

Taking the Long Way Around... *God's Plan When Things Don't Seem to Make Sense*

*"For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways,
declares the Lord.*

*As the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts."*

—Isaiah 55:8-9

You don't have to be a Christian long to see and experience the truth of these verses. Even when we wrestle the Lord for control, if we end up humbly letting go and allow Him to teach us, we learn that His ways really are best. We simply cannot trust and live by what we see and feel. If we do the results will be, in the least, a path other than the one God chooses for us, but more likely it will also mean disaster and heartache.

Think of a small child with an appetite for sweets. The goodies taste so good, how can it be wrong to eat a chocolate chip cookie instead of dinner? In the child's eyes, his parent presents a roadblock as dinner is served. We are not so different as we confront the all-knowing, Living God with our paltry wants and desires. "We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum instead of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased." (C.S. Lewis, "The Weight of Glory"; New York: The Macmillan Co., 1949)

It's true, God's ways often don't make sense to our human perspectives. He does not act according to our plans or common sense because He sees our lives from beginning to eternity. And yet, it can be difficult not to wonder why He wouldn't bring quick healing to a loved one. And why doesn't He immediately come in and straighten out the messes we find ourselves in? Why does it seem God doesn't always take the road that seems most efficient to us?

Such questions are nothing new to God's people. Remember the Israelites as they left Egypt? "...God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine Country, though that was shorter. For God said, 'If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt.' So God led the people around by the desert road toward the Red Sea."

Now, if you were one of the Israelites, you might even understand the whole avoidance of Philistine Country. On the other hand, my guess is that you'd begin to question God's thinking a bit as you heard the crashing waves of the Red Sea ahead. Be honest. Haven't you ever found yourself asking, "Okay God, just what are you thinking?"

As usual God *was* thinking and His plan *always* is "higher" than our plan. In fact, His plan was designed for the Israelites' ultimate good, not to mention a miraculous get-away route in the end—just to be sure all who might be watching knew it was the Lord God of Israel setting the course. Is it possible the Lord wants to take your "impossible" situation and do something that will make it completely obvious to all that He can do the "impossible"?

So, what is it in your life that appears a bit like a roadblock? Is there someone, some circumstance, or some struggle that makes you scratch your head, wondering what God is up to? That's nothing new. Our God seems to work best when things don't appear to make sense. All He asks is that we take His route, one step at a time. It may not be the route we would have chosen. It may even involve some difficult terrain along the way, but when we reach our "Red Sea" we can be sure of one thing: He will be there to open the way and get us to the other side. Take the "risk" with God and you'll find that in the end it's the least risky choice around!

*"...No eye has seen, no ear has heard,
no mind has conceived what God has prepared
for those who love Him—but God has revealed it to us by His Spirit."*

—1 Cor. 2:9-10

Are you facing a roadblock in life? Share your struggle with a few others and ask them to pray with you over the coming weeks. It's amazing what happens when you share your burden with other believers and bring it to the Lord together!