**A WONDER IN THE POOL**

With great interest Bob Bowman watched little Michael swim. Every time he stepped into the pool, Michael was unbeatable. Bob Bowman approached Michael's parents and made a request: “Give me the opportunity to coach your son and I will make him a champion in the 2004, 2008 and 2012 Olympic games”. “We only brought Michael to the pool because he is a naughty boy”, the parents replied. “Let me train him”, Bowman replied, “and I'll make little Michael a champion”. Thus began the story of Michael Phelps, who became a wonder in the pool. Michael is the athlete with the most Olympic medals. Michael was champion in Athens 2004, Beijing 2008, London 2012 and Rio de Janeiro 2016. He won 28 Olympic medals in total, being 23 of them, gold.

It is beautiful to see how the right vision of a coach and the disposition of a young man and his family, were able to create a true champion. In the same way, God has beautiful plans for each of his children. One of the greatest promises of the Bible is: "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11 NKJV). To understand this, we have to recognize the following.

**God created us with a purpose**

God knows every human being, for he has formed us in a wonderful way. Each of us is God's masterpiece. The Psalmist David wrote: “For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And *that* my soul knows very well.” (Psalm 139: 13-14 NKJV).

God has created each of his children with wonderful abilities and skills, which he wants us to develop. “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.” (James 1:17 NKJV).

God has created his children for his glory: “Everyone who is called by My name, whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him.” (Isaiah 43: 7 NKJV)

**God has plans for each of his children**

Do you remember God's promise? The Lord told them “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11 NKJV).

To understand what God's plans are for his children, Jesus used the figure of an earthly father. He tried to explain it with these words: "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!.” (Matthew 7:11 NKJV). Jesus reveals two important lessons. First, If human beings in their imperfection want the best for their children, how much more will our heavenly Father, who is perfect give us the best. Second, earthly parents have good plans for their children, but God's plans exceed all human expectations. They are perfect plans.

Do you remember the story of Joseph? His father Jacob loved him very much and had beautiful plans for him. Jacob wanted his son to be the inheritor to everything he had built. Although Joseph was one of the youngest children in order of birth, he still was the firstborn; he was the first son of Rachel. Jacob gave his son Joseph a colorful robe to show his affection and his love for him (Genesis 37: 3). In addition to a double portion as a first-born right, the inheritance of his father profession and the leadership of the family, Jacob wanted his son to be the receptor of the divine promise, the promise of being a blessing for all the world and being the father of a great nation (Genesis 12: 1-3). How many times, under the light of the moon and the stars, next to the tents of the family, Jacob shared with Joseph the promise God gave to Abraham! What a beautiful scene of a father teaching his son to love God above anything else!

Although Jacob had plans for his son, he had no idea about the wonderful way God was going to guide his boy and transform him into one of the greatest men in history. God began to give Joseph glimpses of his purposes by sending him dreams, where he implied that his plans were truly great (Genesis 37: 5). To achieve this, God allowed Joseph to go through a difficult path, which would prepare him for the fulfillment of his duty. When Joseph was already the governor of Egypt, he recognized that God had guided his life with a wonderful purpose. He declared that God was the one who had sent him to Egypt (Genesis 45: 8) and he guided everything with a purpose (Genesis 50:20)

Always remember the following: “Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God's ideal for His children. Godliness—godlikeness—is the goal to be reached. Before the student there is opened a path of continual progress. He has an object to achieve, a standard to attain, that includes everything good, and pure, and noble. He will advance as fast and as far as possible in every branch of true knowledge. But his efforts will be directed to objects as much higher than mere selfish and temporal interests as the heavens are higher than the earth.” [ED 18.4]

**God's plans are fulfilled in Jesus Christ**

In fact, God has great and beautiful plans for each of his children, for each human being. It is true that we need to fight, to strive in order to achieve these goals, however the greatest truth is that God's plans for his children are achieved in Christ Jesus. Jesus said: “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” (John 14: 6 NKJV). “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?” (Matthew 16:26 NKJV). When you give your life to Christ and you live for him, then everything makes sense. The servant of the Lord said: “He who loves Christ the most will do the greatest amount of good. There is no limit to the usefulness of one who, by putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart, and lives a life wholly consecrated to God.” (DA 250. 4)

**Invitation**

Do you want to place your life in the hands of Christ today so God may fulfill his purpose in you? I invite you to pray.