

# Ditch the Scheduling and Go on an Adventure With God

If there's one thing I've learned about life it's that it is utterly unpredictable. Rarely, is it ever as neat as we'd like it to be. And regardless of what we have heard from countless sermons, Ted-talks, and podcasts, life doesn't happen in steps. Life is a constant journey of discovery and recovery. It's a process, not a program.

Growing up, I thought I needed a method for my faith. I said to myself, "do this, don't do this, and all will be swell." I sang "read your bible, pray every day, and you'll grow, grow, grow" with passion believing those words would come true. Waiting for them to prove themselves in my own life. Except they didn't. At least, not as quickly as it may have worked for others. In fact, the older I got the more I began to wonder if there are some lyrics missing in that song. Perhaps, the part about how suffering often precedes growth.

See, my life took twists and turns that I was often un-prepared for, couldn't predict, and couldn't have planned out. And it was those unpredictable moments, and hard times that truly grew my faith.

## Life Altering Scriptures

One particular passage of Scripture really struck me. Since reading James 4:13-15 my thinking has shifted altering the way I move and how I operate in the world:

*Listen! You who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this city and stay a year and make money." You do not know about tomorrow. What is your life? It is like fog. You see it and soon it is gone. What you should say is, "If the Lord wants us to, we will live and do this or that."*

James 4:13-15 New Life Version

What terrific advice. It was as if James were talking directly to me! Be still, young man: life is a fog, so lean on God. Don't try to come up with your plan or follow some formula. You won't be able to see your way through. Instead, be attentive to the voice of God in your life.

What James is telling us is that we are unable to see the road ahead. Therefore, we must learn to listen for the voice that has already been where we are headed. We must adopt a lifestyle that is highly dependent on the Holy Spirit. One that takes into account what God wants to do in our lives as opposed to our plans. Only an All-Knowing God can deal with our unpredictable lives. He can maneuver whatever life throws at us to fit His good purposes. He knows the way to where He's taking us.

## Spiritual Spontaneity

I began practicing James advice immediately. Anytime someone would ask me for my plans for the day, or whether or not I would attend an event, I would respond: "If the Lord wills." This response bothered most people. People want definite answers. We want to plan, to be certain; yet life is uncertain. This small adjustment made way for a more Spirit-led life. It heightened my awareness that as a Christian, I had already surrendered my plans, schedule, and future to Jesus. He was Lord of my life, therefore Lord of my plans.

The more I became aware of this, the more I began to see the scriptures advocating for such a life. We see this numerous times in the lives of many of the disciples. Let's take Philip for example:

*An angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, "Get up and go south. Take the road that goes down from Jerusalem to the country of Gaza. It goes through the desert." Philip got up and went.*

Acts 8:26-27 NLV

On his way, Philip met an Ethiopian studying the scriptures in Azotus. He tells the man about Jesus and the man in turn requests to be baptized. Watch what happens next!

## Spirit Led Moves

*When they came up out of the water, the Holy Spirit took Philip away.*

*The man from Ethiopia did not see Philip again. He went on his way full of joy. Philip found himself at the city of Azotus. Then Philip went through all the towns as far as the city of Caesarea preaching the Good News at each place.*

Acts 8:39-40 NLV

What an astonishment. Philip didn't check his iCal, his apple watch, or his iPhone (clearly I love all things apple) to check and see if he was available to go to Gaza. No, the text says the Spirit moved him to his next assignment in Azotus and he got up and went, immediately. We are so dependent on our volition and plans today that we don't make room for God to move like that anymore. But in this verse we see Phillip caught up and led by the Spirit. And the truth of the matter is, we can be caught up and led by the Spirit too. Perhaps not teleported in the way that it implies Philips departure, but indeed immersed in God in such a way where our schedules and plans disappear. It's happened to me. I have gone from doing missionary work in Costa Rica to working with Special-needs kids in Maryland; from serving as a University Chaplain in the DC metro area to Lead Pastor of a church in the Suburbs of Chicago. And now, I live and Pastor half-way across the world, away from family, friends, and all that is familiar in Australia. It's funny how the simple practice of accepting God's will over your plans opens endless possibilities to what God can

accomplish.

## **Adventuring With God**

My first practice of changing my vocabulary made way for me to become attentive to God's leanings in my life. I started looking for God-encounters. Moments where I would feel impressed to go somewhere, call someone, pick-up a book, or sit still. The more I listened and followed these intuitions prayerfully, the more I saw God at work.

***In the beginning, all that changed was my perspective. After that, then my expectations changed. I began looking for God to interrupt my life with His agenda. And His plans have always been better than mine.***

I love the response of King Ahab's servant Obadiah when Elijah tells him to tell Ahab he's looking for him.

*"Now you are saying, 'Go, say to your owner, "See, Elijah is here."  
'And after I have left you, the Spirit of the Lord will carry you where I do not know. So I will go and tell Ahab, and he will not be able to find you. Then he will kill me. But I your servant have honored the Lord since I was young."*

1 Kings 18:11-12 NLV

What an incredible declaration! Obadiah understood that Elijah was a man who was on God's schedule, not his own. Elijah could be moved by the Spirit anywhere at any time. What an adventurous life God has called us to live. To so depend on Him, that our schedules are arranged and rearranged based on His plans for our lives. Such an experience is possible. It's something we grow into overtime. When we learn to tune our heart and ear to God, and change our vocabulary from "My will" to "If God wills," then we allow ourselves to truly ditch our schedules and go on a life changing adventure with God.