

Are We There Yet?

Have you ever been annoyed with the kid in the backseat yelling, “Are we there yet?” We forget that we were once that kid. We are built to be concerned about our destiny. People spend billions each year to get insight to their future, from church (needing a prophetic word), to astrology, tarot cards, and psychics. What makes us obsessed with destiny?

Four character traits we all possess create a drive to determine our destiny. We are made to live with purpose; we are rational; we are imaginative, and we have the power of choice. Humanity is concerned with destiny on a personal and cosmic level. To live with purpose is to live believing your life has meaning. To live rationally is to live grounded within a reality that makes sense –logically and sensibly. To be imaginative means that you can investigate future that does not yet exist. That which is not yet future, can become a future because humans have the power of choice.

Your Choice, then there’s God’s Choice

Your destiny is ultimately linked to your choices. The quality of your choices is dependent on your knowledge and emotional health. Partial knowledge, even when your motives are positive, can lead to negative outcomes. Before making a major decision, it is very important to do your research. Also evaluate your emotional health or state at the moment you are contemplating making a major decision. Try to avoid making major decisions during times of grief and even times of euphoria.

In the Hebrew and Christian Bibles, God demonstrates that He does not force a person’s will. One can find such an example in the story of the prophet Balaam (Numbers 22-25). When a foreign king, Balak, contracted with Balaam to curse Israel, God told Balaam not to. Balaam, desiring the bounty Balak was offering, tried everything he could. However when he tried to curse Israel only blessings came out of his mouth. While Balaam could not audibly curse Israel, his will was not changed, so he cursed them in his heart.

Free Will

Another story that most church-going kids know, is the story of Jonah. God told him to go and preach to the people of Nineveh. Jonah refused and decided to go in the opposite direction. God, however, arranged a three night stay in the Big Fish Motel, which gave Jonah time to reflect over his decision. Jonah changed his mind and at the end of the three days, he decided going to Nineveh wasn’t so bad after all.

If God, who gave us free will, does not force our will, what is His role in our lives? First, we should be clear why we have free will. God desires to have a loving relationship with humanity based on trust freely given. Love can only be given freely if we have a free will. While God can be coercive in matters of universal concern, He will not coerce individuals to love Him. God expresses his love and care in so many ways. Some of those ways are inscrutable, the things that cause grief and sadness. God yearns to guide us to paths that lead us into closer relation with Him and fellow humans. He died to make a way for our ultimate destiny –a life eternal where things that cause us hurt, pain, and grief will no longer exist. As our relationship with God deepens and matures, so too does our trust and ability to discern God’s will for our lives.

Joseph’s Dynamic Destiny

The Bible story of Joseph (Genesis 37–50), the son that Jacob had with

Rachael, can be a helpful parable to illustrate the dynamic relationship between God's will and our will. Joseph was the eleventh and favorite son of Jacob. This favoritism bred jealousy among his brothers. To make matters worse, Joseph shared two dreams that God had given him to forecast his destiny. Those dreams essentially meant that one day Joseph was destined to be the leader of his family.

When Joseph's brothers plotted to kill him, it would seem as though they made sure his dreams would not come to pass. They threw him into a pit, selling him to a band of merchants who sold him into slavery in a foreign land—Egypt. Then his owner's wife falsely accused him and had him thrown in jail. Jail had to be the place from which he could never imagine being elevated into the cabinet of Pharaoh, yet, this former slave and felon became the secretary of Agriculture. Famine overspread the land, and Joseph's family traveled to Egypt for grain, eventually appealing to the secretary of Agriculture, Joseph. Though he recognized his brothers, they did not recognize him. Finally, when he pressured his brothers to bring their father on their next trip for grain, and they did, Joseph's destiny was fulfilled.

Joseph's faith in God's will guided him through each turn. God only gave him his destiny; not details relative to its path. The path is not always smooth or easy. Your faith must focus on God with each step and turning point. I am sure when Joseph must have asked "am I there yet?" that he trusted His God. He refused to get off the path until God said, "We're here!"

God has a plan for your life. God has promised, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end" (Jeremiah 29:11 KJV).