

# **Finding the Way**

*God's Blessings for Navigating Life*

A Bible Study Workbook by  
Cain Atkinson

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LIFE IS A JOURNEY .....5

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by Cain Atkinson

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P U B L I S H E R S

This book is dedicated to:

The Lakeside Church of Christ and it's loving members who pulled me out of a literal and spiritual ditch once, when I was so very helplessly lost...

## The Inspiration for this Bible Study: Learn from Being Lost

Thank you for picking up my bible study called “Finding the Way.” In this work book, you’ll find a picture being painted of your faith-journey as a literal trek—something like a hike or a journey. Like any journey, I acknowledge we don’t always make the path to Heaven as straightforward as it could be. If I can, I’d like to share with you a story of how I got terribly lost on the way to a church potluck while I was interning at a church in small town Kentucky.

I will begin by saying this, I am significantly directionally impaired by the fact that I have always leaned very heavily on my GPS to get me from A to B—I am in this respect a *helpless millennial* as my current preaching mentor (Matthew Allen) in conjunction with our eldership tend to viciously bully me for almost daily. (Love you guys.) Nonetheless, this is an important thing to note at the beginning of the story—as you will inevitably be asking yourself, “*can he really be that directionally challenged... can he be this dumb?*” To which the answer is “yes.” I own it.

On my way to the aforementioned potluck which was located in a barn owned by one of the church’s families, I began to notice the terrain becoming increasingly rougher on the road I was taking, eventually turning from concrete, to cracked concrete, to pothole-ridden “no-longer maintained by the state” concrete, to gravel, to some-gravel-but-mostly-dirt... at this point my GPS is telling me I’m a mere three minutes away from the country residence of the family hosting the potluck.

*“Did I take a wrong turn? Couldn’t be.”*

I figured, arrogantly though that I should double down through this dirt road, and though maybe my sedan wasn’t built for such a trek... I was only three minutes away from the destination. Pressing on, my vehicle’s right tires slid into a large puddle of mud and yes I’m quite ashamed to say I did not react in a very composed way. Limited cell signal. No one around for a long while. I called a member of the church, when I finally walked to where I had enough signal to speak with him—turns out the GPS had taken me down the COUNTY road of the same number, not the STATE road actually leading to the potluck.

I will spare you all the details, but because of the Christian love and good humor of that church, I was lifted out of the mud with the combined effort of not just one, not just two trucks—but two trucks and a tractor. Don’t ask how all this played out. Yes, it was ridiculous of me to get stuck in such a muddy situation because of my arrogance to admit I had lost my way... but it was equally ridiculous how those Christians left the safe, fun environment of a potluck to come help their helpless millennial brother in a time of need. It’s something I’ll never forget. So, how can I repay? I want to offer a word for you, the reader—I learned through this that no matter how lost you get, God will go to incredible lengths, use the right people and give you the resources to find your way back home. That’s what I hope we can discover together through this study.

In Christian Love,

CA

## Lesson 1

# Life is a Journey

## Introduction

We see every day new paths stretched before us. They wind and they twist, sometimes they dip low and sometimes they run up a difficult slope. The fact of life is that it is not straightforward all the time. Our lives on earth can be filled with amazing joy and moments of awe. At times we round the bend and what waits for us on the other side is a blessing we could never have deserved or expected. Life's journey is full of great things, meaningful friendships, adventures and amazing destinations.

At the same time, life is also full of dead ends, cracked pavement and ditches. Many of us have experienced the results of losing our way and heading down a wrong path. We have felt the pain of losing our way. This isn't avoidable when the paths we find to walk can become so complicated. Life is a journey, and for most of us not an easy one. We often try to navigate it alone to our detriment. This is what we read in Jeremiah when he describes the detriment of trusting in self for the answers to life's hardest questions.

I know, O LORD, that the way of man is not in himself, that it is not in man who walks to direct his steps.

Jeremiah 10.23

The words of the prophet Jeremiah from the Old Testament become obvious to us when we reflect on our own lives and see the lives of others. Try as we might to give the impression that we have it all figured out, we have to be honest—we sure don't. We all lose our way in this journey. *Finding the Way* is about figuring out the destination of our lives and the path set before us by God to get there.

The heart of a man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps.

Proverbs 16.9

### For discussion:

1. How is our spiritual life like a journey?
2. What is God's role in our journey? How do you see it?

## What's to Come

Beginning with this lesson, this series will focus on the following ideas:

1. What is the destination of our spiritual lives?
2. Who is Jesus and why should we follow Him?

3. How Jesus showed the way home
4. The blessings we have along our way
5. How to invite other people along this journey

## **God's Blessings for Navigating Life**

Life is a series of forks in the road. We make decisions every day on the direction that we want to go. It needs be said, some decisions do not inherently defy or honor God—not every call we make is a matter of sin and righteousness. There are so many elements that go into our decision making process—the effect it will have on our society, on our families, to ourselves... Many of these processes happen automatically or subconsciously.

In some matters, God will make good no matter what we do because we are going in the direction of Heaven. We have a degree of freedom. Sometimes we have the choice between good and better and sometimes there are grey areas. Still, without some kind of standard or help, many times we may believe we are doing the “right” thing and end up veering far and away from God’s purpose. The point of this workbook is to identify how to navigate these complexities by taking full advantage of the blessings God has given us to get us and keep us on the right track—the one that leads back to Him.

God gives us the freedom to get lost and end up in ditches. The paths before us can get thorny and complicated. Life is full of questions. Where should I turn? To the left or to the right? We need help from a higher standard than what man can offer. The God of Heaven is very real and He cares for us. He has given us blessings that help us to recognize when we are heading in the right direction, steady us and help us to make it home safely.

Those blessings are available;

- Knowing we have a final home at the end—Heaven being written on our hearts, Ecclesiastes 3.11
- Proof that we can make it—Jesus who came to show us the way home, John 1.14
- A road map—The scriptures that equip us for every good work, 2 Timothy 3.16-17
- Trails blazed ahead of us—The examples of faithful people that came before, Hebrews 11.13
- God’s leading—God’s providence and help through our lives, Romans 8.28
- Leaning on people—The support system of the church, John 13.35
- Calling on a friend—Access to God through prayer, Psalm 34.17
- A “Compass Tuning,” from the Creator— a purer conscience, Hebrews 10.22

### **For discussion:**

1. Which of the above blessings do you utilize the most?

2. Of the above blessings, which do you struggle with taking advantage of?

## Promises for your Confidence

... he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire...

2 Peter 1.4

The God of scripture has delivered on and continues to deliver on all His promises, which we will explore more in our later lessons about Jesus—the ultimate fulfillment of all God’s promises. We can see in the character of the God of the Bible that He is consistent and powerful enough to do what He says He will do. He’s more than capable of getting us home... no matter how big of a mess we get ourselves in. In the scriptures we see God doing countless amazing things for His people in order to get them exactly where they needed to be.

If we’ll take advantage of and utilize the blessings we have at our disposal, we will make it to the end of the journey. We aren’t promised that it will be easy to stay on the path all the time but we are promised;

- Our needs for each moment, Matthew 6.33
- A way out of temptation, 1 Corinthians 10.13
- Growth through the difficult parts of the journey, Romans 5.3-5
- Total victory, Romans 8.37

### For discussion:

1. How do God’s promises help us get through life? ...Even the difficult parts?
2. How can we be sure that God will follow through?

## Show Me the Way

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah 53.6

Wouldn’t it be easier if God just spoke directly to each of us and told us exactly what decision to make each time? Easier, maybe, but that’s not the way the Lord works. Just like a loving father, God allows us to ask questions, make mistakes, get lost, fall down and skin our knees sometimes. His promise is that if we’ll call out to him, he’ll pick us back up and show us the way.

Let’s all be able to say—

“My steps have led me astray. God, if you would, show me the way.”

At the end of the day, the way we’ll find our way back home is by pointing our hearts toward God. This can be hard to do but it means humbling ourselves and admitting our role in this—we are not the creators, we are the creation. It also means trusting even in difficult times that good things will come. It means stepping out in faith and being bold. It also means caring for others along the way and even inviting them along to join us in our journey.

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Matthew 6.33

**For discussion:**

1. What does it mean to “seek the Lord?”
2. What are some difficulties we face in this?
3. What’s the final result of trusting the direction of our life to His way?

Prayer for today—

*Lord, show me the way. Brighten my path and clear out distractions. Keep me from veering off from your purpose for my life.*