

## Children's Sermon (road map)

(How) reliant are you? What are the things or actions you do regularly that, if you did not do them or use them, your day would not be complete?

There's the very (basics): breathing, moving, eating, sleeping. Fine. Are there other things or actions that you are reliant on?

(Have) the electric-power go out at your house and it may not take too long to (realize) the TV, or music, or refrigerator, or stove are things you rely on. When your car is with the mechanic you might realize how reliant you are.

That being said, I have come to the realization that I am becoming a ("digital) traveler." Last weekend I navigated north-central Oregon by phone. Actually I did it by GPS. A lovely female voice spoke clear directions with plenty of time to prepare. *In one quarter of a mile at highway 143, turn right toward Kelso.* Have you done that? It is an engineering wonder. How does that she know where I am? And better yet, when the road I was told to turn right on is "closed" it did not take too long for her voice to say *in 800 feet use the left lane to turn left.* Amazing! And yes, when I tried to find my way on my own.....I did not always get to where I wanted to be. Humbling, isn't it?

And even (better,) the GPS system can even determine the fastest route to take to save you a few to several minutes! Where was that technology when I was younger, (making) decisions that would not turn out very well? How would your life be different today if you had the benefit of a life-GPS to guide your choices and direct your ways 20, 30, 40, or 50 years ago?

I'd like to advocate (for a) spiritual-GPS. This device would directly connect the Holy Spirit to your phone, no, to your soul. Your Spiritual GPS will chime in when your choices are about to derail your life. How would you respond to that non-judgmental voice saying....*(in 45) seconds you will be asked to sign this contract...that will affect your life for the next 30 years.* Or, *(in 20) seconds the angry words you are about to say will end your relationship with this life-long friend.* Or, *(in 500) feet, Jesus will ask you for any help you can give.....dressed as a homeless woman.*

Now, I can already hear some of you (saying) "I don't want a nagging voice interrupting me all the time." I'd encourage you to reframe your comment in a positive way. That voice could help make my life better!

That being said, if we go old school for a bit there are written records of the Spiritual GPS. (These) words are intended to bless your life and to warn you of dangers ahead.

In the Proverbs, (wisdom) is described as a welcoming, gracious woman. Her invitation comes to each and every one of us to come into her home, and be fed, be cared for, and be instructed. The way of wisdom is a no-brainer, but since its way is not the quickest or the easiest we may be more liable to listen to her (neighbor), foolishness. Foolishness is loud, and she encourages everyone to stop trying to please others, and learn to please themselves.

The Spiritual GPS of the Proverbs draws us into a close confident relationship with Sophia, the Spirit of God. Come, for all are welcome....

A thousand years (later,) Paul's letter to the Ephesians offers his Spiritual GPS. *In one mile roadwork will slow (your trip) by 45 minutes...re-calculating.* Watch where you walk. Be mindful of your neighbor. Be careful of your use of alcohol, pain-pills, chemicals, and all of your vices. Be filled with the Spirit...*in two-miles use the two left lanes to merge onto the way of spirituality.* Stop telling lies, and more, stop believing lies. Treat everyone with care. Be quick to praise, and slow to condemn. Join in singing songs and hymns of praise. Wouldn't that be wonderful!

As I drove around northern Oregon, she would up-date the journey. *Road-closed (ahead.) Re-calculating*, and sure enough (she would) have me take back roads, 3 rights, 2 lefts, and boom, there I am back on the highway.... past the construction. Had I ignored her instructions.....what would have happened? Who knows? I'd have to fumble around in a strange land. No landmarks. No signage. No references. Go back the way I came. Frustrating? I thought I knew where I wanted to go, but the way I planned didn't pan out.

Has that ever happened to you? Unless you are one of those (control) freaks I talked about last week.....having all your ducks in a row.....you know that life is more like trying to (keep) a dozen cats in a row. Impossible. (*Re-calculating.*) *In 1,000 feet make a u-turn. Re-calculating. In 800 feet turn right. Re-calculating.*

(Spiritually), life can often feel like that. I want to deepen my understanding of the Bible. How? I'll just (read it.) How about Leviticus!!! (*Re-calculating.*)

I want to deepen my (prayer) life in contemplation. How? I'll sit quietly for 30 minutes. Oh, I need to get milk and eggs at the store. Did I pay the Visa bill? I need to go through my closet and get rid of stuff. (*Re-calculating.*)

Jesus said that our faithful relationship (with God) is to be based not in believing but in understanding. In that I mean we need to open ourselves to the presence of the Holy Spirit. That means we need to do some pretty hard work: acknowledge our limitations, be humble in understanding our own efforts, and to make ourselves vulnerable to receive God's love. (That) is the narrow door we are to seek.

(Jesus) is never upset at sinners. He is only upset with people to do not think they are sinners, but who keep tabs on the sins of other people. That is the tragic edge of life. It is that (spirit) that fills the news these days: the self-righteous calling down fire on the perceived sins of others. Is this how ones Spiritual GPS works?

No. That doesn't work. (The Holy) Spirit will not allow you to do that. It may become, to you, a nagging (voice)....if you choose to continue straight ahead with how your independent life rolls (along).... *In half a mile turn left onto Highway 137. In one quarter mile, make a u-turn. Re-calculating. Present plan does not lead you to your destination. Re-calculating. Pull off the road and re-consider your destination. Re-calculating. In 2 miles turn left onto the road to recovery. (Re-calculating.) Re-calculating. (Calling) on-star. Amen.*

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