



WOW: Word Of the Week

GPS

May 7, 2025

“Make a U-turn. Turn around.” GPS is a wonderful thing if you do not know where you are going. Less so if you do know where you are going! I was demonstrating the GPS system to Jan, so I turned it on as we left the house for a familiar location.

Soon a voice was admonishing me repeatedly—turn around. Eventually I went so far that the global positioning system had to find a new route. The best route! Or at least the one we always take!

What happens when you know the GPS is wrong? When we are smarter than the system? It happens. Several years ago I spoke at a men’s retreat for a church in northwestern Arkansas. The retreat was held at a remote retreat center in northeastern Oklahoma—a retreat center that was not well-known. And certainly not well-known to the GPS systems of the day! Many of the participants arrived late. But they had some quite amusing stories as we shared a later-than-scheduled meal. Unintended tours of rural NE Oklahoma.

Sometimes we know GPS is wrong and go our own way. When we are right, all is well! But sometimes we think GPS is wrong when it is right. “There is away that seems right...” You can likely finish the quotation from Jeremiah. Less well-known is Solomon’s wise observation (13:13), If you don’t pay attention you will pay for it!

The GPS I have been describing can make mistakes. It is only as smart as the information that was put into it. There is another GPS—God’s Positioning System, or perhaps God’s Plan of Salvation—that is never wrong! Wise Christians use God’s GPS to train their conscience.

In daily life, our conscience says yes or no. But our conscience is only as good as the information it receives. I recently read an article that showed how orthodoxy precedes orthopraxy. The author claimed that orthopraxy is impossible with orthodoxy! Need an interpretation? Right teaching leads to right actions. If the teachings are wrong, the practice will eventually fail.

In a day when some say that doctrine does not matter—the contemporary church scene often seems little interested in right teaching and what the Bible says, simple GPS lessons say correct information does matter.

With wrong information, you may end up where you did not plan to go!

I am sure you can figure that out spiritually as well—God’s Positioning System is right! You can know where you are—without a doubt! You can know how to get where you are going! And when God’s GPS says, “turn around,” you should take it seriously!