

What way is best?

A common saying is 'there is more than one way to skin a cat' and though I love cats so 'am bothered by the images it conveys' still the philosophy is one many people subscribe to. Another saying that seems to challenge this belief is 'there is a right and wrong way to do everything'. There are those who adamantly refuse to read 'instruction manuals' or seek the wisdom of someone more knowledgeable about a topic 'determined' to **figure things out** for 'themselves'. In truth there is a part of that which is admirable in their resilience to keep trying till they succeed or die trying motif.

Yet I pause to wonder if the energy could be put to better use. The creator of something understands that 'thing' better than anyone else and so makes a manual to 'help' others have insight into its proper use, upkeep and maintenance. There is an element of 'pride' (never a good thing' if we believe we 'know' better.

I believe the Bible supports the philosophy of only a 'right and wrong way'. For example, 'there is only 1 way (thus the right way) to enter Heaven thru Christ'. For me there is a better way to express it 'there is God's way and our way'. In every moment of our lives God has a purpose and design the Bible says He 'ordered/numbered' our steps, that they are predestined. Because He is our Creator and He wove us cell by cell together in our Mother's womb it is clear that He is passionate about our design, function and purpose that He created us to accomplish. Still He didn't want a marionette that was unable to act or function on its own nut rather beings that would have a **choice**.

In the ability to choose we can function alone based on our own albeit limited understanding thru life or we can accept His offering of fellowship and set aside our will, plans and purpose for His. Ultimately whether we recognize it or not this is the **choice** we live out moment by moment each day. In every decision we make big and small we are making a choice in whether we seek God's will or not thus defaulting to our way when we don't. I think many would argue that God doesn't care about the small hundreds of choices we make daily (like what we wear, how we fix our hair, do we wear makeup or not, what do we eat for breakfast, etc.) but only cares if we ask Him about the big things (like is time to change cars, homes, jobs or retire, etc.). To believe He is ok with us fumbling along making random choices when He is an orderly, detailed God which we know based on His creation and the laws He instilled to ensure it functions in harmony would be unwise.

Yet I think that people who have the philosophy of a ‘million ways’ to accomplish something allow this philosophy to influence their relationship and understanding of God. But in the very root of this belief is the underlying seed of ‘I can figure this out on my own, I don’t need anything from anybody, I need to control this, etc.’. We either accept that we are sinful creatures who desperately need ‘saving’ and willing to do whatever is necessary to except our current condition, or that we are basically ok and maybe only once in a while could use someone else’s help but rarely if ever ask for it. The first condition realizes that no matter how many attempts we make we cannot save ourselves and will ultimately end in failure this leads us to reaching out to God willing to trade everything of ourselves to Him and walking a life based on wanting every choice to be ones that ‘honors and glorifies’ Him because of our gratitude for His rescue. The other philosophy leads to a life of battle between wanting to do things their way as opposed to God’s. The Jews ran into this problem throughout their history where they would turn to God in greatest need but often refused to walk in His ways. As a result, they lived a rollercoaster existence blessed by God but often living in judgment because of their rebellion.

I think that is why Jesus said we had to become like ‘little children’ to enter the kingdom of Heaven. Little children are dependent on their parents to exist and so do not challenge them but instead gratefully accept what they are given and love their parents unconditionally. Their knowledge is basic (what they are taught) and accepted not questioned. Their faith in their parents is unwavering and they enjoy lives free from the worries of the journey ahead safe in the belief that wherever their parents take them will be ok because they will be there to take care of them and ensure they are safe. We have to have that same philosophy with God in our lives. We need to go back or perhaps forward in our understanding to the point where we have complete trust and faith in God.

I think it is not a coincidence that our lives all lead us to this place at some point. For some which 'man' deems a normal life where we're born, live, grow old then die we experience this dependent phase at least twice: 1) in the beginning where our bodies are immature and inadequate to meet our own needs so cause reliance on others till we get to a place where we can care for ourselves and 2) when we get old enough that our body fails to function well enough for us to care for ourselves and we must again rely on the benevolence of others to help. But for those who live outside the boundaries of what man calls normal there are those who have had to learn or live this lesson of humility repetitively throughout their journey on this earth whether born with, thru accident, sickness or disease we find ours needing the help of others.

This can be problematic for those who are adamant on being self-reliant and find themselves thrust into a situation where now they have no other choice. Bitterness, anger, frustration, envy can become constant companions on what has become a very different path from the one the person had in mind. If you look to the response of a young child they don't look beyond the day, it isn't wrapped up in what the future holds but enjoying to the best of their ability the day they have been given when they wake up. They make the best of their circumstances and enjoy what they have not what they do not because for young children they don't know what they don't have. But the truth is that everyone experiences 'times' of reliance on others whether we want to or not and, in these times, there are precious gems to be found if we open our hearts to them where our lives, beliefs and mindsets can be molded by God to be forever changed.

Which philosophy guides your life? Is it one of childlike faith dependent and reliant on God's way for your moment by moment survival bathed in an understanding so simple that there is no room or thought of disobedience but just sheer longing, hope and seeking for time with God? No question of His Love, faithfulness and provision with unwavering trust in the path He lays before you and your desire to walk it and see what He has in store. A life of peace and joy unspeakable and full of glory. Or has your philosophy been one of independence and self-reliance only willing to accept the help of others when it is forced upon you by the circumstances of life? I would hazard a guess that if the latter is true you live a rather lonely life because having to do something by yourself means you're working for self-gratification which isn't something others can share. In the end it would seem an empty life because things of this world pass away so what we achieve here temporally has no meaning in the eternal and will become dust long forgotten in time. Only what we allow God to use us here to accomplish has

any meaning and lasting effect by there is that thing again where we have to ‘allow God to use us’ which has ‘nothing’ to do with us (other than obedience) so we can take no credit for the result/outcome other than the immense joy of God choosing to use us when He could use anything even a rock.

Finally, we are most useful to God and fulfilling His perfect predestined plan for our lives when we have emptied ourselves of everything and become childlike in the way we live each day. Children don’t make plans or do things apart from the parents from the clothes they wear, to how their hair is fixed, to the food they eat, to where they go ... their lives are orchestrated by the parents and our lives should be no different with God. A mixing bowl cannot go to its maker and say ‘I wanted to be a pot’ nor would it go over well if that same mixing bowl told the cook who pulls it out ‘you can’t use me to mix those ingredients I am only willing for you to use me to scramble those eggs on the stove’. I would venture to say either 1) the bowl would **never** get used or 2) be used once to try and cook the eggs over the stove and crack or shatter under the heat.

Do we want to be used by God? Then we must have **trust** that in whatever ways He sees fit we were made perfect for the task and humbly grateful that the God of the universe would choose us as a tool in His hand.

The saying ‘as for me and my house we will serve the Lord’ should be our purpose and desire in this life but even more so to ‘honor and glorify’ Him in all we say and do because we as children love him and want to please Him as the ultimate achievement of every moment of every day for all the days He blesses us with.

Will it be God’s way or your way?