

FUTURE PLANNING

"YOUR TIMES ARE IN HIS HANDS"

Key Passages

- Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, to give you hope and a future."
- Psalm 31:15 "My times are in your hands; deliver me from the hands of my enemies, from those who pursue me."

Story

The special needs attorney's questions hung in the air: "Who will care for your daughter when you're gone? Have you established a special needs trust? What about guardianship decisions?" Robert and Susan exchanged glances across the conference table, overwhelmed by scenarios they'd pushed to the back of their minds. Planning for their typical children's futures felt straightforward—college, career, independence. But planning for their daughter with intellectual disabilities meant navigating unknowns that kept them awake at night.

Future planning for special needs families involves complexities most parents never face: legal guardianship, financial trusts, residential care options, and support systems that must outlast parental involvement. The weight of making decisions for an uncertain future can feel paralyzing, especially when the stakes feel so high.

Yet Jeremiah 29:11 reminds us that God has plans—not just for us, but for our children. His perspective spans generations, seeing what we cannot. This doesn't eliminate our responsibility to prepare wisely, but it anchors our planning in trust rather than fear.

The goal isn't perfect planning but faithful stewardship, knowing that ultimately our children's futures rest in hands far more capable than our own.

Discussion Qs

1. What aspects of future planning for your child create the most anxiety?
2. How do you balance preparing for the future while staying present in today?
3. What hopes do you hold for your child's future, even amidst uncertainties?
4. How has your perspective on the future changed since beginning this special needs journey?
5. What helps you trust God with your child's future when you can't control all the variables?

Dads

1. How do you handle the weight of responsibility for your child's long-term security and care?
2. What future planning steps feel most urgent to you, and which feel overwhelming?
3. How do you balance planning for worst-case scenarios with maintaining hope for your child's potential?

Moms

1. How do you process fears about your child's future independence and happiness?
2. What helps you when future planning discussions trigger grief about lost expectations?
3. How do you handle anxiety about who will advocate for your child when you're no longer able?

Couples

1. How do you navigate different timelines or priorities when it comes to future planning?
2. What conversations do you need to have with extended family about your child's future needs?
3. How do you make complex planning decisions together when emotions run high?

Application: Take one concrete step toward future planning this month, whether legal, financial, or relational.