

FAQ

I'm almost sure I predicted your questions

By and Based on the Books of Robert J. Cormier (www.thefaithkit.org)

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Dear reader,

My presumption is that you have read my other mini-books that speak of the basics—see the back of this book—particularly the three that provide the gifts of faith:

Heaven: We exist because God, who does not need to be explained, decided to share His life.

Love: We are here, in this world, to participate in our own creation. God is giving each of us the opportunity to become our own person. This is the reason that we are born unformed, unknowing, and utterly self-centered, and we are called to grow. We are called to grow in the faith that inspires the love which makes us more like God, and prepares us to share God's life as richly as we might.

God's plan: In the act of creation, God put into action a plan for everything that would ever happen, including all the events of all of our lives. He did this knowing how we would respond to these events. In this way, we become the people God wants us to be, while, in the process, each of us still becomes our own person.

I am also presuming that you have read about the fourth basic doctrine, the one which makes sense of the other three if, indeed, God is good and just:

We are going to share heaven as a family where all of us are going to be richer for the holiness of each of us.

The doctrine of the family explains that the purpose of God's plan and human history is the formation of the *family* we will be. It points out that every single person has a God-given role in this great struggle. And this means every single person will share *fully* in all our family will receive from God. This, and idea that God has planned *everything*, often raises questions. Here are five of the most frequent:

1. If everything that happens is bound to follow God's plan, why pray?

First of all, let us be clear. We do not pray in order to change God's mind. We pray because, in order to have a relationship with God, we need to be able to tell Him how we feel.

To have a relationship with anyone, we need to tell this person how we feel. If something is on our mind and we do not express it, we fail to connect. But if we do express it, even if it has nothing to do with our friend, we feel more connected than ever.

This is the reason to pray, even to pray for something. To feel connected. To know that God is there. To know that

God is God, and, according to His plan, everything will be all right.

This is the reason to pray, even to pray for something. We need to express to God what we feel. But then we say: “But Thy will be done.”

“Please, God; but Thy will be done.”

2. If God’s plan always brings about the best thing that can happen, why bother?

Notably, this is never the attitude of those who do believe that everything that happens follows God’s plan. Such people know that their lives too have followed God’s plan; they love themselves, and this always inspires in them a sincere love for others.

Besides, God’s plan may bring about the best thing that can happen, but it does not work apart from what we do. And until we act, and things have happened that cannot be changed, the future is ours to make. Therefore, our job is to try to see things as they are and to work for what we think is best.

Two more reasons that faith in God’s plan does not call for complacency:

We cannot outguess God. We do not know why His plan calls for what it does. The fact that it is raining does

not necessarily mean that God does not want us to go on a picnic. Maybe He wants us to go and get wet.

We are here to grow. The fact that we did something does not mean that God wants us to continue doing it. Maybe He wants us to learn from our mistake and try harder to do better.

3. If God has planned everything, what about free will?

First of all, free will is not the power to make choices that even God did not see coming. It does not mean that a person can make choices apart from human nature and his past experience. Free will means that a person's choices are not normally compelled by an exterior power. Rather, his response to anything that happens reflects him, the person who he is. Since this response changes him, a lifetime of this process is personal responsibility. The fact that God knew, and even planned, all the events that led to these results does not change the fact that the events did not become results except through a person's reactions being himself.

Thus, it is not past or person. It is past and person. God and us.

4. If all of us share everything in heaven, what's the point of my sacrifice?

To answer this question, we begin by pointing out—see question 2—that God's plan does not work apart from

what we do. And, until we act, and things have happened that cannot be changed, the future is ours to make. Therefore, your sacrifice will make heaven better for everyone—and therefore also for you. Of course, this raises the next question:

5. If all of us share everything in heaven, where's the justice?

First of all, love surpasses justice—and love is not love if its object was my reward.

Secondly, people do the best they can with what they are given.

Thirdly, in the grand scheme of God's plan, people play the part that they were meant to play. The success of God's plan requires them to play this part. If they would be forever less because this was the part God gave them, where is the justice?

Besides, faith is its own reward. The person with faith has so much more than anyone without it. Even in struggles that faith itself inspires, the person with more faith is more alive.

Also from the mini-books menu at www.thefaithkit.org/panorama:

Climbing the Stairway to Heaven: a guided meditation

The Five Steps to Faith

Eight Images: to help you help God make your faith grow

Faith Is Easy: at least in terms of getting started

The Author's Commentary on The Seven Steps of *Faith Is Easy*

Dear ____: A letter to you who have learned to love faith and want to know what to do next

Phase II: in pursuit of a living faith

The Author's Commentary on The Four Weeks of *Phase II*

Phase III: sanctifying the seasons

Short Steps: A spiritual journey

a mini-Book about The Gifts of Faith

Believing in Yourself for the Right Reason:
because God has made you who you

Loving Yourself for the Reason: because God has made you who you are

Special and Important: Who do *you* see when you look in the mirror?

The Four Phases: Making our way to love and faith

Seven Statements of Faith:
Being an attempt to explain the distinctiveness of Catholic Christianity

Creeds

A Mini-Catechism:
based on the four parts of the universal Catechism of the Catholic Church