

# “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!

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# Overcoming Anxiety: Finding Real Peace When Life Seems Crazy

*What makes you feel anxious? Being late or unprepared for work or appointments? Maybe unresolved interpersonal conflict. Airline travel? Public speaking? Fears of losing love? Serious illness or a friend's death?*



*This article is also available in [Spanish](#).*

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Pressures from the trivial to the traumatic can prompt feelings of fearfulness or apprehension.

Once at a booksellers convention my wife and I spent an exhausting day on our feet promoting a new book. Late that night, after a reception crowd had thinned down to mostly authors and our publisher, we stood in a circle engaged in conversation. I had to leave her side momentarily to attend to a matter.

Upon returning to the circle, I walked up behind my wife and began gently to massage her shoulders. She seemed to enjoy this, so I started to put my arms around her waist to give her a little hug. Just then, I looked up at the opposite side of the circle and saw ... my wife.

I had my hands on the wrong woman!

In that instant, I knew the true meaning of fear. Fear of circumstances. Even fear of death! Confusion clouded my mind.

Heat enveloped my back, shoulders, neck and head. My face reddened; my stomach knotted.

You've probably had embarrassing moments that generate anxiety. What about more serious causes?

## **Your Greatest Fear?**

Fear of death is perhaps humans' greatest fear. In college, the student living next door to me was struck and killed instantly by lightning on a golf course one springtime afternoon. Shock gripped our fraternity house. "What does it mean if life can be snuffed out in an instant?" my friends asked. "Is there a life after death and, if so, how can we experience it?" Confusion and anxiety reigned.

If you can't answer the question "What will happen when you die?" you may become anxious.

How can you find real peace in a chaotic world? Consider a possible solution. It involves the spiritual realm.

As a university student, I wrote a paper for an abnormal psychology class investigating a biblical therapy for anxiety. I had come to faith as a freshman and found it brought me peace of mind. Complex psychological disorders often stem from more basic problems like anxiety, problems for which faith offers practical solutions.

I sent a copy of my paper to the author of our textbook, a prominent UCLA psychologist. A month later, he replied that he liked the paper and asked permission to quote from it in his revised textbook.

Somewhat amazed, I readily agreed. I also sent a copy of his letter to my parents in Miami, who were beginning to wonder about their son's campus spiritual involvement.

This professor felt that the principles in the paper—which

certainly were not original with me—had both academic and personal relevance. Several months later, we met at his lovely home in Malibu overlooking the Pacific Ocean. As we sat in his back yard, this professor told me he lacked personal peace and wanted to know God personally. I showed him a simple four-point outline based on one of Jesus' statements: "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."[\[1\]](#)

We discussed God's unconditional love for us, our dilemma of being unplugged from Him and the flaws (selfishness and "sins") that result. I noted that Jesus, through His death in our place and return to life, came to plug us back into God by paying the penalty we owed for our sins.

## **Finding Real Peace**

This professor decided to place his faith in God and asked Jesus to forgive him and enter his life. We kept in touch. Later, over the phone, he told me that as he looked out over the ocean and saw the setting sun, "I really believe I'm a part of all this. Before I didn't, but now I do." He was seeing how he fit into God's universe. An internationally acclaimed scholar linked up with, if you will, the greatest Psychologist.

One of Jesus' earlier followers wrote to some friends about a divine aid for anxiety: "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. If you do this, you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus."[\[2\]](#)

Faith in God does not make life perfect and is no automatic solution to anxiety. Illness, chemical imbalance, emotional wounds and more can hamper coping. But a good starting place is to become linked with the One who loves us and knows best

what makes us fulfilled.

Might it be time for you to consider Him?

### **Notes**

1. John 3:16 *NLT (New Living Translation)*.
2. Philippians 4:6-7 (*NLT*).

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