



CEO Devotional – September 22, 2014

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Leading by Plan or Leading by Purpose

“Where there is no vision, the people perish” (Proverbs 29:18). As a planner, this verse appeals to me. I’m the kind of guy who loves casting a vision, building a plan to make that vision a reality, then executing the plan. I know that when an organization (a company, a non-profit, a church, a family) has no vision from leadership, the people inside get lost and they “perish.”

This is how I have lived my life and built my businesses. But I’m finding that this truth needs to be held in tension with another truth: God’s purposes are more important than my plans.

Five years ago, my wife Theresa and I set out to create a business with the intention of “Glorifying God by Serving Families.” We spent time talking with (and praying for) “Champions”: people who help others grow in relationship, spirit, and wellness. To serve these Champions best, we decided to help them scale by providing them with powerful, transformational technologies. But in the process of seeing this vision come to fruition God had some teaching in store for us.

The passage of Scripture God spoke to us through was Proverbs 3:5-6: “*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.*” We had to learn to be more committed to God’s purposes, His desires and His plans. Not ours. God began to prune us - painfully we had to give up control. For a leader, that’s challenging.

It’s especially challenging for the industry we’re in. Trust in God requires ambiguity. Ambiguity means not everything is nailed down, planned out, and buttoned-up. It means there’s room for God to move, to change the course, or to throw His curveballs. The world of technology is hardly an “ambiguous” space. It doesn’t reward ambiguity. In fact, it seeks to eradicate it.

But to trust God — to lean not on our own understanding and plans — we needed to learn to leave room for Him to “order our steps.” Room for more faith … and more uncertainty. That’s hard for a planner like me. But I know it’s good. I still believe in planning — it’s part of who I am and how God made me. But the reality is that there is a mysterious and positive tension which comes from these two passages.

As a leader, I’m learning to frame planning and vision in light of God’s purposes, leaving room for God to order our steps in whichever direction He sees fit. This has been good for our business as, looking back, we see there is no way we could have planned out what has transpired. God took “Champions” in directions we could not have imagined. He led us to make staffing changes, product changes and to hold the entire project loosely. He gave us invitations to respond to in the midst of “Champions” becoming a reality.

We don’t have it all figured out, nor are we totally comfortable with this tension, but isn’t that what walking with Jesus is truly like? For us, it’s been three steps forward, two steps back, but we’re convinced this is the way to walk forward, leading by leaning on His purpose. We are learning that our plans and leadership must flow out of our relationship with Him by staying connected to Him, yielding to Him and receiving from Him and responding to Him. He is trustworthy. “*He will make your paths straight.*”