Marlene's Meditations

Clear Trails

By Marlene Houk
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Psalm 25:4 "*Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths.*"

Several years ago, my husband and I hiked a trail leading to three exquisite waterfalls in the cool, green mountains of western North Carolina. The trail led downhill most of the way beside a lively rippling stream with moss-covered rocks. On the return journey, the path wound up and around and, eventually, back to the parking lot.

On the way back, I kept looking for the path that veered off ninety degrees to the right and would take us back to the parking lot. I never saw it. The further we trekked uphill the more I searched. Finally, I happened to look back and noticed the sign nailed high on a tree. However, the sign sat on the backside of the tree instead of the part of the tree facing us. Perhaps an angel gently turned my head at just the right time. Praise the Lord we didn't go too far out of the way, but it did remind me of spiritual truth.

God marks clear trails for us in life. His trails offer guardrails at times, the lovely fragrance of His presence, and a spiritual adventure like no other. Divine paths guide us to the Lord's will for our lives, and as I grow in the Lord, His Word lights my way.

He illuminates our path through prayer. The Bible abounds with prayers we can pray for light in our journey. One of my favorite biblical prayers for a clear trail is Colossians 1:9 in which we request to be filled with the "*knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.*" I often encourage people to pray for guidance in the routine of life so that when emotional times descend, we already know how to find discernment.

Jesus offers clear trials in His Word by including stories of divine drama. The narratives open wide to possibilities of incredible journeys with the Lord. Many stories in the Bible center around King David who leaves plainly marked paths of righteousness for us today. His accounts leave trail markers with clear instructions for life. David also directs us to read God's Word, assuring us that, *"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*" (Psalm 119:105). For young men starting at their life's trailhead, God promises them pure life in this verse. "*Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word."* (Psalm 119:9)

God also opens up His way for us through our circumstances. The Master Guide will impress you through His Word, prayer, or others, saying, '*This is the way, walk ye in it,'* (Isaiah 30:21)

We retraced our steps and headed up the last incline toward the parking lot. Just as we cleared the trees, a summer shower burst through the clouds. Huddling under the sign with its eaves just big enough for us, we gazed at lush green bushes. We listened to refreshing rain and lifted our noses to the scents of fresh life bursting around us. After ten minutes, the shower waned to gentle plopping drops, and we scurried to our car.

I still remember that sign—on the backside of the tree but not on the front where we needed it. I'm so thankful our adventure reminded me that God leaves clear trails to lead us—not to lose us—on the path of life.

Marlene Houk is a regular contributor to Blue Ridge Christian News. Her passion is to delve deeply into the truths of Bible women and to discuss those in Bible Studies called Backstage Pass to Bible Women. She and her husband discover joy, nurture, and challenge in their church. Her contact is marlenehouk@bellsouth.net Learn more about women in the Bible at Marlene's website: www.MarleneHouk.com