

Are You Planning "With" Jesus?

Each new year brings with it the prospect of change. There will be newer and better ways of doing domestic tasks, business chores, home repairs, etc. Some of God's children will "plan" changes of much greater proportions as they choose a mate for life, look for a job in order to sustain them perhaps to a better material degree than the present or even plan to move to another place for health and prosperity.

As exciting as these might be they can bring spiritual ruin and be disastrous for the well being of the soul without proper care in planning. It simply depends upon whether one plans "with" Christ or "around" Christ. On a small scale the application can be made to planning a vacation. What will you do about worship? Did you plan "with" Christ or plan to go "around" Him just like going around the lake?

On a larger scale, people plan careers, marriages, places where they choose to live, etc., and in the planning they go "around" Christ. They find themselves carrying out their plan but no longer being "with" Christ. They knew they had an obligation to be "with" Him but now the avoidance and separation is becoming a way of life. They have managed to avoid their Savior altogether. By way of contrast, Joshua was determined to follow Lord. He encouraged the Israelites to follow him by saying, "... *but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord*" (Joshua 24:15).

It is encouraging to read about all the people in the New Testament whose households were converted to Christ. When Peter came to preach to Cornelius, he called together his "*kinsmen and near friends*" (Acts 10:24). Luke says of Lydia in Acts 16:15 that "*she was baptized, and her household ...*" The same is true for the Philippian jailer (16:33) and of Stephanas (1 Corinthians 1:17). These were people who planned "with" Jesus and their families will be eternally blessed at the judgment.

Once a plan is set in motion, it is difficult to reverse; but we must reverse it and repent if we are to be "with" Christ. We must consider the long-range consequences of our planning and whether it will aid in our worship and service to God. I seldom hear one say anymore that they had to cancel or put their plans on hold because it would interfere with their service and worship of God. More important than what your plans will be this year is will your plans be "with" Christ Jesus this coming year?

Adapted From Bob W. Lovelace