



# TRAFFIC



# CHAPTER 1 | TRAFFIC

## Introduction

Everyone who lives in the city deals with traffic. It is common and almost expected, but we never feel good when we get into a real jam.

When you think about traffic, you may think of long lines, people who impede progress, and potholes. These things equal stress. We all get frustrated, disappointed, and even mad when caught in traffic.

Traffic jams may prevent us from reaching our destination when we plan to, cause us to miss an important meeting, or cause us to run low on fuel. We often share the road with distracted and inexperienced drivers on hectic highways. Detours can cause us to take a longer route than expected and encounter unfamiliar territory. What would otherwise be a routine and uneventful trip may suddenly become the source of unexpected stress and anxiety when we encounter heavy traffic and all its delays.

The same is true of the spiritual highway upon which we find ourselves. Some of us not only deal with traffic outside, but we also deal with traffic inside our heads and hearts.

Although we purpose in our hearts to avoid the distractions and delays the enemy uses to hinder us, we often find ourselves sharing the road with unwanted traffic.

*As women, our lives get crowded.*

As the fixers of all things, from broken toys to broken hearts, women often wrestle with establishing healthy boundaries and the ability to say no. Deeds we perform with the best of intentions are frequently misunderstood. Burdens that aren't ours to carry find their way into our totes. And thoughts we know better than to entertain play in an endless loop over and over in our minds.

How do we avoid the internal traffic our souls get caught up in? How do we take the right exits, let detours work in our favor, or recover after a crash? God loves us and wants to show us the avenues of freedom He's made available for us.

Welcome to this chapter's study on the reality of Traffic: Taking the right exit and roads less traveled.

Let's look into His Word to find and follow His roadmap and solutions for these less-traveled roads.

*"You can enter God's Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. But the gateway to life is very narrow, and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it." (Matthew 7:13-14).*

This broad road is filled with detours that cause stress, people distracted by things that aren't spiritually beneficial and jams that delay our arrival at the destination God has intended for us.

This fast-paced highway offers excitement and seemingly quicker routes. God, however, has something different in mind for us. When He came to the earth, the angels proclaimed:

*"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased." (Luke 2:14).*

Jesus came to reconcile us to the Father and to open a path where none existed. He doesn't want us to live in constant turmoil; hectic living without respite can kill us. The narrow road offers the escort of the Holy Spirit and the refreshment of Living Water. Just as the 23rd Psalm promises, He lets me rest in green meadows; He leads me beside peaceful streams.

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He never promised that life would be without chaos, but He came. He brought peace that takes us beyond ourselves to a place of safety, deep security, and forward progress. Even during times of uncertainty, when the road is rougher than anticipated, or when we find ourselves in uncharted territory, we can experience God's peace, *which exceeds anything we can understand.* (Phil. 4:7). As we learn to trust the Good Shepherd, it becomes less of a struggle to avoid the pitfalls of rush hour traffic and enjoy the serenity of the narrow road.

His Spirit helps us put the unnecessary blockade of the world aside and enables us to *strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up.* (Heb. 12:1).

While the narrow road may not move as quickly as we would like and may not take us to our destination pain-free and without bumps and bruises, we are assured that we are never alone as we journey this path with our Savior.

His Word is the supreme GPS to help us navigate our course.

*"Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path."  
(Psalm 119:105).*

In this section, let's examine God's Word and what it says about freedom from internal traffic.

- *How do we find that internal freedom?*
- *How can we cope when it feels like everything is at a standstill?*
- *How can we navigate the detours?*
- *How do we move forward after the crash?*

*Let's find out!*



# TRAFFIC part 1

*Taking the Right Exit*

# God, the Way-Maker

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In **Luke 2:14**, the Word of God says,

*"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."*

This is an important verse when we think about the things that crowd our lives and make us weary and nervous. We've bought into a terrible lie in our modern world that busy is better, more is significant, and we alone are enough. But we were not created to be self-sufficient--crowding our lives with worry, fear, tasks, and stuff doesn't give us clarity. Zooming past the stop signs of God's truth on the way to 'me' only hurts us in the long run. Life without putting God first keeps us at a dangerous pace headed nowhere.

*The truth is, we all need a Savior.*

The most inescapable traffic jam in life is the blockade caused by sin. Until a person repents and receives the free gift of forgiveness and reconciliation that Jesus Christ offers, life is at a dangerous standstill. God offers us a way out through His death on the Cross and His resurrection from the dead. The only highway a person travels until her life is made right with the Creator is the crowded road toward eternal death.

The first way to overcome this blockade is to open our hearts to Christ, ask God to forgive us of our sins, and receive the free gifts of God's unfailing love and forgiveness. He made a way where none existed.

Our enemy, the devil, wants to stop any movement toward God we make. He wants us emotionally jammed up and works hard to stop any spiritual progress. He desires to "steal and kill and destroy" (John 10:10). God, the King of glory, more powerful than the enemy and his schemes, came to give us a way out: eternal life through Jesus Christ, His only Son. He cleared the sin that separates us from His Holiness by His death on the Cross and resurrection on the third day.

Now, we can have a relationship with God by faith in Christ. When we make this choice, our souls are clear, we can move forward, and our life is headed in the right direction.

Let's pause and look at what the Word of God says:

*"But the angel reassured them. 'Don't be afraid!' he said. 'I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger.' Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.'" (Luke 2:10-14).*

On the very night of Jesus' birth, the angels praised God and declared peace to those with whom He was pleased. Likewise, the shepherds, watching in amazement, were told not to be afraid. This is good news for each of us because, although we were born into sin, Jesus came into the world to make a way for us to be forgiven. This is the only way around the blockade of sin in our lives.

### Write your responses in a journal or notebook:

*What did the heavenly angels declare on the first night the only perfect human being born of a virgin lived on earth (verse 14)?*

- *What does verse 10 say the first instruction people were given was?*
- *Why do you think this is 'good news,' and how can this free the heart from the internal blockade of sin and spiritual stagnation?*

### Action steps:

Have you taken the right spiritual exit from eternal death by receiving God's free gift of salvation in Christ? If not, stop and ask Him to come into your heart right now. Confess your sins and surrender your life to Him as your Savior and Lord.

Does your life feel jammed by a sin that is stopping you spiritually? Take God's exit plan: Confess your sins, ask for forgiveness, and receive what Christ did on the Cross to pay for that fault you've committed. Actively put God first. Decide at least one thing you will do differently as you give Him full authority over your life, especially in that area. Pray. Talk to Him right now.

## Note to self:

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God made a way out through the road of faith in Christ, and all I have to do to avoid the internal traffic jams of life is take the right exit, surrender to Him, and have faith in His only Son, Jesus. From now on, I will believe what God says in His Word and live with that as my absolute truth.

## Continuing on the Right Path

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Once you find your way out of the traffic jam of sin by faith in Christ, you need to continue on the road less traveled of continual faith in Him and obedience to His Word.

How can you do that? Here are a couple of pointers you can follow.

The psalmist David often wrote about how following the right path helps us for the rest of our lives. He talked a lot about knowing and understanding God's Word.

"Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path." (Psalm 119:105).

Spending time daily in God's Word helps guide our steps and the roads we travel.

## Write your responses in a journal or notebook:

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*"Stay on the path that the LORD your God has commanded you to follow. Then you will live long and prosperous lives in the land you are about to enter and occupy." (Deuteronomy 5:33).*

- *What does this verse say about the right path?*
- *What do you think this means?*



Another important tip for continuing on the right path is to surround yourself with people who have genuine faith in Christ and who live what they say they believe. Be intentional about spending time with them, and make yourself accountable to them regularly. They will help you keep your life on a path toward growth and spiritual health. Find a church where the Bible is taught well and whose pastor preaches the gospel, and attend regularly.

The devil wants us to become isolated and would love to keep us detached so that when we make a mistake, we give up. However, allowing other believers to surround us and sharing time and relationships with them will help us stay on the right path.

*"You have made a wide path for my feet to keep them from slipping."  
(2 Samuel 22:37).*

- *Write this sentence in your own words.*
- *What do you think it means?*

To continue on the right path, find a mentor to help you grow spiritually. Pray for someone who loves God, lives for Him, and is close to you to become that mentor, someone who can share their spiritual journey with you and point out what the pitfalls in the road might be. If no one approaches you as a mentor, consider approaching someone you would like as a mentor and ask to visit with them about the possibility of mentoring you.

*"The LORD is good and does what is right; he shows the proper path to those who go astray." (Psalm 25:8).*

- *What does this verse mean to you?*

## Dig Deeper:

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- *What steps can I take to guard against fear and worry crowding my mind and distracting me from what God says about my situation?*
- *Who do I need to distance myself from in my life, and with whom should I seek more fellowship?*
- *What are the priorities of one who seeks the long and prosperous life referred to in Deuteronomy 5:33?*



# TRAFFIC part 2

*Navigating The Detours*

# A Guide for Life's Twists and Turns

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*"And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them." (Romans 8:28).*

Sometimes, it's not just the issue of the traffic but the detours that make us feel derailed. In effect, we plan to be somewhere in life by a certain time, at a certain place, but things happen. The road is closed. We get derailed, and we end up somewhere else—maybe even in places we never wanted to go.

How do we navigate the detours, overcome our frustrations, and start on a new path?

Can we find purpose, rhyme, or reason in things that seem to deter us? Is God still good when things don't work out like we want them to? We may have to deal with these questions. God's Word has answers for us. When detours happen, we don't have to feel lost.

John 16 tells us that we have a Guide even in the detours. Not only is He an internal GPS for believers, but He also comforts us and helps us find pathways to healing, deliverance, and hope.

Let's look at God's Word to understand this better.

## Write your responses in a journal or notebook:

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*"When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future." (John 16:13)*

- What does verse 13 say the Holy Spirit does to help us navigate even the hard things in life?

The disciples were excited at all Jesus was doing. They expected Him to reveal himself as the Messiah of Israel in a very different way than God, the Father, had planned. Life for them, as followers of Christ, would take a very sharp turn from what they expected. God, however, did not leave them without direction. The detour they'd soon experienced would take them to a higher road God was preparing for them. He told them what would happen beforehand and later fulfilled every promise He had made. (Acts 2:1-21).

- *Why do you think detours in life are sometimes necessary? How does God prepare us for them?*
- *What is one experience or event you thought would work out a certain way but are now happy that God had something else in mind?*

After writing it down, stop and thank God out loud that His plans are always better—even when they are different from what we expected.

## Unavoidable Pitfalls:

Some detours, however, don't result from God's plan but from the sinful choices of others: a spouse who betrays their family, a father or mother who abandons their faith, a jealous co-worker or employer with a divisive or unkind heart, or a thief or abuser who wounds and hurts others.

## Write your responses in a journal or notebook:

*"But I will send you the Advocate—the Spirit of truth. He will come to you from the Father and will testify all about me." (John 15:26).*

- *Who did Jesus say would come to help us have the right perspective when others do things that hurt us?*

*"Joseph could stand it no longer. There were many people in the room, and he said to his attendants, 'Out, all of you!' So, he was alone with his brothers when he told them who he was. Then he broke down and wept. He wept so loudly the Egyptians could hear him, and word of it quickly carried to Pharaoh's palace.*

*"'I am Joseph!' he said to his brothers. 'Is my father still alive?' But his brothers were speechless! They were stunned to realize that Joseph was standing there in front of them. 'Please, come closer,' he said to them. So, they came closer. And he said again, 'I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into slavery in Egypt. But don't be upset, and don't be angry with yourselves for selling me to this place. It was God who sent me here ahead of you to preserve your lives.'" (Genesis 45:1-5).*

## Write your responses in a journal or notebook:

In Genesis 37:1-36:

- *What detours did Joseph experience in his life?*

In Genesis 39:6-23

- *How did Joseph respond to the terrible decisions of others?*

In Genesis 41:1-56:

- *How did God use the difficult turns in Joseph's favor?*

In Genesis 45:1-7:

- *What did Joseph conclude about the unexpected detours life had taken?*

## Write your responses in a journal or notebook:

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- *What detours have you or are you currently experiencing because of others? How do you feel God wants to use this in your life?*
- *What are you finding in God's Word to help you navigate? How is His Spirit working to give you the right perspective? What is God saying to you about all this?*

## Listen to This:

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*"This is what the past is for! Every experience God gives us, every person He puts in our lives, is the perfect preparation for the future that only He can see."*

*- Corrie Ten Boom, The Hiding Place <sup>1</sup>*

## Action Step:

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Take some time to meditate on Romans 8:28 and commit it to memory. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you believe this truth deep in your soul. Declare this Scripture out loud for a week with faith that God's Word accomplishes all it sets out to do.

## Note to Self:

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Detours can be navigated well as we allow God, the Holy Spirit, to lead us to Christ and help us to see things from His perspective.

## Distractions That Lead to Deadly Detours

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There is another type of detour we may find ourselves taking if we aren't careful: those that come from taking our eyes off Jesus and what His Word says. If we aren't careful, Satan will lure us into devastating, deadly detours with his arsenal of 3 Ds – distraction, deception, and, ultimately, our destruction.

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<sup>1</sup> Ten, B. C., Sherrill, J. L., & Sherrill, E. The Hiding Place. (Washington Depot, Conn: Chosen Books, 1971). xii.

The enemy's first step is to distract us. At first, this may seem like a seemingly harmless thought. It slips in so innocently and subtly that we may not even notice it at first. But as we entertain it and allow it to remain in our minds, this little distractive thought leads to his second step: deception.

Just like Eve, we start to believe the lie that Satan planted in our minds. Rather than focusing on what God says about us and standing on the promises of His Word, we allow deception to take root and ultimately lead to our destruction. Once Satan has twisted God's Word and our understanding of our worth and purpose in God's plan, just like Eve, we are easy prey for him.

2 Corinthians 10:5 says, "We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ."

The secret to avoiding such detours is to stay in God's Word and "capture rebellious thoughts" before they take root in our minds.

Satan can't destroy us if he can't deceive us. And he can't deceive us without first distracting us from God's planned path.

## Dig Deeper:

- *What can I do when things are going well to prepare my soul for the times things don't go as I had planned?*
- Is there anything I do or allow in my life that lead to ungodly detours?
- What can I learn from or find to be thankful for about the detours I am in right now?



The background of the slide features a close-up, slightly blurred image of orange flowers, likely dahlias, with warm, golden tones. A solid orange rectangular box is centered over the image, containing the title text in white.

# TRAFFIC part 3

*Moving Past the Crash*

# Hard Stops and Long Waits

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*"I look up to the mountains— does my help come from there? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth!"*  
(Psalm 121:1-2).

To fight mental and spiritual traffic, we need to keep moving forward. This can be thwarted if we are worn out from the hard stops or long waits of life's difficulties. Tragic situations can bring us to a complete halt unless we look to God for help. Looking to the wrong places or people to give us what only God provides will keep us from progressing. How do we combat this?

Let's look at what the Bible says about moving past the crashes and halts.

## Write your responses in a journal or notebook:

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Read Psalm 121 and Psalm 18

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*"I look up to the mountains— does my help come from there? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth!"*  
(Psalm 121:1-2).

- *Where does the psalmist go in Psalm 121 for help when he has trouble?*
- *What does verse 2 say about God that helps us know He is bigger than any circumstance we face?*
- *In Psalm 18:4-6, what difficult situations did David face that could have brought him to a complete halt?*
- *What did David do to keep moving forward (verse 6)?*
- *How did God respond (verse 6)?*
- *What hard stop has tried to bring you to a complete halt?*
- *What can you learn from Psalm 121 and Psalm 18 to give you momentum?*

We cause unnecessary traffic stops and crashes when we look to the wrong things or places for help and emotional fulfillment.

## Listen to This:

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As women, keeping our lives free of misaligned relationships is essential. Being spiritually disjointed or practicing relationships outside of God's boundaries (i.e., sex out of marriage, same-gender relationships, pornographic addictions, or polygamous practices) brings us to a spiritual halt. It opens the lanes for demonic attacks or strongholds. Too many lives are kept stagnant by staying in the wide, permissive lanes of sexual immorality. These practices not only harm us and damage those we are involved with, but they also destroy our children and invite curses into our families--see Deuteronomy 28:15.

As believers, God calls us to take the less traveled roads. Living God's principles is unpopular and may seem narrow to many, but these paths lead to eternal life. His ways keep us from crashing and provide escape routes to forge ahead into God's best plan for our future.

Doing what God says means forfeiting immediate gratification for a better pleasure later. When we wait on God and do things His way, we learn to possess our souls and establish an everlasting inheritance.

## Write your responses in a journal or notebook:

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### Read Ruth 1-4

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- *What does Ruth 1:14-16 tell us Ruth did when given the choice to travel the popular road back to where she came from?*
- *How is Ruth's patience and diligence reflected in Ruth 2:2, 17, 23?*
- *How did God reward Ruth for moving forward after life's initial crash, according to Ruth 4:9, 13-22?*
- *Are your relationships adequately aligned? If not, what do you need to do about it? Is there an old door to close or a new, less popular door God wants you to walk through?*

Ruth's life crashed when her husband died suddenly, leaving her a young, poor widow. Ruth had choices to make. During a time in her life when she could have easily prostituted herself, she chose to take the road less traveled toward the God of Israel. Instead of making excuses, she honored God and cared for her mother-in-law. As a result of getting up after the tragedy she experienced and waiting patiently while working diligently, she saw God's miraculous provision. And in an even greater blessing, her faith helped to insert her name into the lineage of the Messiah.

She reaped an eternal reward because she aligned herself to God and to the relationships He had in mind for her.

Ask God to help you choose the road less traveled—His perfect will for your life.

### **Action Step:**

Are you waiting on God and honoring Him in your relationships? Are you a faithful spouse? Have you closed all doors on any sexual immorality? Do you honor the people in your life that should matter? If not, stop right now. Ask God to forgive you.

### **Pray:**

Ask God to show you if you need to honor someone in your family differently. Decide on one thing you will do this week to obey God in this area.

Lift your hands and praise God that He loves you and has the best relationships in mind for you. Thank Him for all the good people He has put in your life

### **Note to Self:**

God wants to lead me into healthy and blessed relationships. Practicing sexual immorality just because it's popular or crowding my life with toxic relationships can thwart my life spiritually, emotionally, and physically. I don't have to let life crash by willfully engaging in harmful behavior. When given a choice to return to old things, I will take the road less traveled by saying YES to GOD and NO to the FLESH. Forward progress and victory are the routes I will take instead!

## Dig Deeper:

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- *Are there people or programs I turn to for help when God asks me to rely more completely on Him?*
- Are there any relationships that I need to let go of?
- Am I on the straight and narrow path God has called me to?

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