

When Your Plans Get Knocked Off Course

When have your best-laid plans gone totally awry?

Those times can frustrate us, but before we sit in the corner and pout about it, consider these two stories.



We'll first go back to 1900. The light bulb had been around for 20 years, but it wasn't doing much good for a surgeon in Vienna. He needed more light in his operating room, so he went to Erwin Perzy for help. Perzy ran a shop making fine instruments, and he took on the job of creating a brighter light bulb.

Looking for an idea, Perzy noticed that, when shoemakers poured water into a glass globe and placed it in front of a candle, they created a small spotlight that brightened and focused the light. Perzy tried the same thing with a light bulb.

It didn't work. Strike one.

But maybe he could add something to the water that was reflective. So Perzy added small semolina flakes (a byproduct of milling wheat), hoping the white flakes would reflect and brighten the light from the light bulb.

Strike two.

In Perzy's frustration, he thought the floating flakes in water reminded him of snow. So he crafted a replica of the Basilica of the Birth of the Virgin Mary in Mariazell, Austria, placed it in a water/flake-filled globe, sealed it, and created the snow globe.



Perzy never got the brighter light the surgeon needed, but he launched an industry. In the last 100+ years, snow globes have gotten cheaper and are mass-produced, but Perzy's shop in Vienna—the same shop where he crated his first one—is still open and creating hand-crafted snow globes.

Perzy's original plan was waylaid, and while others went on to create the bright lights needed for surgery, Erwin Perzy still found success.

The second story may be more familiar. A carpenter named Joseph had plans: have a family with his young wife, Mary, and maybe raise a son or two who would join him in the family business.

Joseph's plans were waylaid in a far different way. God stepped in.

Joseph had no plans to raise a son that was not his offspring. He did not plan on living his life with the stigma that comes from a wife pregnant before they were fully married. He had no plans to take a hiatus in Egypt. But Joseph obeyed the words of the angel of God. As a result, Jesus was raised in a home where He was loved and cared for. (See Matt. 1–2.)

Joseph greatly benefited from his faith and obedience. Joseph set aside his own plans—and we all have benefited.

I am a planner. I have joked previously that the first item on my to-do is to create a to-do list. I like to map out my day, my week, my life. But I've learned to be flexible. I've learned to accept interruptions in my day and even embrace them. Because in those moments, God is often doing something.

If your plans get waylaid for the moment—or for a lifetime—look to see where God is at work. God may have caused that disruption—or He may not have—but either way, in that moment He will work in you and through you.

He did it for Joseph. And He'll do it for you.