

Fresh Start

By Jerry Bader

Nicely Played, God

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Of all the temptations a Christ-follower faces, perhaps none is greater than trying to understand why God does what He does and how He does it. Even worse, we sometimes try to predict what He will do next. In an episode of the 1990's TV sitcom "Frasier," the lead character becomes convinced he is in a battle of wits with God, believing he is actually predicting how the situation at hand will play out. When the story ends with a surprisingly positive outcome, Frasier looks skyward and says, "Nicely played, God." The truth is that even in real life we are often arrogant enough to believe that God is just one step ahead of us, or that we can even outthink him. Consider this real-life example that illustrates just how ridiculous a notion that is.

I was becoming desperate in my search for a new employee. I shared my need for a writer with a fellow-Christ follower who works at a local college. It was already summer and I had missed the spring graduate hiring season, but she tells an English professor about my need. The professor sends an email to about 30 students. One responds. She has no experience in the field of writing which the position requires. But she's smart, a hard worker and (I would learn later) a person of faith. And she's honest. When I asked her if she had the background for the writing involved she said no but was willing to learn. I truly felt God wanted me to hire her, so I did. She has learned the job faster than I could have imagined; she is a great employee. As we got to know each other, she told me the job was "literally a godsend." (In fact, she has since confessed she was stunned when I offered her the job.) She was beginning to worry about her student loan deferments ending and she had absolutely no other job prospects.

I consider finding her a blessing from God. She considers the job a blessing from God. Now, take a step back and consider all the moving parts in that story:

- I think to tell a friend, a Christ-follower, who might be able to help with my need.
- In the dead of summer, she finds one English professor with whom to share the opening.
- That professor sends the opening to 30 some students and one responds.
- The graduate who responds had no other prospects, I had no other applicants. We both had been looking for months.
- She was praying for a job. I was praying for an employee. In other words, both of us had involved God in this process.

Now consider:

- God does this billions of times each day.
- He planned each of these billions of intricate scenarios before He created the Universe.
- More people were blessed as the result of this outcome than either she or I even know.
- Yet we still believe at times we can either predict or second guess God's plan. People wonder if God has a sense of humor. I suspect that at times He belly laughs.

So, then, what is our role in the execution of God's perfect plan? In a word: trust.

- Trust in God's plan – *“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”* Jeremiah 29:11
- Trust God to provide for your needs – *“And my God will provide every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”* Philippians 4:19
- Trust that God answers prayers – *“Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened to you.”* Matthew 7:7
- Trust God patiently, even when it seems to you like he's taking a long time providing or answering – *“And thus Abraham, having waited patiently, obtained the promise.”* Hebrews 6:15

Every component of God's plan had been in place long before He brought us into this world (Psalm 139:1-18, especially verse 16). All we're asked to do is trust in His plan; trust in Him. You can start right now. My new employee and I trusted Him, and he filled both our needs with one series of events. Nicely played, God. Nicely played indeed.