

Anne Graham Lotz: Follow God's 'Road Markings' to Live in His Abundance

"See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I am commanding you today, and the curse, if you will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn from the way which I am commanding you today" (Deut. 11:26-28a).

When I drive down the highway, painted lines on the pavement provide helpful guidance. A dotted white line lets me know that if the lane of oncoming traffic is clear, I can pass other cars. A solid line means no passing is allowed. The highway department is not trying to take away my joy in driving. The lines on the road are intended to keep me safe, and keep others safe, while I'm on my way to my destination.

In a similar way, as we live and travel down life's road, we can push the boundaries God has established. But we do so at our own peril. If we go outside His "road markings," the likelihood is that we will get hurt, as well as hurt other people. At the very least, we will experience life on a lower level than He intended. The alternative is to take God at His Word, stay within His boundaries and trust Him to know what's best for us.

Let's consider some of His road markings:

–When God says to have no other gods before Him, He knows that other gods—such as money, fame, sex, pleasure, power—will enslave you.

–When God says not to create and worship idols, He knows that behind them are demonic forces who will weaken you, deceive

you and suck you into evil attitudes, words, actions and thoughts that you had no idea you were capable of having or saying or doing.

–When God says not to misuse His name, He knows that unless you reverence Him, you will not have even the beginning of wisdom with which to live and make your decisions.

–When God says to set aside one day in seven in order to focus on Him, He knows that such a lifestyle will help keep your faith anchored and remind you that the world doesn't need your effort to continue spinning.

–When God says to honor your parents, He knows it will lead to a richer, fuller, longer life.

–When God says not to murder, He knows that human life has a high value. Yours and theirs.

–When God says not to commit adultery, He knows sexual betrayal destroys a marriage bond and cracks the foundation of a nation.

–When God says not to steal, He knows that if we want others to respect us and our possessions, we need to respect them and their possessions. Without mutual trust, we cannot have safe, healthy relationships.

–When God says not to lie, He knows that integrity is foundational to a successful life and a strong society.

–When God says not to covet, He knows the danger of never being content with what we have, whether it's a spouse, a home or a job. We will be dominated by greed that demands more and more until we are insatiably unfulfilled (Ex. 20:3-17).

This simple and incomplete rationale for heeding God's road markings illustrates that His practical, divine directions for living are for our own good. And while you may be questioning what the Holy Spirit has to do with what is in essence the Ten

Commandments given by God to Moses, we may benefit from being reminded that the entire Bible is “God-breathed”—divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit, both Old Testament and New Testament (2 Tim. 3:16).

When you or I go outside His directions for living—His road markings—we wind up with less than God intended us to have. This begs the question, what if you have gone outside God’s road markings? What if you have hurt yourself or someone else and now want to live according to God’s directions? The first step is just to tell Him. Be honest.

So at the beginning of this new year, whether you have been living in ignorance of His directions or in rebellion against them, tell Him what you have done, where you are and that you want to live as He directs. Then start reading your Bible. Study it, love it and live by it. God the Holy Spirit is your helper. Your strengthener. Your Counselor. He is just waiting for you to turn to Him and give Him the freedom and authority to bring order out of your chaos. {eoa}

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