

Daily View

"But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called 'today'" Hebrews 3:13

August 25, 2020



Yogi Berra said, "when you come to a fork in the road, take it." We have all gone down different roads and wonder what would have happened if we chose the other road — perhaps, "the road not taken" (look it up under "Robert Frost's.")

“What Might Have Been...?”

Do you ever wonder “what-might-have-been”? As you get older, you tend to look back on the twists and turns of life — many of them completely out of your control — and ask “what if?”

In 1968, I was driving home from work in the rain on the 405 freeway in LA. A car, without warning, swerved into my lane and I had to stomp on my brakes. My car began to spin out of control. It was like slow motion, but it spun 360 degrees so all I had to do was accelerate to get back into traffic. Obviously, I could have perished at the tender age of 20 and I wouldn't be sitting here writing about it. Or, I could have suffered a debilitating injury that would change my life forever.

What if... my parents had decided to stay in Orange County and buy some land in Anaheim in the area where Disneyland would be built? They probably could have done that. What path might that have put us on? We would have been rich, at least for awhile.

What if... they had not moved to Ceres, California and met Christie's parents? Would I have met Christie? Highly unlikely.

What if... I had been sent to Vietnam in 1968, like so many of my peers? Assuming I survived, how would that have affected me? I was scheduled to go to OCS (Officer Candidate School). What if... I had decided to go forward with that? As it happened, there was a long waiting list so I cancelled those plans before OCS began. Had I completed it and become a second lieutenant, I would most likely have been sent to Vietnam. Instead, I spent my Army days in Hawaii. How'd that happen??

The rock group Eagle's guitarist Joe Walsh is almost exactly my age. Quoting a philosopher, he said,

"Life as it's happening seems chaos with no order at all. This happens and that happens. Looking back on it though it seems like your life was perfectly orchestrated."

I think there's some truth in that. Life goes so fast and we look back and realize how little control we had over it. Things happen, “just because.” It's possible, of course, that God intervened at times, but I'll leave that topic for future time.

We all do it, but thinking “*what-might-have-been*” is a fruitless exercise unless we have learned lessons from the past. Spinning out on the 405 in LA at rush hour was frightening but it might have saved my life in the long run. I drove more “defensively” after that.

God teaches us to learn from the past and to think carefully about the future. Psalm 90:10 reminds us:

*The years of our life are seventy,
or even by reason of strength eighty;
yet their span is but toil and trouble;
they are soon gone, and we fly away.*

I wish I could communicate to young people that life really is short, but it's almost impossible for them to grasp. You say, “life is short” to an 18 year old and you'll most likely hear “OK Boomer” (“with all due respect”).

But our lives *are* short. So, what should we do? We can spend our time wondering, “*what if...*” but Psalm 90:12 tells us to think about life *as we live it*:

*So teach us to number our days
that we may get a heart of wisdom.*

Lots of things happen that we can't explain. So, those who are wise rest in God's love and rejoice in each day.

*Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love,
that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.* Psalm 90:14