
Following our GPS: When We Dont

1 Timothy 1:12-20¹

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Lost!!!! No GPS. No map. Unfamiliar landscape. What happens next?

Most of us have had the sensation of being lost.

Lost on a road...

Lost in a forest...

Lost in a city...

Too many people have lost their life's true GPS.

Oriented by what serves self...

Oriented by wants and desires functioning as lusts...

Oriented by cultural idols and priorities...

Oriented by deeply held myths and lies...

Oriented by false doctrine and error...

Oriented by unbiblical philosophies and methods...

We could spend a lot of time talking about each of those. Let's take a look at a text that helps us to think about this and launches us on a trajectory for discipleship and discussion.

We Lose the Appreciation of God's Grace (v. 12-14)

The appreciation of God's grace comes through reflecting from present grace to past mercies.

¹² I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, ¹³ though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, ¹⁴ and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

That Gives us Ministry (v. 12)

Without a God Positioning System:

We do ministry in our own power,
instead of availing ourselves of God's strengthening, enabling grace.

We do ministry in our own authority,
instead of serving Christ as Lord, as Sovereign.

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We do ministry in our own standards,
instead of seeking to be faithful.

We do ministry as our right,
instead of serving in the humility of a Divine appointment.

When our work of service among God's people is not oriented by God, ministry will be about us, not about others.

That Transforms our Lives (v. 13)

Without a God Positioning System:

We will fail to have an accurate understanding of our past,
instead of seeing the vileness of our sinful deeds.

We will fail to have a Biblical assessment of our religiosity,
instead of seeing the filthiness of our good, moral works.

That Highlights God's Mercy (v. 13)

Without a God Positioning System:

We will dismiss the mercy of God who saved us,
and secretly believe we are deserving of God's grace.

We will think ignorance is excusable,
instead of recognizing it as a kind of unbelief.

That Fuels our Praise (v. 14)

Without a God Positioning System:

We will make ourselves the center of God's work,
instead of highlighting the grace in God's work.

We will take God's grace for granted,
instead of being overwhelmed by God's overflowing grace.

We will locate faith and love in ourselves,
instead of being a result of being in and united to Christ.

One great danger in not having our God Positioning System is that we will no longer be grace driven people.

We Lose the Centrality of God's Glory (v.15-17)

The ascription of God's glory comes through reflection on His perfections.

¹⁵ The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. ¹⁶ But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. ¹⁷ To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

In the General Confession of Truth (v.15)

Without a God Positioning System:

We will reject the importance of history and doctrine,
and press for new and simpler formulations that are vulnerable to error.

We will privatize our faith,
instead of confessing truth in unity and harmony.

We will disconnect doctrine and truth from life,
instead of affirming that we live what we believe.

In the Central Mission of Christ (v.15)

Without a God Positioning System:

We will make the gospel about culture and society,
instead of preaching the gospel of redemption from sin.

We will make the gospel more about our significance,
instead of the humbling truth of our sinfulness.

We will make the gospel about our initiatives and responses,
instead of magnifying the Redeemer and His redeeming work.

In the Specific Example for Believers (v.16)

Without a God Positioning System:

We will forget the work of God in the lives of others,
and fail to learn from the examples God gave us.

We will forget the patient mercy of God on us,
and make Him the petitioner instead of the Sovereign.

We will subtilly slip in action and works in our salvation,
instead of highlighting the essential role of faith.

In the Wondrous Praise of God (v.17)

Without a God Positioning System:

We will boast in ourselves,
instead of boasting in God.

We will pilfer from God's glory,
and fail to give Him all the glory He is due.

We will overemphasize the nearness of God and the humanity of Jesus,
and fail to magnify God in His attributes.

We will be impatient to know about God with us,
and fail to worship God in all His transcendence.

Another great danger in not having our God Positioning System is that we will glorify God in all that we do.

We Lose the Significance of God's Purposes (v.18-20)

The apprehension of God's purposes comes through responding to life with enduring faith, love and hope.

¹⁸ This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, ¹⁹ holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith, ²⁰ among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.

In the Spiritual Warfare we Engage (v.18)

Without a God Positioning System:

We will diminish the importance of Biblical ministry,
and fail to see it as a charge and a stewardship.

We will follow the world's lead in the work of ministry,
and fail to heed the preaching of the Word with our ministry,

We will make the ministry about social, political and cultural change,
and shift the Biblical focus from being in the world to being of the world.

In the Spiritual Commitment we Affirm (v.19)

Without a God Positioning System:

We will hunger and crave for the new, the innovative,
and will not hold fast to sound doctrine.

We will be blown around by every wind of doctrine,
instead growing in understanding and living sound doctrine.

We will mis-train and impair the Biblical function of our conscience,
and fail to have a good conscience.

In the Spiritual Dangers we Avoid (v.20)

Without a God Positioning System:

We will become part of a dishonorable company of sinful people,
instead of holding fast to the faith and having a good conscience.

We may become vulnerable to coming under public censure,
rather than having a good reputation.

We could be vulnerable to being handed over to Satan,
instead of learning and living with holy self-discipline.

Another great danger in not having our God Positioning System is that we will not align our lives with the trajectory of God's purposes and become ensnared in spiritual dangers and defeat.

Reflect and Respond

All people live by some beliefs and wants that function as their GPS. No one actually lives without something that orients their soul and life. So people substitute a God Positioning System for some other system. This system is false teaching and myths. It leads to sinful conduct and is empowered by the flesh and by sin.

What is orienting your life?

In how you think about Who God is and what your relationship is?

In how you think about the aim, hope and purpose of your life?

In how you think about how to live the Christian life?

In how you think about your family?

In how you think about your money?

In how you think about your work and vocation?

In how you think about your ministry?

May we orient our lives by to believing in Christ for eternal life. May we live to the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, for His honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.