

## ***Is God Within Your Plans?***

We make plans in our lives many times. Do you ever stop and think about God being a part of your plan-making? The faithful child of God would and should.

If you were to have to make a move to another city and state, what would be your priorities in making such a huge step? How would your plans affect you and your family? Would you seek out to find the Lord's body working in this new location and be a part of the work to serve and worship God? Would God be in the forefront of the decisions you determine to do in carrying out these changes? Would God be first in your life? (Matthew 6:33) Would you seek to please God with your choices? (2 Corinthians 5:9)

James wrote: "Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; whereas you do not know what *will happen* tomorrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you *ought* to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that." But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil." (James 4:13-16).

When we make plans, we should first seek to please God in what we are planning to do. Are the plans we make first authorized by the Lord? (Colossians 3:17) Secondly, we should also have the attitude that "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that" as James teaches us.

Being with God forever and having eternal life should be our aim everyday. (Colossians 3:1-2). The decisions we set on accomplishing in this life should always be toward pleasing God. Are your plans according to God's will? Is He included within them?

**- by Bob Tidwell**

---

## ***Voice Commands***

Technology has certainly come a long way over the years. Some experts believe that computer keyboards will become obsolete in the near future as more and more functions become voice-activated. Instead of typing a letter, we will just speak the words that will be printed off or sent as an e-mail. Some companies have already developed software that does not require much traditional typing. It is thought that devices will so permeate daily life that instead of pressing buttons and turning dials, we will just speak instructions to everything from the television to the toaster. When we speak it will be done.

A device that is designed to accept a voice command only does so because it is programmed that way. It is interesting to consider that God could have made us this way. Instead, however, He gave us the choice of whether or not we will listen and obey. He gave us a mind to think and a will that is able to choose.

James urged us to obey God every time He speaks to us through His Word. He wrote: "Be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (Jas. 1:22). Self-deception comes when we listen to God's Word without doing what it says. We quickly forget what the Lord shows us about ourselves and wander along our way unchanged. It is easy for us to forget that our own way leads to death (Prov. 14:12; 16:25) but God's way is higher and better than our own (Isa. 55:8,9).

It is natural to want God to hear and answer us, but the greater issue is whether we listen and respond to Him. Does God have our attention today? Are we choosing to listen to His voice or are we too caught up in our own?

**- by Shane Williams**

---

## ***The Bible Classes and You***

A golden opportunity occurs here twice a week. And those who will not hear its knock are destined to be weak. The Book of God is opened wide and placed before our eyes; that we might place it in our hearts and by it be made wise. So come and have a part with us, and please do not be late. Have your lesson in your hand and then participate. The passive student cannot learn if no effort is made to have the lesson in one's mind with groundwork firmly laid. So read the Scriptures, fill the blanks, and give the Lord a chance to teach you truth more thoroughly than one gains by just a glance.

- by Tim Nichols

---

## **“Everything Happens for a Reason”**

We often hear people use the expression: “Everything happens for a reason.” This saying is the modern, New Age version of the old religious saying: “It’s God’s will.” Is this true? Is there a reason for everything? Does God’s will regulate all things?

First, some things happen because the Lord has placed certain ‘natural’ laws in place that cannot be violated without predictable results. For example: a man broke his leg. Why? What was the reason? He stepped off of a ladder and the ‘law of gravity’ prevailed. In this sense, we can understand and acknowledge that this ‘happened for a reason,’ though we doubt that this is what the New Age crowd means when they use that expression.

But, we must essentially protest the claim that God has totally predestined our lives, or that His ‘will’ controls every aspect of our existence. The Scriptures make it clear that God gives man choice. Joshua’s famous statement makes this abundantly clear: *“Choose you this day whom ye will serve”* (Joshua 24:15). We know that the invitation for salvation is open to all, but each one must decide: *“The Spirit and the bride say, Come . . . and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely”* (Revelation 22:17). So, obviously, God has not predestined everything, else these statements about our freedom to choose would be senseless.

Further, we know that some things do, in fact, happen as a consequence of the choices God allows us to make. Good choices typically bring good outcomes, and bad choices produce bad ones. Many are suffering the ill effects of things they chose to do or not do, while others are enjoying the benefits of wise selections. Moses advised the Israelites: *“I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live”* (Deuteronomy 30:19). To put it simply, choices have consequences. And while this is a definite rule of God, the specifics are determined by us and our free will, not His.

Finally, we must note that there is not always a clear, one-to-one corollary to be seen in every event in our lives. Sometimes bad things happen to good people, and vice versa. Why? Frequently we can ‘see’ it, but often we can not answer, other than to lay it to the reality of living in this present world with its physical suffering and death. We may not be able to explain them, but we can use even the ‘bad things’ to provoke us to do what is right and just – as we seek for a world where such will never happen again (2 Peter 3:13).

- by Greg Gwin