

Keep on Truck' in!

Dear friend, take my advice; it will add years to your life.

I'm writing out clear directions to Wisdom Way, I'm drawing a map to Righteous Road. I don't want you ending up in blind alleys, or wasting time making wrong turns.

Hold tight to good advice; don't relax your grip. Guard it well-your life is at stake! Don't take Wicked Bypass; don't as much as set foot on that road. Stay clear of it; give it a wide berth. Make a detour and be on your way. Proverbs 4:10 The Message.

At one point or another, we've all found ourselves wandering down a long and lonely path. Many of us have traversed deep and far and turned to and fro only to later realize that we've ended up on the wrong road. Nobody said we're perfect.

However, there is just a tiny difference between accidentally taking a wrong exit that ultimately adds ten or fifteen minutes to our travel time and heading off on a two or three year destiny destroying joy ride. Getting lost isn't a sin. Staying lost, on the other hand, is simply the opposite of wise.

I'll never forget the time that I took Shelby on an extracurricular journey that quickly turned into the World's Worst Road Trip! I made the fatal decision to stray from the straight and narrow in order to take my lovely wife on, what I believed would be, the scenic route. Our travels were taking us through new country and I thought it would be a lot more enjoyable for us to view some sights that were only visible off of the beaten trail. That thought was only the beginning of the end! My little side trip caused us to endure several hours of banging our way up and down dirty, dusty, pot-hole filled gravel roads. Enjoyable was not the word later used by anyone to describe the trail that carried us all the way from Wyoming into Montana.

All along the way, I kept thinking to myself, "We'll be back on the black-top really soon! Surely, pavement will pick back up again just around that next turn." Unfortunately, the gravel roads knew no end and continued to wind their way through county after county and turn after turn.

Strangely, Shelby knew almost immediately that a mistake had been made. It was shortly after experiencing the rush of adrenalin that follows having your head bounce off the headliner of a motor vehicle, that she verbally expressed this great epiphany.

Very politely, she pointed out that turning around might not be that bad of an idea. I, on the other hand, refusing to admit that any error had occurred at all, boldly continued to share my belief that I was making nothing but wisdom based choices.

"Just wait," I exhorted. "This is going to be a lot of fun! You'll see."

To my misfortune, we had several hours of I.D.T. (intense discussion time) Most of our discourse during this expedition through the wilderness was in regards to what Shelby constantly referred to as the devastating outcome of the choices that I had most recently made. Then, suddenly it happened! It came without notice and, to this very day, I can remember the exact spot along the trail where I received my great revelation. It was almost as if a voice from heaven gently spoke to me and uncovered a truth previously hidden to my eyes. I could now see that a grave error had truly been committed. I wasn't sure that it was totally my fault, but I could see that this so-called scenic route had a few characteristics that lacked great appeal.

Even with the possession of this golden nugget of wisdom, I still had yet one more difficult problem to deal with. I couldn't, for the life of me, figure out the proper way to admit that I had taken us down the wrong road without having to take full responsibility for our dilemma. So, rather than bringing it up again, I simply continued driving silently in the hope that civilization would poke its tiny head around the next curve. I believed with every fiber of my being that, sooner or later, it would have to appear. There's only so much dirt that a couple of states can contain!

Although it turned out to be later-much later-we did eventually find our way back onto the highway. As luck would have it, Miss Shelby-due to exhaustion-had passed out quite a few miles back up the trail. I thought it best not to wake her only to inform her of the many, many beautiful sights that she had missed out on sharing with me as we traveled through the wilderness on a dusty, rocky road through the dark of night.

Taking the scenic route wasn't a sin. It was just STUPID! If only I had taken the time to actually read the map or to stop long enough to ask a couple of questions!

But no-in my unyielding stubbornness-I attempted to repair my current situation by using the same brain that had created my mess to begin with. It was the sheer grace of God (and Shelby's blameless life) that allowed us to eventually find our way back home again. There were several wide spots in the trail, had I been willing to simply turn around, where my decision would have only cost us a few additional moments in time. However, I choose to continue down a path that I knew was incorrect.

It was that decision that added the real fuel to the fire that, with only a spark, I had started. I realize that I am writing to fellow travelers today. Many of my compadres suffer from the same strong will that has constantly affected my life in the arena of decision making. It is very easy to get lost along the way. Anybody can do it. As I stated earlier, getting lost isn't a major sin. Staying lost, however, is not the mark of genius, either. Maybe a little detour would assist you in getting back on your way, as well? Is it possible that you've elected to embark upon one of life's many journeys without so much as a map or clear directions of any kind? We must constantly remember that it really isn't very difficult to make a wrong turn, especially when we're traveling in new territory.

Maybe another thing we trailblazers need to remember is that we've been given the Ultimate GPS System to assist us in reaching our destinations. The Holy Spirit is more than willing to take an active role in keeping us on the straight and narrow.

Along with that, we've been blessed with The Road Map Extraordinaire. Our Bible is an exciting step-by-step Adventure Planning Guide that directs our steps around all types of ruts and pitfalls. Add to all of this the instruction that we receive on a weekly basis through the teaching of God's Word and there's really only one left to do. Obey!

You see, we don't need to find ourselves trapped on a lonely road in the middle of nowhere wondering which way leads back towards the high life that God has created for us to enjoy. There's really no need for us to wind up on blind alleys or to waste our time making wrong turns.

Don't be afraid to read (and even study) your road map. If you're still confused, stop long enough to ask a few questions. Trust me on this one! Wisdom Way has been paved for our traveling enjoyment. Righteous Road is the way to go. Don't even slow down when you see the Wicked Way exit approaching. In the words of my father's wisdom-Just keep on truck' in!

We believe in you! Pastors Thom and Shelby

