

That Voice in the Box



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Eternally Speaking Now

A man's heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.
Proverbs 16:9

On our way home from a family reunion last month, Robin, Zach and I traveled through five states in one day. This may sound impressive, but it's actually more fun to report than it was incredible to do. Somehow it just happened during the course of a seven hour drive...thanks to the **GPS**.

As you can imagine, we depended (probably too much) on that little **voice in the box** to get us literally everywhere we needed to go.

Speaking of the **GPS**, we experienced something you may have noticed on your own road trips. At some point, it directed us to take a road going North. Then, it quickly commanded we go East. The problem is that we were trying to *get home*, which was in the completely opposite direction: we needed to move South and West, not North and East.

Hmmmm. Was the **GPS** wrong?

We were at the crossroad many of you have likely encountered:
Do we obey the machine, or do we decide to defy it?
Do we pull over and pull up another map to see the path for ourselves,
or do we continue as told, blindly believing *the voice*?

Admittedly, I've all too often questioned the **GPS**,
done my own thing, and ended up lost. Based on that history,
my husband and I decided to continue North and East,
trusting we'd find ourselves South and West.

Sure enough, our family returned home not only safely and on time, but also having
been diverted from several construction zones and areas of delayed
traffic...thanks to the **GPS**.

I wonder if you've caught on to the direction in which I'm going here.

Yes, there was a lesson from God in all this.

It's short and succinct:

In life, sometimes we need to go North and East to end up South and West.

At some point in my life, when I'd lived long enough to look back and discern life's
lessons more clearly, I discovered this:

God has designed a plan for each of us.
Let's say He wants to get you to Point J.
You start at Point A, move to Point B, then progress towards Point C.
You're feeling good. Life's landscape looks positive.
You're in the will of God, and the groove feels right.
As you begin traveling towards Point D, though,
you notice where you're headed isn't where you thought Point D was.
In fact, you couldn't be any farther away from where you'd expected to be.
Soon you observe you're at a location in life
that is so opposite from what you thought Point D would be,
that you wonder if you've done anything right at all.
You get confused.
You thought you were following the Lord's guidance.
Had you heard Him clearly?

Time passes. You continue on to Points E, F and G, persevering through
unexpected bumps along the road-- both surprises and mysteries, both treasures
and tragedies. G leads to H, H leads to I, and ta-da! You find yourself landing at
Point J, a place you'd never have imagined,
desired,
or sought.
And it is amazing.

Looking back at the unique steps in your life,
you realize with "hindsight 20-20 vision"
that God's plans all along somehow included mysterious Point D.
You see how you'd never have arrived at J had it not been for D and everything in
between. In fact, Point D reveals itself as having benefited you in ways you'd never
have been able to anticipate back when you endured it.

***And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God,
to those who are the called according to His purpose.***

Romans 8:28

Yup, sometimes God will take us North and East to eventually get us to South and
West. And it is good.

CHALLENGE

There's another lesson from my family's travels last month, and it has to do with
the **GPS**. Buckle up, put on your thinking hat, and go along for the ride with me,
as I do my best to capture God's greatness and put it into a few more paragraphs.

You've likely heard the phrase, "Jesus is my Co-Pilot," or the song title, "Jesus Take
the Wheel." These sayings are catchy, empowering, and meaningful; they've
certainly ministered to me over the years. I'd like to propose though, that the Holy
Spirit would like us to go farther than those mottos; He wants to draw us into a
deeper, more dynamic, other-worldly relationship with Him.

Here is what I mean:

If we are in Christ, then in a sense, He is our vehicle, right?
We surrender our lives to Him,
abide in Him,
and let Him direct our lives.
We are "in Him," and He takes us where we need to go.

On the other hand,
it's also true that as we abide in Christ, He abides in us, yes?
Doesn't that then make *us His* vehicles?

***(Jesus said), "Abide in Me, and I in you.
As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself,
unless it abides in the vine, neither can you,
unless you abide in Me.***

***I am the vine, you are the branches.
He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit;
for without Me you can do nothing."***

John 15:4-5

Somehow, as we abide in Christ and He in us,
He is in us *and* we are in Him.

We are made one together, at the same time.

He is the vehicle in which we travel,

and we are *His* vehicle in which *He* travels--

we are His chosen vessels to carry His love, truth, and presence to others.

***"For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness,
who has shone in our hearts to give
the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus
Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels,
that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us."
2 Corinthians 4:6-7***

How magnificent is this?

It goes farther.

(I'm traversing my way towards the **GPS** part. Please don't pass by this.)

If I am God's vehicle, and He is also mine,
then who is in the driver's seat?

While this question could prompt a lengthy and enjoyable theological discussion, for the sake of time, let me summarize the answer. *(If you'd like the Scriptures that support the following, feel free to ask.)*

- The Lord is sovereign (in control over all), yet He has also given mankind free will (the ability to make our own choices).
- We are never equal to God; He is our Father and our Creator. He adores us and calls us into loving, lasting relationship with Him.
- When, by an act of our will, we've surrendered to Jesus, His Holy Spirit comes to dwell in us. His Word promises He will abide with us forever, will seal us by His Spirit, will not permit any to snatch us out of His hand, and will not let anything separate us from His love. *We become a citizen of His kingdom. He is our King, and we give up all rights over our will.*
- We are then left with that daily struggle between flesh and spirit, *but* because of God's Spirit dwelling in us, we are no longer slaves to sin. We are free to say "Yes!" to God's will and "No!" to ours.

Therefore, because those in Christ are now one in Christ,
it cannot be "just God" or "just me"
in the driver's seat of my life.
It must be both.

*Both the Lord and I are in my driver's seat.
Together, as one, at the same time.*

Yes, road blocks and detours will inevitably come.
We'll face dead ends, and the route will need to "recalculate" at times.
Do you feel like you're stuck driving in circles on a round-about?
Are you in need of a road sign?
Have you gotten lost somewhere along the journey?
The direction we choose in each of these situations
will depend on whose **voice** we obey.

Will we mind our own will or submit to God's?
Will we acquiesce to the **voice** of the current culture and the lust of the flesh,
or will we listen to the **voice** of the Holy Spirit?

Be on guard. Proverbs 16:25 cautions,

***"There is a way that seems right to a man,
but its end is the way of death."***

*It's all about the **GPS**-- that little **voice in the box**.*

Which **GPS** were we created to embrace?

God's
Perfect
Steps

God's steps for us are clearly presented in the Bible.
His Word is like a treasure box, ready and available to you every hour.
Open it! Read it! *Follow it.*
The Lord who wrote it is the only One who knows the future.
He's the only One who genuinely *knows you*.
He sees around every corner.
He knows what lies ahead, and
His **voice** is the only One worth obeying.

Oh, give thanks to the Lord for *His* **GPS**! We'd be lost without Him.

So, there you go: you've been given the keys.
Now put them in the ignition,
surrender afresh to Jesus,
pray, read His Word, and
be led by the Spirit of God--
that glorious,
loving,
mighty (yet often gentle and quiet)
Voice in the Box.

***Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
and lean not on your own understanding;
In all your ways acknowledge Him,
and He shall direct your paths.***
Proverbs 3:5-6

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