

Sandcastle (God's Plan) (Sanctification)

For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Jeremiah 29:11

The Basic Bible Truth

God did not create us, and then sit back to see what we would do with our lives. He is actively interested in the direction we are going and is invested in the outcome of our lives. His desire is that we understand His plan for us and accomplish His will. That requires much from us. A willingness to let Him have his way, and set our own plans to the side.

The Object

A Block Of Wood Cut To Look Like A Portion Of A Sand Castle
Fine Sand
Glue
Sand Carving Tools, Like Spoon, Knife, Etc.



You may use any material you like. I am a woodworker by trade and took a block of wood and made a small structure that looked somewhat like a castle. I then smeared glue all over it and pressed fine sand into every crevice and surface of the mold. The result, after the glue had dried, was something that looked remarkably like it had been carved from sand. I took the remaining sand, moistened it a bit to make it stick together like good sand castle sand might. I placed my castle on a large piece of wood and poured my moist sand over everything and packed the sand down around it nicely. Now it is ready for "carving." While giving the lesson and with a little drama, you can simply remove the wet sand from around the castle that you previously covered with glue and sand, gradually uncovering it, and making it look as if you actually carved it right there in front of everyone.

The Lesson

God is interested in the direction of our lives. Intensely interested. His love for us motivates Him in all kinds of ways to plan our lives and urge us into His perfect will. We would do well to recognize this aspect of life and follow His lead. But understand, it will not be simple. His plan is detailed and exacting. It is not just a general overall blueprint of a building with no dimensions, measurements, or elevations. God's plan is highly detailed, covering many "pages" of design, schedule, and components.

Our lives without God are anything but organized. We may think that we have things figured out, but the truth is, we drift aimlessly without meaningful direction, fulfilling the whim or desire of the moment. We are self centered and concerned for our own good first, and others second. We tend to fill our lives with stuff, looking for something to satisfy the internal need we have for fulfillment. There is a God shaped void in the heart of every non-believer that can only be filled with a relationship with Him.

When we finally realize that we need a Savior, and ask God to take control, His plan is ready, but He will wait for us to allow Him to work. Romans 8:29 says that we are *predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son*. From before time began, our lives were an integral part of God's plan for this world. He is big enough to foresee everything in eternity past, and worked out all of the details. Our destiny is to become like Jesus in character and action—in love.

That is possible, but requires the removal of things not suitable to God. It requires our complete cooperation, as God will not force Himself or His plans on us. He would rather that we do so voluntarily. His work will go on without us if necessary, but it will go on.

I have had the opportunity to watch a master sculptor at work. To take a chunk of whatever medium, and begin carving a likeness of some kind is amazing to see. Often they will rough out the entire project or maybe just a portion, and then go back and continue removing unwanted material, allowing the finer details to show through. God works often in the same way, removing chunks from our life causing major changes in our behavior and direction of life, but then He comes back, and begins fine tuning His masterpiece, allowing details to become the beauty of the work.

I do not know if the story is actually true, but it is applicable here. It is said that a little child was watching a master sculptor finish his masterpiece, and in amazement asked the artist, "How did you know that he was in there?" We are a mass of nothingness. But God knows our potential, He knows what is inside of us, and by carefully removing everything from our lives that does not look like Jesus, we gradually come to look like His Son. It is that simple.

I have been carving a sand castle as I have been talking with you. You will notice the simple fact that all that was required of me is that I remove everything that does not look like a sand castle. What then remains, is a sand castle. A very, very simple idea. So why do we fail so often to let God have complete control of our lives and allow Him to continue His work of sculpting our lives to look like Jesus?