

Wisdom for Life's Journey

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55: 8-9

When I was a little girl my parents took me camping a lot. Hidden in the forests of Wisconsin are dozens of campgrounds. Summer weekends for our family meant packing up all necessary supplies on Friday and spending the next 48 hours enjoying the outdoors. We camped with family friends. I have many fond memories of camping as a young girl. Many of those memories include exploring nature. As my friends and I explored God's creation, which included venturing down trails we hadn't traveled before, we found ourselves asking (on more than one occasion)... "Was this the right way?" Thinking back now, that question can have a deeper meaning, especially when reflecting on one's spiritual journey in life.

Sometimes life is great. You cruise along life's path and enjoy the wind blowing through your hair. You take time to smell the flowers and appreciate all of God's blessings. Thoughts of happiness consume your thinking when everything seems to be going just right. At other times you may feel discouraged, frustrated or angry. For example, you receive a rebate check in the mail for an account credit and all of a sudden you have an extra \$200 in spending money. With that money you decide to treat yourself to a new outfit and handbag. The next day you get a flat tire. All of a sudden, you find yourself wishing that the \$200 spent on new wardrobe purchases was instead deposited into a savings account at the bank. Maybe you missed that "detour" on life's freeway and now instead have encountered an obstacle or bump in the road. Life's challenges are often self-inflicted. Whether you like it or not, your selfish motivations influence your "driving." That voice, your Old Adam, offers unwanted advice or reasons, similar to that of a backseat driver. Regardless of the journey you are on, your ways are full of interruptions. You can't depend on the choices that you make for yourselves or others.

I heard an interesting comment on a Christian radio station this morning that connects directly to the point above. Not only do we make poor choices, we publish those decisions and share our thoughts for the whole world to see. In today's society, it is even more challenging to overcome the barriers we've created because of the constant reminders that penetrate our lives with social media sources like Facebook and Twitter. We break up with a boyfriend and instead of moving on, we remain "friends" on Facebook and continue to harbor the memories of a relationship gone badly by visiting his profile or Facebook page daily. I sometimes see friends take out their anger or issues with one another by bashing each other's reputation through "tweets" on Twitter. The more we try to control things in life, the less trust we have in the Lord's provisions. He will give us everything we need. All we have to do is ask and reflect on the words in Isaiah, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord."

Just like when you reach the final destination at the end of a long road trip and there is pure joy and excitement, we can find that same exhilarated feeling even when we make bad choices because God promises to never leave us nor forsake us. He is still constant in his care for us. Fortunately, God's ways are not like our ways. He's always consistent, loving and faithful. Even when we fail him, he doesn't fail us. The wisdom Paul shared with Timothy, still applies today: "...if we are faithless, he will remain faithful." (2 Timothy 2:13)

The next time you find yourself at a fork in the road and you contemplate making a decision, whether it be in regard to relationships, money, school, a job, or spiritual choices, think before you act. More importantly, have a conversation with your Savior and let him know how thankful you are that he lived a perfect life for you so that any mistakes made along the way are already atoned for. Ask for guidance and wisdom as you "travel," until you meet the Father face-to-face when you reach the true, final destination—eternal life in heaven.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, I am so thankful that I don't have to worry about the ways of this world. Help me to trust your ways. When I find myself trying to control things in life, help me to remember your will be done. When I am self-absorbed with life's many responsibilities and struggle to find a clear frame of mind, please send your Holy Spirit calm my fears and worries. I know I don't deserve anything, but thank you for thinking of me and for being the Way, the Truth and the Life. In your Holy Name I pray. Amen.

For further reading:

Isaiah 55: 1-13

Written by April Richter

Reviewed by Pastor Joel Gerlach