

Growing Dads God's Way-16 Mile Markers on the Road of Godly Parenting

We just arrived back from a 4,639-mile journey through 16 states in 16 days traveling from Tulsa to the East and back.

As I sat for about 92 hours over these past few days behind the steering wheel, *often moving at 102 feet per second*, I started noticing how many details the Interstate Highway System has incorporated to keep the millions of us drivers on the right road.

Now with all that in mind, if it takes that much reminding to keep us merely on a physical road to not stray off the path, don't you think the God of the Universe would similarly mark the pathway we need to stay on for raising our children?

Well the good news is that He has. And in the map book called God's Word is a clearly marked trail for Parenting and Grand parenting our Families in Godliness. May I just trace that map through the Bible with you today? You may want to mark some of these verses, or note them on paper so you can use them to see where you are or should be on the Road to Godly Parenting your Families and Homes!

MILE MARKERS ON THE ROAD OF GODLINESS IN PARENTING

I have made the words "GODLINESS IN PARENTING" an acronym to help you remember these points. Each of the 18 letters that make up those two words Godliness and Parenting stand for one Biblical Mile Marker along this road we should be following. If you have children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, brothers, and sisters – or ever plan to, this road map and each of these mile markers are for you!

First let me just list them. Here are the measurable and intentional areas of the personal spiritual life of our families we should be heading for:

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|----------|----------------------|----|----------|-----------------------------|
| G | A GODLY LIFE | IN | P | A PATIENT LIFE |
| O | AN OUTREACHING LIFE | | A | AN AFFECTIONATE LIFE |
| D | A DISCIPLINED LIFE | | R | A RESPECTFUL LIFE |
| L | A LOVING LIFE | | E | AN EASILY-ENTREATED LIFE |
| I | AN INTEGRITY LIFE | | N | A NURTURING LIFE |
| N | A NOBLE LIFE | | T | A THANKFUL LIFE |
| E | AN EXEMPLARY LIFE | | I | AN INIQUITY-HATING LIFE |
| S | A SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE | | N | A NOT BEHAVING RUDELLY LIFE |
| S | A SACRIFICIAL LIFE | | G | A GENTLENESS LIFE |

G

GODLY LIVING Titus 2: 11-13 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

NKJV (I WILL LEARN TO LIVE FOR GOD EACH DAY)

- I WILL NOT CHOOSE TO LOOK AT WHAT GOD CALLS EVIL. Psalm 101: 3-4 I will set nothing wicked before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; It shall not cling to me. 4 A perverse heart shall depart from me; I will not know wickedness. **(I will search God's Word to learn what He hates, and what He loves, and imitate those areas!)**
- I WILL NOT USE MY MOUTH TO SAY WHAT GOD CALLS CORRUPT. Ephesians 4: 29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.
- I WILL SEEK TO PLEASE GOD IN ALL I DO. 1 Corinthians 10: 31 Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.
- I WILL NOT CLING TO MY OLD HABITS, I WILL LOOK UP NOT DOWN. Colossians 3: 1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.
We are like sheep, that's what God's Word says. And sheep¹ will blindly, habitually follow one another along the same little trails until they become ruts that erode into gigantic gullies, so we humans cling to the same habits that we have seen ruin other lives..
- The world we live in is full of such folk. Broken homes, broken hearts, derelict lives and twisted personalities

¹ Phillip Keller, *A Shepherd looks at PSALM 23*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zonderavan Publishing House, 1970, p. 74-80.

remind us everywhere of men and women who have gone their own way. We have a sick society struggling to survive on beleaguered land. The greed and selfishness of mankind leaves behind a legacy of ruin and remorse.

O

OUTREACHING Matthew 28: 18-20 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. **(When you have an outreach directed life you get the authority of God, and the personal presence of Jesus in an especially promised way. Remember the context of these verses is outreach!)**

- I WILL SAY TO THE LORD ALL THROUGH MY LIFE – HERE AM I LORD SEND ME. Isaiah 6:8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me."
- I WILL STAY ON GOD'S WAY SO HE CAN LEAD ME. Genesis 24:27 And he said, "Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken His mercy and His truth toward my master. As for me, being on the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren."

D

DISCIPLINED: 1 Timothy 4:7 But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; NASB (I WILL LEARN TO BE DISCIPLINED IN MY EVERY DAY LIVING)

- I WILL BE ORDERLY: 1 Corinthians 14:40 Let all things be done decently and in order.
- I WILL BE LOVELY: Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.
- I WILL BE HARD WORKING: 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, 12 that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing.
- I WILL BE DEPENDABLE: Psalm 15:4b ...He who swears to his own hurt and does not change;

L

LOVING: Colossians 3:14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

1. **LOVE** is the absence of selfishness. I want to be less selfish and self-seeking than I was last month.
2. **JOY** is the spiritual quality that releases us from circumstances. I want to be a joyful person.
3. **PEACE** is the internal serenity that only God can give. I want peace to become more and more a way of life for me.
4. **PATIENCE** is the absence of personal irritation at the actions of others. I want to be more patient than I was three months ago. If we are not increasing in patience it is only that we are not yielding and submitting to the Holy Spirit.
5. **KINDNESS** is a beautiful reflection of God in our lives by the absence of an abrasive manner in my dealings with people. I want an increasing tendency toward personal kindness in my way with others.
6. **GOODNESS** is being Godlike! It is the opposite of fallen humanity. I want to be doing good to all those around me.
7. **FAITHFULNESS** is a trustworthy and dependable life. The kind of person that keeps their own life in order so that you can count on them. I want to make and keep my word and be making strides in reliability and dependability.
8. **MEEKNESS** is the opposite of asserting yourself. I want my personal agenda and my rights to be in hopeless shape, crucified with Christ and fading.
9. **DISCIPLINE** is defined by the Greek Dictionary as "a virtue, which consists in mastery of the appetites and passions, especially the sensual ones." The only force that can control our flesh is the Holy Spirit. When yielded to Him we become vessels that are worshipful sacrifices to Him no longer to self. Self cannot control self. Flesh is not able to harness flesh. Only the Spirit can discipline us. I want to be graciously under the control of God's Spirit of Discipline. I want to be beating under and giving knockout blows to your flesh as Paul was in I Cor 9:27.

I

INTEGRITY: 1 John 1:5-7 This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that **God is light** and in Him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and **walk in darkness**, we lie and **do not practice the truth**. 7 But if we **walk in the light** as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and **the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin**. LIGHT-WALKING

- o I WILL OBEY GOD EVEN WHEN IT LOOKS HOPELESS. Genesis 16:9,13 The Angel of the Lord said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hand." 13 Then she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, "Have I also here seen Him who sees me?"
- o I WILL OBEY THE LORD WHEN ALONE, FAR FROM HOME, AND EVEN WHEN NO ONE CAN EVER FIND OUT WHAT I DID – EXCEPT GOD. Genesis 39:9 There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

N

NOBLE: Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. I WILL SEEK

E

WHAT IS - ... Isaiah 33.15-17

EXEMPLARY LIVING: 1 Timothy 4:12 Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word (**what I say**), in conduct (**what I do**), in love (**what I give**), in spirit (**what I feel**), in faith (**what I believe**), in purity (**what I resist**).

- I WILL DEVOUR GOD'S WORD. 1 Timothy 4:13 Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.
- I WILL SERVE CHRIST'S CHURCH. 1 Timothy 4:14 Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.
- I WILL EXCEL IN SPIRITUAL THINGS NOT MERELY IN TEMPORAL THINGS LIKE SPORTS, THE ARTS OR ACADEMICS. 1 Timothy 4:15 Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all.
- I WILL RUN FROM SIN IN ANY FORM. 2 Timothy 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

S

SPIRIT-FILLED: Ephesians 5: 18-21 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; **but be filled with the Spirit**, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, 20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 **submitting to one another in the fear of God**.

Spirit-Filled living makes us submissive in every area of our lives:

- I WILL OBEY MY PARENTS EVERY DAY I LIVE IN THEIR HOME, AND HONOR THEM ALL OF MY DAYS ON EARTH. Ephesians 6: 1-3 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: 3 "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."
- I WILL HONOR MY BOSS AT WORK. Ephesians 6:5 Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ;
- I WILL KEEP THE LAWS OF MY COUNTRY AS A TESTIMONY TO MY LORD. Romans 13: 1-2 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.

- I WILL HONOR MY LEADERS AT CHURCH ALL MY DAYS SO THAT I MAY SOMEDAY HAVE THE HIGH HONOR OF SERVING Christ's CHURCH. Hebrews 13:17 Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

S

SACRIFICIAL: 2 Timothy 3:1-2 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

All my heroes in the missionary biographies were weird to their own generations!

- I WILL PRESENT MY PAST HURTS TO THE LORD, AND ALL MY PRESENT TROUBLES. Genesis 41:51-52 Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: "For God has made me forget all my toil and all my father's house." 52 And the name of the second he called Ephraim: "For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction."
- I WILL GIVE THE LORD MY FUTURE PLANS TO MAKE SURE THEY FIT WITH HIS. Matthew 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.
- I PRESENT TO YOU O LORD – MY EYES, MY EARS, MY HANDS, MY FEET, MY DATING LIFE, AND MY SOCIAL LIFE. Romans 6:13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.
- I WILL PRESENT MY FRIENDS TO THE LORD, AND ONLY HANG WITH THOSE WHO HANG WITH GOD! James 4:4-5 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?

- I WILL PRESENT MY APPETITES TO THE LORD AND HUNGER FOR HIM AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS AND NOT THE WORLD. 1 John 2: 15-17 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. (We are defenseless but our Lord defends us. Our enemies surround us, they hover around us, and they slither beneath us. John the Apostle identifies our enemies as: **The World** system that governs the earth in greed, controlled by legions of demons, controlled by Satan. The world surrounds us always reminding us that we never quite have enough. **The Flesh** is our insatiable appetite inherited at birth and never completely gone until death. **The Devil** is that most powerful created angel that opposes all that is of God, and goes to any length to steal our affections and devotion away from God!)

In brief, seven fresh attitudes have to be acquired. They are the equivalent of progressive forward movements onto new ground with God. If one follows them they will discover fresh pasturage; new, abundant life; and increased health, wholesomeness and holiness, in their walk with God. Nothing will please Him more and most certainly no other activity on our part will or can result in as great benefit to other lives around.

- **I WILL SACRIFICE SELF FOR CHRIST'S SAKE -**
Romans 12: 1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Instead of loving myself most I am willing to love Christ best and others more than myself. The moment I deliberately do something definite either for God or others that costs me something, I am expressing love. Love is "selflessness" or "self-sacrifice" in contradistinction to "selfishness." Most of us know little of living like this or being "led" in this right way. But once a person discovers the delight of doing something for

others, he has started through the gate being led into one of God's green pastures.

- **I WILL WALK CHRIST'S PATH INSTEAD OF MINE** - Mark 2:14 As He passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he arose and followed Him. Instead of being one of the crowd I am willing to be singled out, set apart from the gang. Most of us, like sheep, are pretty gregarious. We want to belong. We don't want to be different in a deep, distinctive way, though we may wish to be different in minor details that appeal to our selfish egos! But Christ pointed out that only a few would find His way acceptable. And to be marked as one of His would mean a certain amount of criticism and sarcasm from a cynical society. Many of us don't want this. Just as He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, so we may be. Instead of adding to the sorrows and sadness of society we may be called on to help bear some of the burdens of others, to enter into the suffering of others. Are we ready to do this?
- **I WILL SEEK JESUS-OTHERS-YOU = JOY** - Philippians 2:4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Instead of insisting on my rights I am willing to forego them in favor of others. Basically this is what the Master meant by denying one's self. It is not easy, nor normal, nor natural to do this. Even in the loving atmosphere of the home, self-assertion is pretty evident and the powerful exercise of individual rights is always apparent. But the person who is willing to pocket his pride, to take a back seat, to play second fiddle without a feeling of being abused or put upon has gone a long way onto new ground with God. There is a tremendous emancipation from "self" in this attitude. One is set free from the shackles of personal pride. It's pretty hard to hurt such a person. He who has no sense of self-importance cannot be offended or deflated. Somehow such people enjoy a wholesome outlook of carefree abandon that makes their Christian lives contagious with contentment and gaiety. **I WILL GO TO THE END OF THE LINE** - Luke 14:7-11 So He told a parable to those who were invited, when He noted how they chose the best places, saying to them: 8 "When you are invited by anyone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in the best place, lest one more honorable than you be invited by

him; 9 and he who invited you and him come and say to you, 'Give place to this man,' and then you begin with shame to take the lowest place. 10 But when you are invited, go and sit down in the lowest place, so that when he who invited you comes he may say to you, 'Friend, go up higher.' Then you will have glory in the presence of those who sit at the table with you. 11 For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." Instead of being "boss" I am willing to be at the bottom of the heap. Or to use sheep terminology, instead of being "Top Ram" I'm willing to be a "tail-ender". When the desire for self-assertion, self-aggrandizement, self-pleasing gives way to the desire for simply pleasing God and others, much of the fret and strain is drained away from daily living. A hallmark of the serene soul is the absence of "drive," at least, "drive" for self-determination. The person who is prepared to put his personal life and personal affairs in the Master's hands for His management and direction has found the place of rest in fresh energy to please others.

- **I WILL PRAISE INSTEAD OF POUT**- 1 Thessalonians 5:18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Instead of finding fault with life and always asking "Why?" I am willing to accept every circumstance of life in an attitude of gratitude. Human beings, being what they are, somehow feel entitled to question the reasons for everything that happens to them. In many instances life itself becomes a continuous criticism and dissection of one's circumstances and acquaintances. We look for someone or something on which to pin the blame for our misfortunes. We are often quick to forget our blessings, slow to forget our misfortunes. But if one really believes his affairs are in God's hands, every event, no matter whether joyous or tragic, will be taken as part of God's plan. To know beyond doubt that He does all for our welfare is to be led into a wide area of peace and quietness and strength for every situation.
- **I WILL LIVE THE CRUCIFIED LIFE** - Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. Instead of exercising and asserting my will, I learn to cooperate with His wishes and comply

with His will. It must be noted that all the steps outlined here involve the will. The saints from earliest times have repeatedly pointed out that nine-tenths of religion, of Christianity, of becoming a true follower, a dedicated disciple, lies in the will. When a man or woman allows his will to be crossed out, canceling the great I in their decisions, then indeed the Cross has been applied to that life. This is the meaning of taking up one's cross daily -to go to one's own death -no longer my will in the matter but His will be done.

- **I WILL GET MARKED IN THE EAR AND FOOT -**
Philippians 4:11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: 1 Timothy 6:8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. Instead of choosing my own way I am willing to choose to follow in Christ's way: simply to do what He asks me to do. This basically is simple, straightforward obedience. It means I just do what He asks me to do. I go where He invites me to go. I say what He instructs me to say. I act and re-act in the manner He maintains is in my own best interest as well as for His reputation (if I'm His follower). Most of us possess a formidable amount of factual information on what the Master expects of us. Precious few have either the will, intention or determination to act on it and comply with His instructions. But the person who decides to do what God asks him has moved onto fresh ground which will do both him and others a world of good. Besides, it will please the Good Shepherd no end. God wants us all to move on with Him. He wants us to walk with Him. He wants it not only for our welfare but for the benefit of others as well as His own dear reputation. Perhaps there are those who think He expects too much of us. Maybe they feel the demands are too drastic. Some may even consider His call impossible to carry out. It would be if we had to depend on self-determination, or self-discipline to succeed. But if we are in earnest about wanting to do His will, and to be led, He makes this possible by His own gracious Spirit who is given to those who obey (Acts 5:32). For it is He who works in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13) .

The second half? Come on Father's Day!