



| Wednesday, December 4

God Has a Plan for Us

For surely, I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.

Jeremiah 29:11

God has a plan for each one of us, but don't get me wrong; God's plan for us is not a "blueprint" for our lives. It's not something we have to discover and then follow.

My wife Bobbi has a master's in counseling psychology from St. Mary's University. As part of her education she did a clinical internship at a conservative Christian university. Many students who came to her office for counseling had been raised to believe that God had a definite plan for their lives. God had a vocation he wanted them to follow; God had a place he wanted them to work; God had a particular person he wanted them to marry—their job was to figure it all out and then faithfully follow God's plan. And they were seeking counseling because they didn't know how to do that, and they were deeply worried that they would get it wrong and make wrong choices that would lead them down wrong paths away from God and the future God had planned for them.

Bobbi helped them work through this dilemma by suggesting that God did not have a particular vocation in mind for them. There were lots of honorable vocations and they should choose one that matched their interests and passions, skills and abilities. What mattered to God was not what vocation they chose—as long as it was work that didn't harm themselves or others.

She suggested that God didn't have a particular person in mind for them to marry. There were lots of people in the world who would make wonderful spouses and they should choose a partner based upon shared interests, mutual respect and reciprocal affection. What mattered to God was whether the relationship was healthy, mutually supporting, good for both people and good for others in their lives—families and friends.

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God's plan for their lives was that they be loving people, kind and compassionate people, merciful people, forgiving people, generous people, fair people—which is to say they should be people who follow the Way of God that Jesus lived and taught. That's God's plan for all of us; it's a plan for our welfare, a plan to give us a future with hope.

Holy God lead us along the path that you have chosen for us—the path of love. Amen.

- Pastor Hank French