

Trusting God When His Plans Are Confusing

“For I know the plans that I have for you” (Jer. 29:11a). How many times have I heard God speak that verse to me? How many times have I doubted it? Maybe it’s because His plans aren’t always my plans, or His ways of accomplishing those plans aren’t my ways of accomplishing those plans.

We know that God loves us, but do we sometimes wonder if He “loves” us or is “loving toward us” because of the things that we hope He will do and He doesn’t or the things that He allows to happen? You may have heard the story about the tapestry, but recently God made it come to life for me in a way only He can do. I was thinking about some events that had happened to me that had made a negative impact on my life. I felt like I was looking at the underside of a tapestry. I was seeing the knots that were there because of hard times, loose and broken threads representing so many unfinished areas of my life and the crazy and unexplained directions the threads had taken. I was seeing colors that I would never had chosen. It was not the tapestry that I would have designed for my life.

And God gave me His perspective. He showed me that even though I didn’t choose some of those things, He did or didn’t as the case may be because He knew where He wanted me to be at this stage of life. For the first time in my life, I was able to thank Him for those things. He knows us better than we know ourselves and loves us with perfect love. He sees what we don’t see, and He sees a beautiful tapestry that is being formed for His glory and His purposes.

Two stories from Genesis come to mind when I think of God’s plans versus man’s plans. The first story is when Abram was told that he would have a son from his own body that would be his heir. Perhaps Abram was having a hard time wrapping his

head around this because he had been given no children. He was looking at his situation and putting God in that box. God took him “outside,” and I’m sure it took Abram outside his box when God said, “Look up toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” And He said to him, “So will your descendants be.” It was God’s dream for Abraham.

The second story is of Joseph, who had been sold into slavery by his brothers. There were many years in prison and trials where Joseph faithfully served God. He was promoted in Pharaoh’s kingdom because of his character. A famine came, and his brothers went to Egypt seeking food. When Joseph revealed who he was to his brothers, he said, “I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. Now do not be upset or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. God sent me ahead of you to preserve you as a remnant on the earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of his entire household and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt” (Gen. 45:4b-8).

Just as Joseph, some of those negative experiences in my life were used for His plans and purposes. God is a Redeemer. He wants to rewrite our story. That happens when we say, “Let my story be Your story.” His story is always better—sometimes more painful, but always better. This brings a rest because our heavenly Father is the one with the pencil. Oh, to have a heart like Joseph where I let God take the pencil and write my story is my desire.

And just as Abram, God has dreams for us that may be outside our box (abilities, limitations and so on). They may take years to fulfill as Abram’s did, but if we follow Him, He will be faithful to fulfill them. Just as God’s dream for Abram brought the blessing of Jesus, so God’s dreams for us can

bless many. He wants to take us out of our boxes as we yield to Him and write a story that maybe we never imagined. It makes those “plans” we had open up to a whole new horizon.
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