

# Eternal Perspective



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## *Our Life's Path*

Have you ever wanted to go back in time? Maybe have a chance to change the outcome of things?

In a hotel room, recently, I happened upon an episode of my favorite sci-fi series, the very British Doctor Who.

For the uninitiated, the “doctor” is an ancient Time Lord, travelling back and forth through the universe, and back and forth in time – usually in the vicinity of Great Britain of course!

In this particular episode, the Doctor is trying to explain to his young travelling companion, Rose Tyler that although he can go back in time, he is bound by a code, and that he cannot alter “fixed” moments in time – those things that chart our course in history.

It got me thinking about the twists and turns in my own life, and what if a different decision was made, or a different fork in the road taken? How would the course of my life have been different?

I've been blessed to lead a very interesting life in which as I look back, events certainly could have taken different turns.

To begin with, my parents unexpectedly separated and then divorced when I was twelve. I'm sure this had a profound effect on me for several years. To what extent, I lack the capacity to look that far inward and discern, but I am sure it had to. How would my life have been different if this life-changing event didn't happen?

Would the following have happened? As a result of the divorce my mother became involved in a bible study which indirectly led me (and my friends) at age fourteen to a dynamic Sunday night youth group in a place called “the barn” where I first heard the gospel of Jesus Christ!

Then when I was eighteen, feeling like I was not ready for my life long goal of architecture school, I called a navy recruiter and enlisted in the Navy. How did that decision affect the course of my life? What if I would have gone to architecture school?

After four years in the navy - where I grew into a man, was nominated twice for sailor of the year, became a rescue swimmer, earned numerous medals, awards and citations - I had decided to make the navy my career. I obtained recommendations and completed course work to transfer to the naval intelligence community and being newly married with a baby on the way, my wife and I were looking forward to a transfer from Hawaii to Washington D.C. and a life as a military family.

Then...to my astonishment...checking one day if my new orders had been cut, I found out that the command career counselor had failed to turn all of my paperwork in on time! Angry and frustrated, I made a decision to separate upon the end of my enlistment and try it out in the “civilian world.” Another course change.

How did that decision affect this: Three years later, back in central Ohio, I found myself on my deck debating the existence of God with some childhood friends, and I was brought up short by the reality that I did know the God that I was trying to argue for! The next morning overcome by the Holy Spirit, I turned control of my life over to my loving savior, Jesus Christ!

This led directly to four years in Bible College and a life dedicated to serving Him.

Are all of those events fixed in time?

The theological question is this: is there a designed roadmap for our lives planned out (pre-ordained) by God? As we have been created with free will, what if we make our own way? What if we divert from the course our lives were “supposed” to take?

Many will say, with good intentions, that “God has a perfect plan for your life.” With that thought in mind, I do not believe the Bible teaches us that there is a certain path your life is supposed to take, forsaking all others.

God’s “perfect” plan for your life is simply this: that wherever you are at, in whatever you are doing, that you honor Him. We all make mistakes. Most of us make choices that take us down certain roads that in hindsight we wished we would not have travelled. There are times we wished we would have heeded the advice of Godly family or friends, or the gentle nudge of the Holy Spirit.

However, the God I love and serve is a God of mercy and grace and tenderness and long-suffering!

Romans 8:28 tells us “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

This tells me that God is bigger than our circumstances!

Maybe today you have made choices in your life that have set you on a different course than you thought you would be walking. Guess what? God delights in makeovers! He loves to set things back on track. He longs to redirect and pave the new path in front of you!

Our lives are made up of a series of choices. Some good. Some bad. We are human. God’s thought toward you right now is simply this: “I want to bless you right where you are.”

I don’t typically look back and have regrets, although the one thought I have had more often than others is how my life would have been different if I stayed in the Navy? Did God have a say in having my paperwork misfiled? Maybe. But maybe not.

I am convinced I could have had the same prodding of the Holy Spirit standing on my deck in Washington D.C. wearing my dress white uniform, talking to new friends and colleagues. I could have knelt beside my bed just as easily there as here. Our lives are not set in stone with a distinct road map. Our path changes and reroutes. Honor Jesus with the path you are currently travelling.