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Plans

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Plans

We make plans, sometimes in great detail, as when we choose to travel, and arrange for transportation, a place and length of time to stay, and – unless we have in mind a completely open vacation – we usually decide upon a schedule of events. With careful planning, and the exercise of skills built up over years of experience, we often carry out our plans to completion.

Though we take into account some of the variables that can likely occur when we plan a trip - weather, traffic, and the availability of friends or associates – we can only make plans, we cannot always fulfill them. Many of us have had an airline flight cancelled, causing us to miss a trip entirely, or we have been prevented by circumstances beyond our control from completing some plan or other that we had carefully fashioned.

For some, not being able to accomplish a plan is a cause for frustration, or at least disappointment. God has plans, some of them quite vast in scope, but these are not subject to failure. We might imagine that our freedom would put a huge obstacle to the fulfillment of any plans that God might have for us, but God's plans are not of the sort that can be frustrated. All of God's plans are for our benefit, but they are not prescriptive of our will.

In our love for others, we do not force them to choose as we think is best for them. On the other hand we do establish some parameters that definitely affect others, as when parents say "no" to a request from children, or a teacher decides to give a quiz instead of a lecture. God has given us great freedom, but we exercise our freedom to choose within a world that has some very strict constraints of time, space, and material. We do not have to obey God, just as one person can refuse to do the will of another, but we cannot alter the plan God has for the universe as a whole or for us in particular. Our freedom is a major part of God's plan of love for us.

The saying, "Tell God your plans to make him laugh," is about our human limitations, rather than a description of God's attitude towards us. God does not laugh at our plans, but inspires us and enables us to exercise the full extent of our humanity. God's plans for us are not, as we might fear, opposed to us. They might indeed differ from some of the plans we can make, but they are never in opposition to us. Our plans cannot take into account the unknowable. God's plans can;

God's plans for us are built around the mystery of our freedom, but not as obstacles to our freedom.

God's plans are that we might accomplish the purpose of our existence. Can we, by strength of our will, and using every quality and capability we have, assure ourselves of happiness and of living a life of value to ourselves and others? We cannot. We do not, as individuals, have everything it takes. We are contingent, inter-dependant beings. We did become who we are at this moment purely on our own. We have received much from many different persons, and have also been influenced by them.

Who knows better our purpose and our capabilities than the One who chose us to be, and chooses us to exist right now? Rather than diminish our freedom, God's non-coercive plans offer us a means of achieving fully the purpose of our existence.

God cannot (being all-good) have in mind for us anything that would contravene the purpose for which he created us, which is basically to love. Do we have a better option, something that we would rather do with our lives? God's plans are that each of us in our own unique way will choose to respond to the love with which we are created. Some of us will do so; some might not, to our gain or to our loss. But God's plans do not change, nor does God's love for us diminish even if we decide to follow our own plans.

We make our very best plans when we seek to discover God's plans for us in the deepest desires of our spirits.