

Plans and Setbacks



Today I was planning to go to Colombia. I would leave from Amsterdam on Delta Airlines at 3 o' clock this afternoon. But due to health issues my wife and I decided 2 days ago to call off the three week trip. I am sitting here with mixed feelings. In my mind I know that our decision not to go is the right decision, and yet I was ready to go. Clearly there is no direct link between our thoughts and our feelings. Feelings change, with ups and downs, we experience moments of peace and concern, joy and frustration. Maybe that is why it is so important that our walk with Jesus is based on knowledge of His revelation and faith in His promises - and not on our emotions. Feelings and experiences can be beautiful, but they should not lead. Sometimes our feelings deceive us. Sometimes we are called to do something that goes against our feelings. Many Biblical examples illustrate this very well!

If it is the Lord's will

Unexpected changes in our circumstances have practical consequences. During these last two days I have been contacting those affected by our cancellation to explain

and offer my apologies. When we make plans we usually expect to follow them through. It is not wrong to make plans. In fact, it is good and necessary to make plans - but always with a pencil and never with a pen! In Colombia, there is a cultural habit of saying 'Si Dios quiere' - If God so wills - after we explain a plan or some future event. I think even Colombian atheists automatically say this! The European Christian generation that lived before us also often used this expression. In writing, a shorter version was commonly used: 'DV', short for the Latin 'Deo Volente' - If God so wills. The motivation to say this comes from James 4:15, "Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that".

The Lord determines our steps

Do you have some study plans for after the summer? Have you planned your holiday? Are you thinking about another baby? ... a new relationship? ... another job? What place do you give the Lord Jesus and the needs of His church and God's kingdom in your decision process? Are you open to His possible intervention?



Can you see the Lord's hand also in those uncomfortable setbacks or cancellations? Wise Solomon wrote: "In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps" Prov. 16:9. After all, our God is in control. And that is really good to remember. It helps to calm my current feelings of frustration.

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