

## **Thwarted Plans or God's Plans? Don't Waste Your Isolation – Part 11**

Until the end of April. President Trump has extended the social-distancing guidelines till the end of April. I'm not sure how I feel about having to waste more time in this prison of isolation.

*“Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring” (Proverbs 27:1 ESV).*

But I've made plans! I've already canceled a vacation, my 401-k has tanked, and now I can't even go shopping for new clothes to get the kids all gussied up for Easter Sunday! That's been a tradition in our home for generations, don't you know? And no, it's not the same if we have to use clothes from last year because we've already shown off those clothes in church.

*“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble” (Matthew 6:25-33 ESV).*

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Ok, I was only joking about the Easter outfits. But seriously, I'm stuck at home and not even sure if I will continue to have a job next week! If my company can't make money, I sure can't expect a paycheck until this social distancing thing is over. Am I not supposed to care about my job, my ability to earn an income? And this is even more important because my retirement account has taken a beating! Am I not supposed to plan well for the future, to be a good steward of my investments?

*“Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit’—yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.’ As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin” (James 4:13-17 ESV).*

So let me get this straight: are you saying that my actions have been sinful simply because I didn't say, "If the Lord wills" before I made my plans? Aren't you straining at gnats now? Do my actions necessarily reveal my heart to be sinful?

*“Someone in the crowd said to (Jesus), ‘Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.’ But he said to him, ‘Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?’ And he said to them, ‘Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.’ And he told them a parable, saying, ‘The land of a rich man produced plentifully, and he thought to himself, “What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?” And he said, “I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.” But God said to him, “Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?” So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God”” (Luke 12:13-21 ESV).*

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I think I'm starting to see. I *know* that God is in control, but if I don't *live* as if God is in control I don't actually *believe* what I claim to know. My plans must be made in submission to God's plans because He is the sovereign one. And if I'm not careful, my own plans for security can shift me away from finding my security in God; my own plans for the future can shift me away from finding my sustenance in Christ alone. All this can lead me into covetousness, which the Bible says is idolatry. If I think I know better than God how my future plans should look, then I am nothing more than an idolater because I actually worship myself rather than trust in Him. So in reality, my plans haven't been thwarted, they've been rearranged by His sovereign will. It's actually a good thing, even if I don't yet fully see why.

*"Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand" (Proverbs 19:21 ESV).*

*"The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; he frustrates the plans of the peoples. The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations. Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage" (Psalm 33:10-12 ESV)!*

I need to think deeper on these things.

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