



## “What Is God’s Plan for Your Life?”

**Y**ou may have been in a discussion with someone about dilemmas they face or decisions they must make when they concluded with a comment that went something like this: “Well, I guess we’ll just have to wait to see what God’s will is.”

Recently, a little four-year-old boy, who was a cousin of a friend of ours, opened the front door of his house and walked into the front yard only to be gunned down by a drive-by shooter. Should it make a difference (and it doesn’t), the little boy was baptized and regularly attended a brick-and-mortar church. *What was God’s plan for his life?*

I have several friends and family members who have died because of terminal diseases. I have several friends and family members who have endured horrific pain because of a crime, some because of automobile accidents, and others because of injuries inflicted on the field of battle as they served their country. *What exactly was God’s plan for their life?*

My own wife has endured two operations, chemotherapy and radiation for cancer. We are so thankful that the cancer, at this point in time as I write these words, is no longer evident in her body. She has regular tests and scans—living in a constant state of flux and unrest, wondering when and if the next test and scan and blood work will reveal that the cancer is back, or that it has metastasized.

Over the many years she has fought cancer, we have had people assure us that God has a plan for her life, and that she never would have battled cancer unless God wanted to teach her something. *Really? Cancer is part of God’s plan for our life? Cancer is a penalty God gives us because we need to learn*

*something? Seriously? Then why don’t we all have cancer?*

A member of my family who is just a little younger than I am was a teenager when she went on a date, only to be so severely raped and badly beaten that, though she survived, she has never been able to function in society with a family and in a profession according to her dreams as an adolescent.

Every day of her life, as she walks with a pronounced limp, as she looks in the mirror at her permanently scarred and disfigured face because of that brutal beating, she is reminded of a few moments in time that changed her life forever. *Was the rape and sadistic beating she endured a part of God’s plan for her life?*

According to one nationally known television preacher, “God will accelerate his plan for your life as you put your trust in him. God is giving you victory sooner than you think.” It is incredibly reassuring and comforting to think that God has physical success mapped out for you—it’s exciting to think God will bring you “victory.” What “victory” specifically means is left unsaid, but of course when most people hear about God giving them “victory,” they imagine a result that will make them happy—perhaps even so gratifying it will lift them out of their chair yelling and screaming. “Victory” is a word that conjures up physically satisfying results.

There is no doubt that our heavenly Father loves us, cares for us and has compassion on us. There is also no doubt that God does not choose to control details of your life or of mine. God doesn’t have a blow-by-blow road map of your life—with predetermined turns and destinations and rest stops highlighted. God loves all of

us—but he does not predestine nor does he force anyone to accept his love, against their will.

Some religious authorities talk about how God “called” them to be a minister, priest or missionary. How, exactly, does a person determine that God is calling them to do a particular and specific thing with their life? When they feel he is “calling” them to a particular course of action do they also believe that if they do not respond favorably to his call they will be in a world of hurt?

Have you ever noticed that most people who talk about how God “called them” to make a particular decision never mention that he called them to flip burgers in a McDonalds in Miami, Florida—or to be a maid in a motel in Missoula, Montana? When I hear people emphatically announce that God “called them,” it always seems that it was for a spiritually “important” or highly esteemed mission. Does God only “call” a few people for important jobs but everyone else gets to make their own decision?

Jesus gives us two commands—to love God with all our heart, mind and soul and to love our neighbors as ourselves. Of course, those commands are not as exciting as reading a spiritual fortune cookie or dancing to the tune piped by a religious windbag who promises us “victory” in every aspect of our lives. God’s will? The plain truth is that he desires that we know of his love, and that we receive and embrace that love, by his grace. That’s his will. □

—Greg Albrecht

*Join us for the complete message “What is God’s Plan For Your Life?” at the audio teaching ministry of Christianity Without the Religion, the week of July 23, 2017.*