**Things Rarely Go According to Plan**

Proverbs 16:9

I can recall hearing this sermon title preached at a very early age. While I do not remember the scripture text on which it was based or most of what was conveyed from the message at the time of the proclamation, the profound title left an indelible mark in my young memory, which over time shaped and influenced how I experienced what could be dubbed an interruption or intrusion to my well-thought-out plan.

I have rehearsed this thought-altering line on numerous occasions when it appears what I thought was a good plan required a shift or needed to be aborted altogether. This consistent reminder perpetually nudges me back to the foundational reality that as His follower, God is in control of the steps and stops for my life. In Proverbs 16:9, King Solomon shares that “A man’s heart plans his way, But the Lord directs his steps.” (NKJV) This bedrock truth is further reiterated in James 4:13-15 where Bro. James cautions the believers about boasting about tomorrow. So, does this mean that it is not necessary to make plans? In the words of Apostle Paul, God forbid! In fact, Proverbs 16:3 encourages us to “Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans. (KJV) Therefore, it can be opined that we exercise proper stewardship when we endeavor to prepare and plan our time. However, I would further note that we must be careful not to lock ourselves into the plan but rather always leave room for the Lord to direct us in a different direction or, as scripture exhorts, commit “our” plans to the Lord and request Him to establish His plan. One example we can glean from is the Apostle Paul; when he and his missionary companions traveled through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, the Holy Spirit kept them from preaching the word in the province in Asia. Likewise, when they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to preach there either. Then, when they went down to Troas, the Apostle had a vision at night of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him to come over to Macedonia to help them. After Paul had seen the vision, he prepared to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called him and his companions to preach the gospel there. (See Acts 16:6-10) Paul’s plan was not wrong; it was just not what God had planned for him to fulfill at that time. Praise God that the Apostle was sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s prompting and leading, thereby avoiding possible frustration, delay, or undue hardship because he chose to follow the Master’s plan rather than his proposed plan.

Take heart, Beloved. The next time you experience things not going according to plan, stop, pray, and listen to see if God has another plan in mind for you.

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