



CWRm

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“God’s Plan for Your Life?”

Question: Recently, my younger brother’s divorce was finalized. The years leading up to this have been painful for him, like a terminal illness. He did everything he could to keep the marriage going, including counseling (his wife would not go with him), advice from friends and the ministry at his church.

He’s gone through anger, bitterness and depression, and now, unfulfilling dates as well.

Whenever he came to me with these things I tried to point him to Jesus. He’d respond, “He’s not here with me” or “He’s not lying next to me in bed.”

This last Sunday, I decided to ask one of the ministers at our church what he thought about the

situation and what more I might say or do to help my brother.

After a long talk, the pastor said he’d pray for my brother and that I should keep him updated.

Today, he sent me a link to a message by John Piper, entitled, “This illness is for the glory of God.”

The bottom line here is not my brother, although, if you have thoughts that might help, I won’t turn it down. I know he needs a connection with Jesus beyond a passing relationship with church attendance.

The message I listened to said,

“Do whatever it takes to get another person to be passionate about God.” *How do you get someone else to be passionate about God or anything else?*

When I listen to your messages and read books like *A More Christlike God*, I feel as though it’s simple. Just love others as myself (not that loving others OR myself is easy), help where and whenever I can, and God will do the rest.

When I listen to or read other people who are supposed to be in the know, I feel like there’s no way I’ll ever be with Christ. The only thing that keeps me going is verses like John 3:15—“everyone who believes may

dilemma and a conundrum for all of us. What is God doing, or not, and why is he doing it, or not?

These thoughts come to mind:

1) I know the thinking that leads to the advice and preaching shared in the message you referred to. To put it plainly, I absolutely reject the thinking and theology of John Piper, for so many reasons that we discuss in our resources. But then again, he and his followers would absolutely reject mine, so there you go!

But you did ask—so my response is this: that particular message is filled with the classic religious thinking that says

there is a divine reason for everything that happens, and that God is often trying to teach us something.

The thinking is bound up in the

cause-and-effect logic that things happen because of something else—like the physical law that every action causes a reaction.

However, the Bible is clear—Jesus is clear—the gospel is clear:

a) God’s ways are not always easy for us to discern.

b) God is not always trying to “teach us a lesson.”

In fact, many of the trials in our lives are not God’s punishment or correction at all. Many things that happen to us occur by time and chance, caused either by natural events and accidents or by the actions of other human beings.

The grace of God teaches us to surrender to God, to trust him, and to yield our lives to him, knowing we won’t always understand.

have eternal life in him.”

This is a selfish letter, yet something that plagues me always. I can’t live in a vacuum; I need to deal with this feeling of never being or doing enough. At the same time, I believe that ONLY Jesus makes us enough.

So, I hope that I’m not wasting your time, but thank you for your time, as always. You and CWR remain in my prayers.

Answer: Hello, dear friend. You are *not* wasting my time! I am privileged to serve you, in the name of Jesus, as best I can. The question you ponder is a

Some believe that up to eighty percent of all suffering in this world is caused by the hands of other humans (not by actions God takes to punish people).

We, as followers of Jesus, are not immune to the world around us. Accidents happen. Diseases spread. Other human beings are violent and commit crimes against us. Floods, hurricanes and earthquakes befall one and all.

Jesus explained this when he spoke of the tower of Siloam that fell (Luke 13:4). For more, I suggest you re-read my brief article in the July 2017 issue of *Plain Truth* magazine, "What is God's Plan For Your Life?"

2) You mention "God will do the rest." Indeed, that's a central point of trust, for us. There is so much in this world that we cannot do, and we will torment ourselves and stress our lives immeasurably thinking we can, when those things are beyond us.

We surrender all to God. We do not know—and God did not pretend to tell us all there is to know—as to why he does or does not do, or why he does not intervene in so many situations.

The human desire to control our own lives and to provide for our security is so strong that an entire industry stands at the ready to provide false and misleading answers. Sadly, some of that industry exists within the world of religion, where religious professionals give answers in the name of God that are far beyond their paygrade. But people keep listening and coming back for assurances, because their hunger to know is so great.

The grace of God teaches us to surrender to God, to trust him, and to yield our lives to him—knowing we won't always understand.

3) Your letter to me is not selfish—it is human. We all have the same questions you ponder. We all feel that if we would just do more, then God will surely do what we want him to. But no—that is a fool's errand. God already loves us as much as he ever will.

We are not in a position to vainly try somehow, some way, to please and appease him.

Jesus asks us to trust him.

Jesus invites us to believe him.

Jesus invites us to embrace the grace of God.

Some say, "Oh, that's too easy—that's just an excuse."

I reply, "Oh no, it is the most difficult thing in the world to trust, believe, surrender, yield and embrace the grace of God. I'll tell you what is easy: to follow the dictates of religion that suggest if we just do more, run faster, give more, pray harder—

then maybe, some day, if we catch God on a good day, he will give us what we want."

The gospel of Jesus Christ is not about what we want or what we think God ought to be doing. Jesus does not sentence us to a religious prison, a chain gang or a salt mine, where we endlessly toil away, watched over by religious overseers, hoping one day that God will give us what we want.

That is legalistic and oppressive religion, not the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is what Paul means in passages like Galatians 3:21-25 (and its larger context) and Galatians 5:1-6, as well as a myriad of other passages, in Romans, in Colossians and in the book of Hebrews.

Jesus alone does for us what we can never do for ourselves. Hold on to that!

4) You are correct—Jesus alone does for us what we can never do for ourselves. Hold on to that! Trust Jesus, put your faith in him,

and not in human authorities. Believe and embrace the grace of God—you will not always be given easy and convenient (as humans would judge them) answers, for that is not part of the gospel. But you will be given the peace of God which passes all understanding.

I hope this helps.

In friendship and in Christ,
Greg Albrecht

Response. Thank you so very much for your letter. I greatly appreciate it and the love that flows through it. I will re-read "What Is God's Plan for Your Life."

Thank you so much for your love and work.

While your messages are clear and pure, it's like putting on white clothing, then going out in the yard to work. Before long, it's not white any longer. Then, we have to go wash out the clothing again. That is exactly how it is with the great message that comes through *CWR*—I need to keep going back to it.

Thank you again. □

"God is ready to assume full responsibility for the life wholly yielded to him." —Andrew Murray

"The man or woman who is wholly surrendered to Christ can't make a wrong choice—any choice will be the right one." —A.W. Tozer