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Submitting plans with open hands

G. Allen

Office of Communications & Marketing

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Lead photo: Outfielder G. Allen, a senior philosophy major from Little Rock, Ark., was named Ouachita's 2022-23 Male Scholar Athlete of the Year. He led the Tigers in batting average, runs scored, hits, triples, home runs, slugging percentage and stolen bases. Photo by Matthew Branch

For immediate release

Submitting plans with open hands

By G. Allen

January 25, 2024

For more information, contact Ouachita's Office of Communications & Marketing at comm-mark@obu.edu or (870) 245-5206.

The following is a transcript of a message shared by G. Allen during Chapel on Nov. 28, 2023. G. is a senior philosophy major from Little Rock, Ark.

There's a truth God has taught me throughout college and I'm sure will continue to teach me as I get older. Two passages of wisdom the Lord has used in service of continually reminding me of this lesson are Proverbs 16:9 – "The heart of a man plans his way but the Lord establishes his steps." – and James 4:14-15, "Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit'– yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.'"

Can you think of a time when your plans didn't work out the way you expected? It could be that you were planning to go into a field or major but now you're on a completely different track. Or maybe the very fact that you're in college or here at Ouachita was not in your original plans.

Whatever the plans may be – small, great or something in between – things hardly ever turn out exactly how we planned. In light of this, I think we have three options.

1. We can try to take things into our own hands and stress, worry and fret over making sure our way gets accomplished.
2. We can simply be jaded and apathetic and not make any plans whatsoever.
3. Or what the passages I've read teach and what the Lord has taught me through my life is the option of making plans but humbly submitting them to Him, with the recognition that we aren't in control, yet He is.



G. Allen

Looking back on the events that led me to Ouachita, I've come to realize they really are an object lesson of all these options. Like most college athletes, growing up I had the dream of playing high level D1 and then professional sports. As I successfully progressed athletically throughout middle school, junior high and high school, that plan began to consume me. I invested countless hours and energy in the gym, at practice and in tournaments across the country.

When I finally reached step one of my plan by receiving an athletic scholarship to Texas Christian University, one of the premier baseball programs in the country, I thought I would feel content. But even with the joy and excitement that came with receiving a scholarship and showing up to campus, the next thing to worry and plan about became figuring out how I was to deal with all the things that come with playing at that level. The stress of an intense coach and the anxiety of failure began to cripple me.

I remember becoming jaded and frustrated with myself, the situation and God as my plans weren't all I expected them to be. I'd worked my whole life and centered my future around this dream; I thought from all the sports stories I'd seen on TV, I'd deserved to have it work out the way I wanted.

But by God's grace, during that time he began to work on my heart and gave me eyes to see my sinful approach. During the pain and disappointment of my freshman year, I began to submit my hopes, dreams and plans to him. This process produced peaceful feelings and thoughts about leaving behind my dreams of baseball. In that season, I knew I had to step away from my plans and humbly trust that God would lead me. So I transferred from TCU to Ouachita, recognizing the Lord ultimately determines my steps.

And I was OK with that.

That decision has been a blessing beyond measure. I'm incredibly thankful for my time here at Ouachita. Even though God has gracefully reinvigorated and blessed my baseball career, it can't compare to the personal, relational and spiritual growth I have undergone here at Ouachita.

My point is not that giving up control of your life to God will always yield pleasant results. Some of the hardest times of my life so far have been in trusting him. Christ's own life was one to the cross where he paid the price for our sins. And he constantly made it a point to say suffering and hardship were inevitably a part of discipleship. But taking this third option, though not always easy or "good" in the eyes of the world, will always lead to a deeper fear and relationship with the Lord.

If you belong to him, that's something we as believers should all be striving for. I challenge all of us to humbly submit our plans before the Lord with open hands – as he is God, and we are not.