

T H E P A T H DAY ONE

Direction – Not intention – Determines Destination

Have you ever been advised to simply say a prayer and hope for the best? Why is that in direct opposition to the principle of the path? On the TV show *Star Trek*, Capt. Kirk simply says, “Beam me up, Scotty” and instantly he’s transported to a completely different location. Since that’s science fiction, none of us will get far explaining ourselves by saying, “I have no idea how I got here. One minute I was headed in the right direction and the next minute... Here I am!” Choices were made, directions were set, and the principle of the path trumped any hopes or good intentions we might have had.

Read Proverbs 14:8, 15; Psalm 16:11; Jeremiah 31:21.

THIRST – In the different areas of your life (family; school/job; finances; physical health; spiritual health), what path are you on? Will it lead you where you want to be? Is there an area you need to “own” and take responsibility for? Identify the path that you’re on that’s going nowhere or taking you where you don’t want to go. Ask God for the courage to push through any blind spots you may have. Pray for wisdom and insight as you seek ways to re-direct and begin taking steps in the right direction over the next few weeks. Thank God He’s not left us to wonder aimlessly in the dark, but He’s given us principles to live by and through Christ, the power to do it.

DAY TWO

Have you ever gotten lost? One of the first reactions I tend to have when I realize I’m lost is impatience. I know I’m lost and I want it fixed now! Once we identify we’re off course we may be tempted to jump on to another path that’s even worse... We “jump out of the frying pan into the fire.” The mentality of wanting problems fixed, quick solutions, and miracle cures is a common one in our society, but isn’t anything new. **Read Genesis 25:29-33 and Jeremiah 7:9.** Esau wanted and needed to eat, but instead of doing what needed to be done to satisfy his hunger, he took the quick fix of what Jacob was “offering.” How did Esau’s heart deceive him? How can we ensure that we’re not deceived by our own hearts?

Read Proverbs 3:5-6. Choosing the best path begins with submission.

Not trusting our own hearts, but trusting God with our hearts. Consider the path you’ve identified as needing a change. Have you submitted it to God? What principles are laid out in God’s Word about that area of life? Does someone you know demonstrate wisdom in that area in their own life? Consider talking to or asking him/her to recommend resources you could access. Pray that God will guide you as you discern the steps you need to take.

DAY THREE

Are you ready to step into the process of SEARCH? **Read Proverbs 4:11-15.** Refer to the message outline from the weekend services. Think about the area in your life that needs change. Ask yourself the “search” questions from the outline. Some may not apply to your specific area, but many will. Write down the first answers that come to mind as you go through the list.

Read Proverbs 4:20-23. Pray that God will guard your heart - that you’ll

keep His principles in mind and that He’d guide you. Go back again through the answers you’ve written. Are these things realistic? (If you want to lose 50 pounds, giving up eating isn’t really a good idea!) Do your answers line up with God’s principles? Consider other questions you might need to ask and search out as they pertain to your specific area. (i.e. If you want to lose that 50 pounds you gained quickly over the last few months, first ask yourself if there could be an underlying medical issue that may need attention.) Answering some questions may bring up others you to need consider. Remember, we’re not created to walk alone. Who do you need to talk to? Consider calling him/her today. Let him/her know you’ve identified a direction in your life – a path you’re currently taking – that isn’t leading where you need to go. Ask him/her to pray for you. Consider setting a time to get together, where you can walk through the process of your search.

DAY FOUR

My dad had his first heart attack before he turned 40. He was overweight, smoked and drank heavily, but was the most lovable guy you’d ever meet. He had big dreams and big plans. After having several more heart attacks, he had quadruple bypass surgery. His heart stopped after they took him off the machine but they were able to get it started again. I was pregnant with our second child at the time and remember whispering in his ear that I was pretty sure it was a boy. He squeezed my hand. In a family that hadn’t had a little boy around for 30 years, this was a big deal. He recovered and several months later was brought to tears when his first grandson was born. He intended to teach his only grandson to rope cattle and wear cowboy boots. He died 4 years later at 59.

Read Proverbs 22:3. My dad had been given warnings and DANGER AHEAD signs, but he didn’t heed the warnings. He intended to, but just never did. What are your intentions? Do the choices you’re making today line up with them? Have you been given warnings regarding the path you’re on? What’s the wise thing for you to do?

Read Jeremiah 6:16. What would today look like if you exchanged the last sentence of verse 16 with, “And you said, “I will walk in it.”? What may feel like a sacrifice now just might be the turning point that alters the course of your life... for life.

DAY FIVE

Read Matthew 7:13-14.

The path that leads to life is narrow. The process of change is difficult and that’s why many won’t find it. Have you considered the difficulties you’ll encounter?

Read John 5:5-7. Why do you think Jesus asked the man if he wanted to get well? The choice to stay where we are, to look at the challenge of change and choose not to take those steps is the decision to move closer to brokenness, ruin, and destruction. Jesus is ready to walk with you on a new path - a path that leads to life. If you find yourself at a place where you honestly don’t want to get well, yet know you should, be honest. Ask God to change your heart and take you to the place where you’re thirsting for life.