

## ***Greetings!***

Have you ever gotten "off track"? Not lost, but just a little "turned around"? If so, then you know the frustration that comes with trying to find your way back to the correct route. Sometimes life is like that. We start out in a direction that we think is correct, only to discover somewhere down the road that we need to adjust things to reach our final destination.

Don't be embarrassed. It's happened to all of us so, sit back, read today's ***Just a Thought*** and think about some things that you may need to adjust.

## ***God and a GPS***

The heavy fog collected on everything including me. Trying to see anything beyond forty feet was useless so, I wandered. Up one ridge and then down another, each time running into a clump of trees that wasn't supposed to be there. Confused, and tired of the uphill climbs, I reached into my backpack for my GPS; salvation with four batteries. All I needed was for it to lock onto at least six of the twenty-four satellites floating somewhere above me.

I've spent much of my life roaming the swamps and hammocks of north Florida or, the mountains of western Maryland and I've only been "lost" once (okay maybe more). I once spent the morning in Green Swamp following someone who had spent the night before in the bar drinking. Since I had never hunted these woods before, I was at their mercy but, that's another story to tell someday.

My reputation among the guys in camp reflected my arrogance as the Daniel Boone of the mountains. When one of them became turned around (lost) in the woods, I was the first to let them know what they should have done. As for me, I always knew which way to go, until that fateful morning.

Surrounded by the unfamiliar, I felt uneasy and just a little concerned that I would spend my day wandering around the mountain, over and over again. But, now I held the answer to my dilemma in my hands. Simple, just push the button and follow the arrow back to camp and a hot lunch. There was one problem. I didn't trust what it was telling me to do, so I struck out in the direction that I "felt" was right. The opposite direction that the arrow was pointing in!

A hundred yards across the ravine and there they were . . . another clump of trees that didn't belong in my path. It was getting late and I knew that they'd be standing around the fire wondering if I was retrieving a deer or, lost. I had to make a decision and make it quick if I were to retain any of my dignity around the fire (it's a man thing). Looking again at the GPS I said to myself, "Listen Chris. Pilots go down because they don't trust their instruments. Follow the GPS stupid!" Turning around and back tracing my steps up one ridge and then another I came to

something I finally recognized. A sense of relief calmed my nerves but, I knew it was too late to avoid what was coming.

Walking into camp, wet from the fog and sweat, I tried not to make eye contact as they stared at me with their silly grins. John was the first to ask (He had good reason. I had made fun of him from the pulpit for getting lost in the woods), "Pastor Chris. You've been lost haven't you?" I continued to put my stuff away without answering him as he broke out in a "new song". "Pastor Chris got losst. Pastor Chris got losst . . ." (You have to hear it in your head.) With hands raised in a hallelujah wave, he danced around in circles singing his song for all its glory. I let him go. He deserved his moment in the mountain sunshine since I'd humiliated him for going the wrong way past me while I sat on a ridge one cold day.

Confused and dazed by the unfamiliar; we've all been there haven't we? You steadily move in the direction you "feel" is right only to meet one obstacle after another in your path. You keep telling yourself that you know where you are, and which way you should be moving, but your gut tightens with each step and you know the truth. You've lost your way.

The answer to your dilemma is showing you the way out but, you continue to listen to your instinct. Every decision you make takes you further away from your destination and the weariness from the constant climbing is becoming more than you can handle. Why won't you trust the truth? Why won't you surrender your pride and follow the directions? Is it the humiliation of admitting you were wrong?

Hunters and hikers alike have become swallowed up in the wilderness because of their pride or panic. From God's vantage point, He sees the clumps of trees in our path; He knows the valleys that lie ahead. Yet, to trust what we can't see instead of what we feel inside us is the quandary we face in our minds. As a pastor, I've watched too many refuse what God was speaking to their lives, only to end up wandering endlessly around their mountain. "If they would only listen to reason", I've thought more than once.

If my GPS could think, I wonder what it would have thought of me that foggy morning. I can hear it now, "Is this guy stupid or what!" "Doesn't he know that I know where camp is located?" "I have twenty-four satellites and you've got one brain!" And finally, "How long will you continue to avoid the truth?" Of course, all of this would be in a feminine voice.

Going in the wrong direction is not uncommon to any of us. Continuing in the wrong direction once you've been shown the truth, well that's another matter.

***And that's just a thought . . .***

## *My Final Word*

Summer is coming to an end and it's time to begin looking forward to fall and the holidays that come with the changing of the leaves. Here at the Griffin household, school is starting back for our grandson and our daughter is enrolled in the local community college, so we'll be having lots of busy evenings with homework.

I'm not sure how things are for you, but I can imagine that you're busy as well. Doesn't it seem that it just never stops; always something tugging at your time? Let me encourage you though to find a few minutes every day for your personal devotional time. There is nothing that will help you keep your life on track like reading the Word and spending time talking to God. I can't tell you the number of times that a scripture has spoken to my heart during a time of change in my life. Too many people wait each week for their pastor to give them their spiritual nourishment for the week, when God is waiting each day for you at His table.

Could I ask you to include one more item on your "to do" list? After starting ***Just a Thought*** last spring, I heard from many of you letting me know how ***Just a Thought*** spoke to you each week. I would love to hear from you again! While trying to start three more teaching emails, uploading sermons to the website, starting a book and working, it's difficult to pull it all together in the time frame that I would like. So, what keeps me pressing on is your friendly comments and your own stories that relate to that week's ***Just a Thought***. Just hit the "Reply" button and let me know how you're doing!

Have a safe holiday as you enjoy the last big weekend of the summer!

Chris

