

## God's Plan - US

Two or three ideas for this week's lesson were meandering around in my head until yesterday. That's when our son Jeff called to let us know Neal was dying. Now. Deb drove up to the hospital in St Joseph, but Neal had passed before she arrived. Neal's brother, sister and Jeff were there when he passed. Neal had been diagnosed with terminal cancer months ago, but his death came far sooner than the doctors expected.

So who was Neal? A third or fourth generation farmer in southwest Michigan with lots of relatives doing the same, but Neal never married or had children. He was a member and leader of the Lutheran church in Baroda and active on the county fair board. When Jeff met Neal, our son was a young man struggling to figure out this life. Neal was a former county commissioner and state representative who was now back on the farm and wondering about legacy. Two men unsure where life was headed. I don't think they met by accident. I think God had plans for both.

Neal offered Jeff work at the farm. Over time that awakened in Jeff a passion for the land. I remember the first time he drove us around Berrien County to show us Neal's fields. And Neal loved to drive us around the area, talking about the history, people and places. Eventually he returned to politics as a county commissioner and he began to entrust Jeff with decisions about the farm. As Jeff's role expanded, I think Neal found purpose in pouring his knowledge and skills into him. He embraced the role of mentor. He opened a door to a future that Jeff is now chasing after with purpose and yes (for now) with mourning.

I'm sharing this story to ask just two questions this morning.

1. Who are the mentors in your life? Some times I act like I've got this all figured out and forget that God has placed people in my life to help guide and direct me. To help me grow in His good purpose.
2. Have you been called to mentor someone? I was asked by a friend years ago to be a mentor. At the time I was more puffed up that he would ask, than serious about his request. So yes I failed miserably. I'm learning that sometimes the ask is short term. Sometimes it may be longer. Sometimes neither person understands the roles that God is leading them into.

I am far from perfect in my understanding of God's Word. But I do know that God often builds through community. Moses had his father in law. David had Jonathan. Jesus sent his disciples out in pairs. God's plan is often Us. Are you in?