

Real Men Don't Ask for Directions

When I'm driving, I hate having to stop and ask for directions. It makes me feel stupid.

"Pardon me, but do you know where 117th Street is?"

"Yeah, you're driving on it. The wrong way."

Besides, I have a GPS, which works great, until it doesn't. I've noticed it seems to work everywhere in North America ... except in Grande Prairie!

Not wanting to ask for directions is a 'man' thing, I guess, like never reading the instruction manual when putting together the thirty-seventh set of shelves that Jane brought home from Walmart. Who needs instruction manuals, anyway?

OK, you see where I'm going with this. My life needs direction. I need guidance. I need a sense of purpose. Where do I get these things from?

There is only one possible answer for me. God is directing my life. When I'm worried, or face problems that seem unsolvable, or when I am discouraged, I ask God for directions. He doesn't mind. He wants me to.

And He has shown me that there's more help available when I need it. The GPS in my life is the Word of God, the

Bible. I turn to that for insight and direction too, every time I need advice, or clarification about what God wants.

And God makes sure I am never lacking for help. He sends me Christian friends, who are my instruction manual; their advice and suggestions help keep me centred on God, and lift my sights away from the world and toward something better.

Recently a friend told me about difficulties she had had, and how, despite the setbacks in her life, which were considerable, she saw them as a way that God was trying to make her a better person, to make her life one that would bring glory to Him. In her words, *“It has made me more compassionate towards others who are struggling, and quicker to reach out”*.

What she said had a profound impact on me. If she could see God’s love in her life even when things were going terribly wrong, how much easier might it be for me to trust in God, and let Him deal with my own worries, which are minor in comparison?

I am amazed by the depth of her faith. I know I’m not that strong. Not yet. But at the same time, her words were uplifting. They helped me to see just a little bit more clearly what it means to truly give oneself over to God. I know I am blessed to have friends like that. It’s one of the many

ways that God is looking after me, and keeping me pointed in the right direction.

Yet I still worry about a lot of things. When I talk to God, I worry that He isn't listening. Then I worry that what I'm doing isn't really what He wants me to do. I worry about my daughters. I worry about my students, and whether I'm reaching them; with some, I know that I'm not. I worry about friends and family. Mostly I worry about me, and whether I'm living up to God's expectations.

I think you get the picture. What I need to do is 'ask for directions'; to turn all of this over to Him, and trust Him to make sure everything turns out all right. But it's not always easy to let go and let God do it, or to let Him take care of difficult situations or problems. Everything I've read says that the more you are able to do this, the easier it gets. I sure hope so.

I know that letting go and 'letting God do it' doesn't mean I should sit back and do nothing while I wait for God to do what I need Him to do. Trusting in Him is important, and I do, but I know I have to trust Him to guide me to do the things He expects me to do.

It's the things I worry about *over which I have no control* that I have trouble turning over to Him.

Someone sent me this quotation: "*Relax. Have Faith. Be Patient. God is working on it!*" I like that quote ... but it also tells me where I'm failing.

Faith, I have. Patience? Not so much!

Turning my life over to God should mean that I am willing to follow His lead, without necessarily knowing where He's taking me. It should mean that I'm willing to wait for His help without knowing when it will come. It should mean that I expect miracles, without really knowing when or how they will happen. And it means I should trust that His purposes will always result in making me a better person, even if I don't understand why He does the things He does.

I wonder if sometimes God gets a little bit perturbed with us trying to figure out why He does what He does. Does He think, "*Why don't they just not worry about it, and think about what I've given them, instead of trying to figure out what I'm doing?*"

How do I get to a place where I can just let God deal with things I can't handle? I'm not there yet; sometimes I don't know how ... sometimes I just forget that He's there with me. I think part of my problem is that I haven't totally surrendered myself to Him. I'm still saying "*I can do this for God*", instead of "*I don't have the strength, but I know God does, and He will do it with me*". When I trust God, I will do

things not through my own strength, but His. In other words, I don't 'work for God'. I let God work through me.

My prayers now always start with asking God to take over my problems and worries. I try to stay in touch with Him day by day, minute by minute; I know I need His guidance, His directions. And when I forget how to ask, I guess I need to go back and read the instruction manual again!

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you”.

(Matthew 7:7)

Addendum [2023]: Looking back on this article, I am amazed at how much God has done for me over the intervening years, and how I have indeed learned to turn everything over to Him. He has helped me through things that I could never have gotten through on my own. He still helps me. Every day.