

Strategic Positioning

Habits not Plans

[Genesis 12:1-9](#)

EXPLORING THE SERMON

- * What did you hear?
- * What did you think or feel about what you heard?
- * What is one thing you can take away from the sermon this week?

EXPLORING THE SCRIPTURE

Now the LORD said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. Abram took his wife Sarai and his brother's son Lot, and all the possessions that they had gathered, and the persons whom they had acquired in Haran; and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan. **Genesis 12:1-5**

REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

Strategic positioning will be a better term for us to use than *planning* as we begin our journey into 2021. A new, exciting path is re-emerging for us as we enter this new year, but we must be prepared for it not to be straightforward. Abram and Sarai did not approach their situation with a strategic plan, and as people of faith, we too will be better served by readying ourselves to move as circumstances allow. **As you read this passage, put yourself in Abram and Sarai's shoes. How would you feel with a prosperous and bountiful future promised to you at such a mature age?**

For people of faith, "life is meant to be received rather than achieved."* If we can shift our mentality to one of positioning rather than planning, we can hear the call of God when it comes so we are ready to step out and respond. **How much of a planner are you? How have you been able to see changes happen in your life when you have allowed yourself to "receive rather than achieve?"**

We can build habits through the biblical patterns of solitude, community, and service to position ourselves to live out our mission both individually and as a church. We begin this week with **solitude**, an invitation to practice the presence of God. We can spend countless hours alone, but if not productive, we will not be filled with the presence of God. **What do you need to do daily to focus on the presence of God? Depending on how you are wired, might this year be a time to try something new (a prayer walk, reading a devotional, [Covenant's Daily Devotional](#), or an Examen)?**

As we strive to be the kind of people who position ourselves to receive God's call in the year to come, may we experience a peace that passes understanding. This week we're invited to meditate on these words from Psalm 46, carrying them with us into any situation this new year may bring: **God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble.**

Heavenly Father, we know that you never leave our sides. Help us to enter this new year with habits that draw us into your love on a daily basis, and ready to hear and receive your call. Strengthen us this week with a peace that passes understanding. Amen.

* Craig Barnes, president, Princeton Theological Seminary