

**I DON’T GET IT**

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Proverbs 16:9

A couple of weeks ago I had a challenging week of travel and speaking. One of my engagements was in Knoxville, Tennessee. I was scheduled to speak at a conference for those involved in sports ministry at the high school, collegiate and professional levels. I had agreed to speak at this conference almost a year ago and had worked hard on my two keynote messages.

It all started out fine. I spent time on the plane going over my messages and praying that God would use them. My flight took me through Chicago where I boarded a new plane bound for Knoxville. But then we proceeded to sit on the runway for about 90 minutes. Frustrating! Even more frustrating was the fact that the pilot finally announced that the flight was cancelled due to weather. By now it was about 8:00 pm and there’s was no way I was going to make it to Knoxville that night, or even the next day for the conference. I tried everything, but in the end I had to call the host of the conference and tell him I wasn’t going to make it. I then hopped on a flight that got me to Sacramento. I spent the night there at my sister and brother-in-law’s house, and the next day I rented a car to drive home.

It’s hard to describe how I felt. As you can imagine, I was exhausted. But disappointment, discouragement and even confusion haunted me. It struck me that this was the first time in 35 years of ministry that I had missed a speaking engagement. Why did this happen? Did God not want me to give these messages? Was there something wrong with me? Some would say this is just the reality of living in a fallen world. Others would say this was the work of the enemy. Still others might try to find a reason for what happened, like maybe the plane would have crashed if it had tried to make it to Knoxville. Or maybe he wanted me to spend that time with my sister and brother-in-law (it was a sweet time as we remembered a good friend who had just passed on to glory).

I really don’t have the answers to these questions. I trust God’s sovereignty, but I don’t always get it. Without trying to compare myself to the apostle Paul, I am somewhat comforted that scripture says he was “kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia.” And then, when he and his friends tried to enter Bithynia, “the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to” (Acts 16:6,7). I wonder if Paul had the same questions I did.

Life is full of confusing things. We don’t have to even like what happens to us, and we don’t always get answers to our questions. We walk by faith and not by sight. In the end, we just have to live with what the writer of Proverbs wrote, “In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps” (Proverbs 16:9).