

## WHERE IS YOUR COMPASS?

By: Dr. M. Diane Pearce, Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist

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Have you ever driven across this beautiful country of ours? I have and it was exhilarating! Although my family would be quick to tell you that I get lost easier than anyone they have ever known, I drove from California to Florida without one diversion or u-turn! However, I can get turned around and lose my way in our local shopping mall! Why is it that sometimes the simplest of tasks can become the greatest obstacles?

I have discovered that what makes the difference is preparation and having the right tools. Even the most mature of us need a GPS, a map, or a compass to assist us. No matter how many times we have made a long journey, we all need to prepare and lean on the right tools. If we begin our journey without a guide or compass to follow, then our decision making will be influenced by the promise or fantasy of a better path. This is true in road trips as well as the journey of living, whether we are new at the journey or seasoned travelers! The distractions for a seasoned traveler may seem less obvious and more subtle.

The choices we make daily are reflections of the guide that we are attempting to follow. If we have no specific guide to follow then we will likely be led by what is most comfortable at the moment. ***If my comfort is my compass then my path will reflect little morality.***

Without a guide or a map to follow, we will deviate from the character of who we were created to be! My pastor recently preached on this topic as it applies to men within our families. He reminded us that if a man does not have a code of conduct or some clearly defined moral mandates then he will show little if any restraint. As a Marriage and Family Therapist, I wholeheartedly agree! The problem within many families is that there are no adults who are willing to impose a code of conduct upon self within their private world.

If I do not have a moral compass that I use as a guide for my private living, then I will be led astray by my own shortcomings! Since we are not meant to be robotic or machine-like, we all have shortcomings that can lead us astray of our goal. Our shortcomings may include pride (attitude of entitlement or superiority), greed or discontent (excessively wanting what we do not have), or perhaps a physical lust (lack of restraint), to name a few.

Our shortcomings can always be seen first in our hearts and then in our decision making. While having a moral compass to guide my heart will increase my chances of staying on the right path, oftentimes, due to stress or unmet needs, we are still vulnerable to distraction. How often on a road trip have you gotten distracted by hunger and deviated from your path for the promise of a big juicy burger to satiate your appetite?

Every one of us is vulnerable to allowing our decision making to be controlled by our stress or circumstances rather than the character of who we were intended to be! So whether you are a novice or seasoned traveler, choose your compass well and let it guide where your heart spends its time!

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