



### *More than a Watchmaker*

**Q** Does God control every detail of our lives, with a blow-by-blow roadmap or architectural blueprint? I do believe God cares about every part of my life and has a plan for my life. Psalm 139 in particular seems to back up my belief. Would you please explain this further?

**A** wide range of viewpoints are proclaimed across Christendom among authors, pastors, ministries and denominations. One extreme says that God is completely uninvolved and unconcerned with his creation. From this perspective, God is perceived as a divine watchmaker who created the universe like a watch, with all its constituent parts. Then, according to this belief, God wound up the watch (today, he would insert the battery) and walked away.

I absolutely oppose such a view, for God himself, in the person of Jesus Christ, became incarnate—"became flesh"—one of us! Further, I believe the risen Lord is still with us, living in us. He never abandon us nor will he ever do so. God is not detached, disinterested, immune or too busy to care. In Christ, God is here, with us, participating in our lives.

On the other extreme is a perception, opposite to the watchmaker God, seeing God as the agent behind every event. This view of God perceives him ordaining every human choice and governing evil itself. In this model, everything we do and everything that happens to us is God's "will."

Not only is this view illogical and completely out of line with life experiences, it is a form of superstition.

An old joke concerns a man who believed God predestined everything in his life. One day the man fell down a flight of stairs, but thankfully, only suffered a few injuries. He dusted himself off, got up and said, "Boy, am I glad that's over!"

The philosophical conclusion that God predestines every detail of our lives is opposed to the fundamental nature of God, who is love. This position imagines God willfully causing hurt, pain and suffering by his "will." So, we have little children being molested, people being raped and a world full of mayhem—by God's will? Wrong! Really wrong, according to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

God, our heavenly Father, does not make all our decisions for us. The gospel of Jesus Christ, as proclaimed throughout the New Testament, says God's "will" risks giving us the freedom to make our own choices in life. For that matter, his "will" even allows the choices of others to impact and affect us. So, how does God actively care for us in a world of choices?

God's love, care and concern is woven into every aspect of our lives like a tapestry. God knows every sparrow that falls (and yet they fall).

**God's love, care and concern is woven into every aspect of our lives like a tapestry.**

He knows every hair on our head (though they fall too!).

As our living heavenly Father, he does not

control or determine every detail of our lives the way an earthly parent might do for an infant (and even then, human parents cannot prevent every disease or accident).

Rather, God's will is for us to grow in Christ, to mature and make our own decisions. His will is that we are more than robots. God's will is for us to know and embrace his love, which passes all understanding—and to participate in his care for the world as agents of his love. His will is that we would know and experience the truth he, like the father in the parable of the prodigal son, loves us in spite of wrong decisions we make.

It might be comfortable to think that God controls all aspects of our lives, in some cases absolving us of responsibility for our actions, but the gospel of Jesus Christ, the nature of God and human experience and history say otherwise. □