

“Recalculating Route”

When a friend visited from another state, she used the GPS function of her phone to help her get around. I was in the car with her on one trip where we had to go to downtown Dallas and weren't sure how to get where we were going. At one point, the friendly little GPS lady instructed her to turn right and she demurred, saying, “I don't think that's right.” And she continued on through the intersection.

Just as I was starting to smile at the craziness of a visitor unfamiliar with the city disagreeing with the directions to a place she'd never been to, the GPS lady announced, “Recalculating route. . .” and then, seconds later, she instructed us to make turns that would get us back on track.

There was no shame or condemnation in her voice. She didn't pout or yell. She didn't accuse, “You stupid idiot! I told you to turn! Why didn't you turn? You never listen to me. How are you going to get where you want to go if you don't listen to me?”

She simply said, “Recalculating route.”

How like our heavenly Father! He directs us in the way we should go. When we deviate from the path, He doesn't yell at us, because there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1). He recalculates the route and redeems the detour for His glory and our good. It will still cost us, because actions have consequences and disobedience comes with a price tag, but the discipline is always delivered with the hand of love.

As my friend now heeded “the lady,” following her instructions to make several turns to get back on the right route, I thought about the time we were losing because of her independence and wrong belief that she knew better, even though she didn't know the city. We eventually got to where we

needed to go, but not without the cost of time. God tells us that He who began a good work in us will continue to perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus (Philippians 1:6). He's running the GPS of our lives; He knows perfectly the map of the terrain and knows the best way to get where He wants us to go. It may not be the route we would have chosen since we don't know enough to choose the best for ourselves, but He knows what He's doing and it pays to trust Him.

When my friend got back home, she commented that her trusty GPS always got her where she needed to go, and every single time she thought she knew better, she was wrong. She heard "recalculating route" more times than she cared to admit.

But the GPS lady's voice was always friendly, non-judgmental, non-condemning. And my friend learned something about God's heart in the process: He loves her and knows she's a work in progress. He doesn't get angry when it takes her multiple times to learn what He is teaching her. He recalculates the route, patiently and with love, because He knows where He's taking her and exactly how and when they'll get there. His omniscience and sovereignty mean that she can't mess up His plans. It may cost her something to get to the final destination, but in love He will redeem the time and use it all to build character and Christlikeness into her.

Leave it God to teach a heart lesson in grace from a mechanical voice!

This blog post originally appeared at
blogs.bible.org/recalculating-route/ on October 21, 2008.