sharing the gospel. In this month of love, think about ways to give back to missionaries. Prayer is a given but maybe they need something tangible from us. If you have missionaries who are close by, consider providing their dinner, if not do a gift card shower.

Service: Have each woman choose an elderly person in the church to build a relationship with this year. Our elderly can often feel unwanted or not as useful as they once were. Have your women take the time to rebuild some of what has been lost. There will be blessings all around.

Study: Ask each woman to discuss an important biblical relationship: David and Jonathan, Ruth and Naomi, Esau and Jacob, Moses and Pharaoh. The possibilities are endless. Pull out truths from these relationships that are still applicable today.

Prayer: So many times we spend time in prayer for our leaders, our country, our families, and ourselves. This month have the women spend time in prayer specifically for the broken and hurting and loss of relationships.

Refreshments: This month focused on traditional Valentine's Day ideas, continue with that theme for refreshments. Serve heart-shaped, iced, sugar cookies (the kind from your second grade Valentine's Day party), and red punch! Use pink or red napkins and pink or red cups.

Extras

- Have your women's group brainstorm ways to show God's love in tangible ways.
- Have each woman keep a journal on the different relationships in her life.