

UpWords – Nancy’s Devotionals

Driving Between the Lines

“Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” Psalm 119:105

The last week of July, Rich and Becky went on an out-of-town trip and I stayed home to work on ministry projects. During the week I also spent quite a bit of time with my parents, with special emphasis on celebrating my mother’s birthday. All week, we went places together—in their new car. They took great delight in putting me in the driver’s seat.

An interesting—sometimes annoying—feature built into this cutting-edge vehicle is a lane protection system. If its driver strays over the marked lines for the center or outside right lane of the road, the car “bings” three times. This soft repetitive sound is just enough to bring the driver’s attention to the car to rectify its position.

I must admit the warning system works. Since then, driving my own car, I am fastidiously conscious of its placement between the lane lines. I never realized how often I cut over the center line to compensate for one of our Lancaster’s country back road curves.

From the car I learned the value of a discipline system—something that could be totally annoying but actually helped me refine and strengthen my driving habits. Isn’t this exactly what God’s Word does for us on life’s journey? Verses in the Bible give us God’s guidelines for our trek through life. The Spirit of God brings to mind, just when we need them, verses of instruction we’ve hidden in our hearts. We might not hear a “bing, bing, bing.” But there have definitely been days when I’ve heard, “...lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge Him...” or “speaking the truth in love....”

Several other similarities can be drawn between God’s Word and the car’s warning system. When I use a regular accountability system, I pay closer attention to my actions. Being disciplined to do the right thing on a regular basis means it gets easier the more consistent I am. If I just tune out the car’s beep or God’s Word, I’m sure to get myself in trouble eventually.

The car’s lane protection system is well engineered and does not over-monitor my driving. If I’m signaling for a turn, slowing down or in some other way changing my straight driving pattern, the car doesn’t scold me. Similarly, godly standards in the Bible are for our good, not merely an instrument to confine or annoy us. Along with God’s guidelines for living as a believer, the Spirit of God works in each of us to show us how to “drive” through some of the unexpected twists and turns of life. He is the Engineer of our accountability system—and knows our route and destination!

This metaphor between the car’s lane protection system and God’s Word has reminded me of the importance of living by the rules. Stepping over the line of God’s directives happens when I’m not paying close attention to how I’m living, living selfishly or allowing myself be pulled off course by distractions. Nothing is worth straying outside the lines God uses to protect us and keep us moving in the right direction.

Can you relate? Are you living between the lines God has indicated as godly? Do you need a few days of “bing, bing, bing” to get you back on the path of God’s choosing? Every time you put God first by reading His Word and listening to His instruction for your life, the actual doing gets easier, more natural. Spend time listening to God’s Word every morning for the next seven days and see what differences you notice in your life during the week. Listen. Look. And stay between the lines and keep going.