

Living in the Supernatural

A man's steps are directed by the LORD.
How then can anyone understand his own way?

Proverbs 20:24

I was in the middle of determining what was next in my life. In the summer of 2003, I left my job as a Human Resources Director for a Fortune 20 company as a broken man. I had literally been brought to my knees through a confluence of circumstances (mainly disobedience) and was pretty much awash with sickness, despair, angst, hopelessness and fear. By the summer of 2004, I (deep down) still had faith that God had a plan for me - although I could not see it. After two difficult years of hard work and really pressing-in, I had a rhythm to my walk with Christ that I never had prior. I felt revived, rejuvenated, and new that restoration was on the way. In early March 2005, I went on a three-day fast and the two things at the top of my prayer list on which I really needed direction were:

1) How should I be preparing for ministry? After running from a calling to the ministry since childhood, I knew that my life (that was in shambles) could not be rebuilt/restored without full submission to that call that I had avoided for so long.

2) What is my labor? After a period of not working at all and then taking on some limited contract assignments, I knew that it was time to either find a job or a long-term contract assignment and I just needed some direction as to what direction to take.

Having received clear direction to both questions within 7 days of the end of my fast, I started moving in faith towards the goal that had clearly been laid out for me. I (emphasis on I) decided that I needed to get a contract position or a part-time job as I moved forward mainly because I didn't trust that God would provide as I worked on the vision that the Lord had birthed in me.

In late March/early April, I received an e-mail that had been forwarded to me from a good friend that advertised the need for a campus recruiter for a 3-4 month assignment. Given my experience in this area, I thought that this would be a great fit so I sent my resume to the e-mail address in the job posting. I almost immediately got a response from a guy named Tom. He said something like: "I bet you could do this job with your eyes closed." I tried to respond modestly, but in the affirmative. He told me that he would get back to me the following week with next steps. He did. He called the next week as promised and told me that they were not moving forward with the position as a contract assignment, and that the position was going to be filled by an internal candidate.

Tom had a reputation for being well networked in the Atlanta HR community and someone had also mentioned that he was "religious." I heard this from a friend of mine that did not know the Lord. This REALLY made me want to meet him. So even though Tom called with "bad news" about the position, I asked him if we could get together for a cup of coffee. He was open to the idea so we scheduled an appointment a few weeks out to meet. He suggested meeting at his private club at 9:30 am on 4/19. Subsequent to scheduling our meeting, I again heard good things about Tom. I heard again that he was "religious" and that he president-elect of the Atlanta chapter of SHRM (Society of Human Resource Management). How intimidating? Had I known this, I would not have pursued the meeting because my self-talk would have been, "He is too busy to meet with me." On 4/18, I called to confirm our meeting. Unfortunately, he had to cancel because he had been selected for jury duty that week. We immediately rescheduled for Tuesday, 4/26 @ 2:00 PM.

On Tuesday, 4/26, I arrived at our designated location at approximately 1:50. I was welcomed at the reception desk and was told that Tom was not there yet. He was expected shortly and that

there was also another party in the lounge awaiting his arrival. As far as I knew, my meeting was just with Tom so I entered the lounge area and had a seat. There were only 2 or 3 occupied tables and only one person was sitting alone. I scoped the man sitting alone and wondered if he had come to ruin the time that I had scheduled with Tom. He seemed deep in thought and was working on something - I wondered what it could be. I picked up a magazine and vacantly scanned its pages. After about five minutes a young man enters the room. He walks over to the gentleman sitting alone and says: "Hello, you're here early." From this comment, I surmised that this was Tom. The gentleman responded, "Yes, I had an earlier meeting in the area just came straight from there, but I have plenty to do so you go ahead." At that point, Tom looks up and walks over to me and tentatively says, "Wendell?" I stood and greeted him.

After we sat down at a table and engaged in small talk, we discussed a range of items - the HR market in Atlanta, my background, his company, and SHRM. I then brought up that I heard that he was a Christian. He seemed open to discuss his faith so I shared my recent acceptance of the call to the ministry and how I felt that I was being led to develop a coaching practice. He encouraged me. While the meeting was pleasant, I was not sure if anything would ever come of our meeting. As we wound up the conversation he told me that I should meet the person who his next meeting was with because he was one of the original developers of The Crossroads Career Network. I was very familiar with it because there is a Crossroads Career Network based at my church. I was very interested in meeting him because I thought that I was going to be doing some career coaching and thought that Crossroads would be a good tool. He took me over and introduced me to the gentleman that he greeted earlier. We exchanged pleasantries and talked about Crossroads briefly. I gave him my business cards and asked for his. He did not have one with him, but he looked at my card, made a joke about my e-mail address, and told me that he would send me his information. Not satisfied with that, I asked him to write his contact information on the tablet in my hand. I couldn't even remember his name. He responded that he REALLY would send his contact information. I said my good-byes and left the wood paneled room through the huge double doors.

Some days went by. I never heard from the gentleman, and never really gave it much thought. As I was trying to get out of the house for a lunch appointment on 4/29, I received a phone call from a man that identified himself as Brian Ray. One of the first things out of his mouth after he introduced himself was, "I am not sure why I called you." Early-on he brought up the name of Heather McAfee, a young woman with whom I had worked and had the utmost respect for. This gave him instant credibility. He mentioned that he had spoken with her earlier that morning and that during the course of their conversation she mentioned my name. He did not mention the context. He then said again, "I am not sure why I called you." I then thought why is this person on my phone - are they trying sell me something??? At that moment, he shifted gears and began to share with me about three ventures/companies with whom he worked and/or owned. He described each of them - executive recruiting, career counseling, and a website that gave free career advice. I locked-in on the career counseling - given my interest in career coaching. By this time, my heart started to stir and I knew that this was not an ordinary phone call but that this was a divine connection. I mentioned that I was in training to be an executive/career coach. He asked me what the training was like. I told him that it was good, but there were some parts of the training I disagreed with. He asked, "What?" I told him that one of the core principles of the training is that the coach's client is "creative, resourceful and whole" and that if the client did not know Christ this was a lie. He began to chuckle and I said the reason why you called me is because you are also a Christian - aren't you? He responded in the affirmative with as much awe with which I asked the question.

He then shared with me that after he hung up the phone with Heather, he felt The Lord speaking to him to call that man - Wendell Bryant that Heather had just mentioned. He did not know how to contact me so he googled me to find any contact information that he could. He was able to find my phone number on the web - thus the phone call. I was running pretty late, I had to leave, and asked would it be possible for us to schedule some time later to continue our discussion. We

scheduled a lunch date for the next week. He asked for my e-mail address because he wanted to send me an e-mail with a link to his websites so that I could review before our scheduled lunch. I said, "My e-mail address is - W, A as in apple, M as in Mary, B as in boy, the number 1 at AOL dot com." When I said that he asked me to hold-on. I heard him shuffling papers in the background and then he picked the phone back up. He asked me if I knew a guy named Tom Darrow. I said, "Yes." It then dawned on me why he was asking. I then asked, are you the person that was waiting to meet with Tom at The Club on Tuesday? He responded with the same sense of awe, "yes."

The resource that Brian has been as I have moved forward into my God ordained destiny has been pretty incredible and while neither of us is really sure what the end of this divine connection will bring, we are both committed to seeking the Lord and as we seek him, the purpose will be revealed.

I learned three things from this experience. First, coincidence accident, nor chance is a description for what happened here. This was an actual miracle! To describe this as a coincidence does not acknowledge God, his sovereignty, nor his ability to control every aspect of the world. I never want to take things like this for granted. Secondly, in the midst of my needs, God is moving and arranging things to ensure that my needs are met - in this case it is Godly counsel. While I am in this uncomfortable place (I have not worked in almost 8 months), I am acknowledging and looking to Jesus Christ at every step - the author and finisher of my faith. Lastly, the importance of obedience. While this is vicarious learning for me in this situation, it has been the most valuable. What if Brian had not submitted to the leading of the Holy Spirit to find my contact information and call me? He could have easily let his self-talk/flesh ("I don't know him or he'll think I am crazy.) overtake the urge to follow His unction. Little things can have a big impact on another person's life when we follow the leading of the Lord. I hope and pray that I will be able to do the same one day.