**That’s Not How I Would Have Done It**

I get a kick out of some of the crazy things people do, and I appreciate that someone posts them on line so that we can enjoy a laugh. Here are some examples:

* Garage door with stairs
* Door stop
* Changing a light bulb
* Diet spoon
* Chair doesn’t fit table
* Stacked bricks
* Road goes around pole (chicane on I St.)
* Spider warning
* Painter: As they say, *That’s why women live longer than men*.
* Air plane wing fixed with duct tape

There are all sorts of ways to do most things and my way is not always the only right way. Generally it’s OK if someone else wants to do something differently than I do. I may be surprised at how he did it. I may be disappointed. I may not even like it. *That’s not how I would have done it*.

That said, I have to overcome my tendency to conclude that he did it wrong because I know better how to do it, whatever it is.

Sometimes when I see someone doing it wrong, I’ll offer to help. Dave Heuer does that often at the Y. He’ll see someone doing an exercise incorrectly and he’ll show her how it should be done explaining how it affects the muscles. In that circumstance she usually appreciates his assistance and now she gets the most benefit from her workout.

Sometimes you do know a better way and choose to share that with someone. I’m installing new baseboards and trim in our house. I know how to do it, but a friend recently showed me a better way. My way wasn’t wrong, but his way is easier and makes a better fit in the corners and joints.

This sermon isn’t about whether or not other people are doing things right or wrong, although I would encourage you to be careful about concluding that someone has done something wrong just because that’s not how you would have done it.

This sermon is about accepting that God does things His way. I know we all agree that God is God and we shouldn’t tell Him what to do, however Christians experience a lot of angst because of precisely because we think God got it wrong. It’s not what God did or did not do. Rather, often enough the issue is, *that’s not how I would have done it*.

When Moses first received his call to lead Israel out of Egypt he had some serious doubts about God’s plan.

* First he didn’t think he was the right guy. *“Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”* Exodus 3:11
* Then he didn’t think anyone would believe him. “*Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?*” Exodus 3:13
* Next he didn’t think he could be forceful enough, *“What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, ‘The Lord did not appear to you’?”* Exodus 4:1
* He continued to argue, “*O Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue*.” Exodus 4:10

With each “reason” Moses gave rejecting God’s plan, God had an answer,

* *I will be with you*. Exodus 3:12
* *Tell them I AM has sent you*. Exodus 3:14
* *If they don’t believe I sent you, perform the wonders I have given you the power to do*.
* *I will help you speak and I will teach you what to say*. Exodus 4:12

It wasn’t that Moses didn’t think that Israel needed rescue or that God couldn’t save them. It was because he thought, *that’s not how I would have done it*.

God had a plan which He shared with Moses, He would harden the king’s heart so that he would refuse to let them leave. Moses didn’t see His plan that included demonstrating His power so that not only would the Egyptians let Israel go, they would furnish the Israelites with provisions.

*“I will make the Egyptians favorably disposed toward this people, so that when you leave you will not go empty-handed. Every woman is to ask her neighbor and any woman living in her house for articles of silver and gold and for clothing, which you will put on your sons and daughters. And so you will plunder the Egyptians.”* Exodus 3:21f

Sure enough, rather than allow Israel to leave, the king increased his demands on their labor. So instead of being a hero to the Israelites Moses became despicable to them. They hated that his obedience resulted in greater misery for them.

Moses didn’t like how this was working out either. He did what God said and what did he experience? Anguish and anger from the very people he was serving, which he expressed to God:

*“O Lord, why have you brought trouble upon this people? Is this why you sent me? Ever since I went to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has brought trouble upon this people, and you have not rescued your people at all.”* Exodus 5:22f *That’s not how I would have done it!*

God doesn’t often do things the way we would do them.

* Who would have included a prostitute, Rahab, in the family tree of the Messiah?
* Who would have used a non-Jewish woman, Ruth, to be the great-grandmother of Israel’s greatest king?
* And who would have chosen the runt of the litter, the last of eight sons of Jesse, to be that great king?

Who would have thought, *I’ll have the Savior of the world born to a young girl who isn’t even married when her pregnancy begins*?

* Who would have chosen an uneducated blue collar carpenter to be the husband of this girl?
* Who would have arranged for this baby to be born in a stable?
* Who would have allowed your own son, to be executed as a criminal as a sacrifice for the sins of the world?

Not me! *That’s not how I would have done it.* I’m not sure how I would have done it, but I’m sure it wouldn’t have been the way God did it. I’m much too selfish to give my son. *None of that’s not how I would have done it*.

I think sometimes we try to get ahead of God, thinking*, I know what He’s doing. I’ll take it from here*.

Do you ever get frustrated when God doesn’t do what you think He should or when you think He should do it? Well, I know you do. I hear it often from wonderful Christian people, people who love the Lord but don’t understand how and why He does what He does.

Then there are the times when we confidently follow what we believe is the will of God and yet our circumstances actually get worse.

Moses thought he would see different results when he obeyed God. Instead it resulted in trouble for the Jews, and 40 years of wandering, listening to complaints that what God was doing wasn’t good enough for them.

David probably thought that having been personally chosen by God, that his rule would be peaceful and prosperous. Instead while his kingdom grew he struggled to keep his family together, suffering the loss of several of his children including the rebellion of Absalom who tried to kill him.

The Jews certainly didn’t think that their Messiah would come by way of a humble unknown couple from Nazareth. They thought He would come in royalty and power.

Mary and Joseph, who had direct communication form God via an angel didn’t think their son would be crucified.

We often become discouraged when we can’t see exactly what God is doing, and we don’t understand how it will work out.

It’s not that God failed. God has His plan and often it’s much different than what we would have done. He’s leading us down a path that ultimately leads to what is best for us, we just don’t see it.

And let’s not forget, often we or someone else interrupt God’s plan with our sinful choices so He has to adjust His plan in order to accomplish His will.

I doubt that many people would go along with God if we knew everything that was going to happen before we get to His final result for our lives.

* Moses might well have said, *No, I can’t deal with the problems*.
* David might have said, *No, I don’t want to suffer that much*.
* Mary might have said, *No, I won’t let my son go through that torture*.

We sing about waiting on God but I think we often don’t get it. This is what it means. Waiting on God means we trust that He is working *in everything for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose* (Romans 8:28). Even when we can’t see or understand it, we know that He loves us and is working to make us fit for eternal life in Heaven.

You’re probably familiar with the third verse of “*Away in a Manger*”?

*Be near me Lord Jesus I ask Thee to stay*

*Close by me forever and love me I pray*

*Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care*

*And fit us for heaven to live with Thee there*

That’s God’s plan. He’s fitting us for heaven, constantly at work in our lives guiding us toward a wonderful eternity. We should always be moving forward, trusting His plan, doing what we know is right, waiting for His plan to unfold.

We’re people of common sense. We can figure things out. God doesn’t want you to stop using your wisdom. He wants to consecrate your wisdom. He wants you to use your wisdom to understand His ways, and trust Him.

Through Isaiah the Prophet God said, “*My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.* Isaiah 55:8f

In other words, *Trust Me. I know what I’m doing, even if that’s not how you would have done it*.

Henry Blackaby wrote in Experiencing God, *As you look back on God’s activity in your life, you will recognize the supreme wisdom in how He has led you. As you look forward to what God may do, be careful you do not try to predict what He will do next. You may find yourself completely off the mark*.

I’ve known a lot of people who messed themselves up trying to outthink God. So I have some advice (all inter-related). These are my ideas, not specifically Biblical:

1. Always do what you know is right. Do what you know from the Bible. You can’t go wrong obeying God’s Word. Whether everything works out comfortably for you or if you experience trouble, do what you know is right. It may not be how you would have done, but you’ll know you’re on God’s plan.
2. Never conclude that because things aren’t happening the way you thought they would, that God has failed. Remember, He has a plan and His ways and thoughts are higher than your ways and thoughts. He’s working His plan in your life.
3. Don’t expect to know exactly what God wants you to do in every circumstance. God wants us to trust Him. Trust what He has told you and live consistently with that. He loves you and wants what’s best for you and He wants you fit for heaven.
4. Never give up on God. I’m sure Christians in Iraq facing the blades of a black-suited ISIS militia would prefer God worked His plan a different way. But they aren’t giving up on God. They’re standing firm in trust.

Could we be as faithful? When we don’t understand what God is doing, could we, instead of thinking, “*That’s not how I would have done it*”, could we trust God’s way over our own?

I think we could. I think we can. Will you join me in following God even if it’s not how we would have done it?