



WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF...

By Susan Vogt

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As parents of four children, we've had our share of scrapes and falls and trips to the emergency room. The most recent one involved our eight year old, Dacian, who cut his knee open playing on a slide. Not life threatening, but a concern and time consuming. After Dacian was home, stitches in place, and we had administered appropriate doses of commiseration and sympathy, I got to thinking: What would have happened if we had gone to a different playground or perhaps stayed home that night? I suppose he would have avoided the injury. Why are we so unlucky?

Or perhaps you've had a car accident. After the obligatory self-recriminations and stomping of feet, you've wondered what would have happened if you had left just five minutes earlier (or later). Another stroke of bad luck.

Several times I've berated myself after such an accident or bad turn of luck and wished I had done something slightly different thus avoiding all this inconvenience. Then I got to thinking. You know, this can work the *other* way too. I wonder how many times, unknown to me, I've avoided a catastrophe. Perhaps that time I stopped the car in the nick of time and didn't plow into the back of another vehicle should be counted. Usually I sigh a quick "Whew" and don't think any more of it, although a few more seconds could have been a life changing event for me.

As I remember the times I've caught the kids from falling or remembered to do something important that I almost forgot, I marvel at all the potential difficulties I've missed – and don't even acknowledge the good luck I've had.

I've heard some people call these fortunate events miracles, and the disastrous ones God trying to teach us a lesson. Others just call it luck or fate. Personally I try not to analyze God's motives or depict natural happening as God's magical work, but I do think there can be a stance of faith here that says something like – Since I choose to be a person of faith I see God working in our world. Thus it is not usually the objective reality that God changes, but rather my *heart* so that I might recognize God's presence in each event of my life – good or bad.

This growing awareness has been sobering for me and I've started to cultivate a thankfulness for when life goes smoothly and no glitches develop instead of taking this for granted as my due.

I wonder what would have happened if...

- you had taken a different route to work today?
- you had decided to go to a movie instead of staying home (or vice versa)?
- you hadn't read this article today?

Perhaps this is just a brainteaser, or perhaps it could be "Thanks-provoking".