

# LIVING WITH A GPS: HAVING A GODWARD ORIENTATION

Titus 2:11-14

Pastor Jason Brodehl

## Introduction

This evening we continue our series on living with a GPS, a God positioning system. Last week Pastor Dale opened this series with an overview of this current series. The goal in this series is to prompt us to ask ourselves three questions. What is guiding our lives? What is controlling our lives? What is defining our lives? His message “A life oriented towards and with the Word of God” lead us into to our topic this evening, Having a Godward Orientation. Let us begin.

From the moment we enter this fallen world we are guided by self, controlled by sin, and destined for destruction. Not a great way to start a sermon is it? But it is true.

Newborns are driven only by their desires, right? They eat, sleep, relieve themselves, and desire to be held. If they don't get what they want, they cry. They have yet to understand what the world has to offer and really don't care. They aren't distracted by social media or worried about being accepted.

This was our beginning. But as we began to grow throughout childhood and ultimately mature into adults, we were introduced to new and various temptations along the way. While we may not have realized it, we grew to want to be the god of our own lives. We innately, because of our sinful nature, began to decide for ourselves what would guide us, control us, and define us.

As parents we attempt to teach our children to have self-control, to think of others, and to pick up after themselves. We are the outside influence attempting to bring order and purpose into their lives. Many times, initially, they resist. Until either the fear of punishment overrides their rebellion, or they happen to see the personal benefit from the instruction. But we grow up even into adulthood seeking purpose and direction. People often seek to better themselves. There are numerous leadership and self-help books to help us bring order and purpose among the chaos. There's even a website called Life Hacker. Little tips and how to be more efficient and productive. But all of these will ultimately fail us every single time. These worldly doctrines are no match for the corrupt human heart.

The problem of all humankind is that we are born with no desire for God. The one who gives us all that we need, the one who gives us the fullest satisfaction, we reject. In fact, we are born defiantly opposed to His grace and mercy. We once viewed our Creator as a hindrance to our desires, the killjoy to what we called life, and Jesus Christ was our enemy.

And this exactly what Paul found in Crete as he wrote to Titus. Before we begin, let's pray.

## Past Grace (v.11)

Open the Word of God to Titus chapter 2 verse 11.

*<sup>11</sup> For the grace of God **has appeared**, bringing salvation for all people, <sup>12</sup> **training** us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and **to live** self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, <sup>13</sup> **waiting** for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our **great** God and **Savior** Jesus Christ, <sup>14</sup> **who gave himself** for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his **own possession** who are zealous for good works.*

Let us recall the situation in Crete. Crete had religious people on the island. But they were not ones saved by grace. Paul called them insubordinate, empty talkers, and deceivers (1:10). These people were upsetting entire families. What about the nonreligious, or the indigenous people, the Cretans? They were labeled by their very own as “liars, evil beasts, and lazy gluttons” (1:12). So here we have it. A society of people guided, controlled, and defined by selfish and sinful desires and influences. Or to put it another way, they were driven by a godless positioning system. All that guided, controlled, and defined them was only leading them to eternal destruction. The path they traveled, and their navigational system had them heading toward a cliff. And over the edge, lie what Jesus described as a place where worm does not die. A place of outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Just as we have only a glimpse of the glory of God as seen in creation, so we have a limited understanding of this eternal damnation.

Every single day, people live navigating their lives toward this end. Some do it with a sense of meaninglessness whiles do it with joy. Unbeknownst to themselves what lies ahead.

But something happened in Crete. The light of the gospel of Jesus Christ pierced the darkness and the darkness could not overtake it. In the middle of the darkness and chaos of Crete, God redeemed a people for His own possession. They were changed. Their whole orientation in life had drastically changed. This is repentance. A turning away from one thing and turning to something else.

As they born again believers, they needed directions for their new path toward their new destination. God doesn't just save us and leave us here to figure things out on our own. He works in us, to will and to work for His good pleasure. He has given us preachers and teachers and more importantly His Word (2 Peter 2:19).

He has so much more planned for all us. But He did not leave us emptied handed nor did he leave us on our own to figure it out. Jesus was the great teacher, and Holy Spirit was given to us to help us navigate this terrain and new direction. We have a new navigational system. We went from a self-centered positioning system to a God-Centered Positioning System.

## Living with a GPS: Orienting our lives with a God Positioning System

This is the reason for the conjunction “for” in verse here in verse 11. Nine verses earlier Paul began explaining sound doctrine. That included roles and responsibilities of men and women, both young and old, and slaves. Why this order because the “grace of God appeared.”

You see doctrine drives conduct. Imperatives are driven by indicatives. To say it another way, what we are to do is based on what God has done. You have a new destination where your inheritance that is “imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you” (1 Peter 1:4) awaits your arrival. This is the power of past grace. And this grace is not necessarily something “dispensed” to us as a ration. I mean, we are given grace daily, but it is something even more powerful. Grace came as a person. “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). This is the grace that appeared.

You see, we have the hope of eternal life, an eternity in the very presence of this grace and mercy waiting for us. And as we journey on in this familiar terrain, although we are on a new path, we have His navigation system, the Word. And this Word gives us purpose and direction.

## Present Grace (v.12)

Look at verse 11 and 12 again.

*“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age.”*

The Word is a light for our path. It is the way we are to walk now as Dale preached last week. And that word trains us. This is the GPS. It guides us. It tells us what paths and terrains to avoid and which ones to travel upon.

## To Renounce

First, the paths and terrains to avoid. Verse 12 says to renounce, say no to ungodliness and worldly passions.

### Ungodliness

What is ungodliness? Ungodliness is defined as “the state of believing in God, while adopting a lifestyle which seems to deny this.”<sup>1</sup> Remember, this is was the same issue in Crete. Paul tells Titus in chapter 1 verse 15-

---

<sup>1</sup> Manser, M. H. (2009). [\*Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies\*](#). London: Martin Manser.

## Living with a GPS: Orienting our lives with a God Positioning System

16, "To the pure, all things are pure; but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but both their minds and their consciences are defiled. They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work." Their personal positioning system was driven by their defiled minds and consciences and unbelief. This is exactly what Paul is saying here. They said spoke one way but lived another. There was no reverence for God.

### Worldly Passions

This was evidenced by their disobedience and abhorrent behaviors. They were living to gratify the desires of their flesh. These are uncontrolled urges within the heart. Its easy to think of "passions" in terms of sexual misconduct, but what about anger, hatred, ambition, comfort in food or drink.

These all fall in this category. We are to renounce, deny ourselves following this system of beliefs, wants, and desires.

From these residents of Cretans, who were saved by grace, now possess the power to be trained to go in this new direction. Grace is not a "get out of jail free card." Grace is do what is right and to go against our flesh. Unfortunately though, many of us don't want ot tell ourselves "no." We appear to be more fearful of falling into legalism than licentiousness, maybe judging our sin as marginal or discreet. But sin is sin. Sin divides, destroys, and leads to destruction. Look the path to destruction is hard to avoid. Jesus said, "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few." A Godward orientation will have us turn away from sin and flesh and toward Christ. There is a saying "no" that is needed to keep on the path of eternal life. But Paul didn't stop there. Just as there is turning away from something, we must now to turn to something else.

### To Live

Our new navigational system informs us of terrains and alleyways to avoid but it also directs us to paths that are favorable. This is the power of grace. It enables us to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives.

## Living with a GPS: Orienting our lives with a God Positioning System

### Self-controlled

We are now to resist the navigational system that submits to worldly passions and selfish desires. Instead we are to bring all these passions and pursuits under submission to the Word of God.

### Upright

And, we are now to live upright lives. This pertains to conduct. Our internal desires are to brought under constraint by the renewing of our minds. As we are being transformed we are no longer being conformed to this world, but begin looking like residents of our new kingdom performing good works and obeying our new king in righteous behavior.

### Godly

But if we are not careful here, we can interpret this to mean ONLY stop doing this and begin doing that. So Paul, in order to clarify a life transformed by grace uses the word godly. We are to turn from ungodliness to godliness.

There are nice, thoughtful, caring, and moral unbelievers all over the place. But they are not godly. A disciplined moral life is good and may be evidence of godliness but it does not guarantee it. There is more to it.

So, what is godliness? It is defined as a reverence for or devotion to God, producing a practical awareness of God in every aspect of life.<sup>2</sup> Jerry Bridges in his book *The Practice of Godliness* defines it as "devotion in action." He says, "devotion is not an activity; it is an attitude toward God." This is exactly the way Paul describes himself in the opening of this very letter. He writes,

This letter is from Paul, a slave of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ. I have been sent to proclaim faith to those God has chosen and to teach them to know the truth that shows them how to live godly lives.

This is the goal of our lives here on earth as we travel toward on our destination. We renounce ungodliness to turn and live godly lives. It is being devoted to God and not yourself. It is having a heart that is formed, shaped, influenced, and directed by Jesus Christ. Do you have a devotion to God? Do you live with a reverence for His holiness and transcendence? Secondly, do you live with awareness of God? Are you aware and cognizant of His immanence, nearness? This is godliness.

Worldly passions and ungodliness will distract us from navigating properly in this life.

---

<sup>2</sup> Manser, M. H. (2009). [\*Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies\*](#). London: Martin Manser.

## Future Grace (v.13)

We have past grace, a present grace, but we also have future grace. Since this is long sentence, I am going to read from the beginning of verse 13,

*<sup>11</sup> For the grace of God **has appeared**, bringing salvation for all people, <sup>12</sup> **training** us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and **to live** self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, <sup>13</sup> **waiting** for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our **great** God and **Savior** Jesus Christ,*

As we travel in this world, we use our rearview mirrors to remember God's grace in saving our souls. And as we travel and look back, we ought to see a continuous accumulation of grace every single day that passes. We use the Word of God as our GPS, to keep us on the path by growing in our knowledge of the truth. But as you know, you cannot drive and neglect what lies directly in front of you. You must keep our eyes on the road because we have a destination. And it's not Disney. Nor will it be like arriving to your favorite vacation spot. No, it will be far greater than any destination we can ever imagine. Paul calls our destination a "blessed hope." And this hope is the return of glory. Paul calls our great destination the appearing of the glory of our Great God and Savior Jesus Christ. Our vocabulary cannot not even capture the glories of the return of Christ. All I know is those who encountered our LORD, usually fell down before Him. John describes like this in Revelation

*<sup>1</sup> Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. <sup>4</sup> He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."*

This holy city, where God dwells with man, this is destination we eagerly wait for. At this current moment, it may appear distant. You may even begin thinking, it doesn't really exist. The drive will get long and at times, boring. You will experience brokenness and severe trials. And, the world around us begins to appear enticing. We will be tempted to take our eyes off the road. We may even wonder if all this struggle against sin and unbelief will be worth it all. This is why we encourage one another singing these words corporately together. Listen to these lyrics:

## Living with a GPS: Orienting our lives with a God Positioning System

*All I am, Lord, here before You  
Reaching out for more*

*You're the promise  
Never failing  
You are my reward*

*I let go of all I have  
Just to have all of You  
And no matter what the cost  
I will follow You*

*Jesus, everything I've lost  
I have found in You  
When I finally reach the end I'll say  
You are worth it all*

Keep your eyes up, your heart devoted, and remember, He will return. We have much to look forward to. We ought to be waiting with great anticipation and excitement. Because one day, our faith will be made real. We will see our Savior as He truly is. All our pain and suffering and disappointment and loss will be not be in vain.

## Personal Motivation (v.14)

How do we stay motivated in a Godward orientation? By remembering who our Savior is and what he has done.

*<sup>13</sup> **waiting** for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our **great** God and **Savior** Jesus Christ, <sup>14</sup> who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his **own possession** who are zealous for good works.*

He gave Himself for us. He redeemed us. Jesus bought us out of slavery to sin and purchased us as His own people. The cost for your soul, the sacrifice of the Son of God. The sacrifice is the grace of God. Every cell in our bodies resisted God because we were chained to sin. We could not free ourselves no matter how hard we tried. All our efforts were futile.

But that is not the case for those who believe. You were set free from the law of sin and death for those who are in Christ Jesus. We have a new owner, with a new direction, with new purpose, and a new orientation. We were purchase us by His very own blood. Therefore, we can say like Paul, *"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."*

It's interesting here Paul says we were purchased from ALL lawlessness. For what reason? To be purified. When we are children of the living God, we now understand all of our trials, all of our struggles,

## Living with a GPS: Orienting our lives with a God Positioning System

and even our triumphs are here to purify our hearts so that we carry the message of hope. When our lives are rocked by the grace of God, and we grow to understand this grace, we will be eagerly poised to do good works. As one author put it, "He redeemed us in the past. He's purifying us and cleansing us in the present. He's making us zealous for good deeds all around us as we move into the future."

## Reflect and Respond

First, do you know this grace? Jesus said, *"And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."* Do you know the grace of God in Jesus Christ? There is absolutely no hope for any one apart from this grace. Jesus warned his followers, *"Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell."* (Matt. 10:28). Our greatest enemy is not the contagion, the government, nor media. Our greatest enemy is sin.

Have you forgotten this grace? 1 Corinthians tells us the Old Testament was written to warn us who live at the end of the age. You see, the people of God were prone to forget.

In Deuteronomy (32:18), "and you forgot the God who gave you birth"

In Judges (3:7), "They forgot the LORD their God..."

In 1 Samuel (12:9), "But they forgot the LORD their God..."

In Psalms (78:11), "They forgot his works and wonders that he had shown them..."

And Hosea, (13:5-6), "It was I who knew you in the wilderness, in the land of drought; but when they had grazed, they became full, they were filled, and their heart was lifted up; therefore they forgot me.

We forget when we turn off our GPS. We turn off the GPS we quit renouncing ungodliness and worldly passions. And when we turn off the GPS, we quit living self-controlled, upright, and godly lives. What is your heart aiming for? Is it more devoted to the world and its enticements? Have you turned off your GPS? Are you losing sight of the path?

Or have you lost sight of the destination? Have the trials and struggles of this life clouded your hope? Remember the grace of God has appeared. Your destiny is secure. His purpose is to purify you. What God promises to do, is done. Rest in the completed work of God our Savior.