

FOCUS ON FAITH

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DIRECTIONS

No doubt most people reading this article will have heard the story of the person who was lost trying to reach his destination who when asking for directions was told, "You can't get there from here!" And probably most have experienced that plaintive cry from a child five minutes after leaving home, "How long will it be before we get there?" It's usually followed up every quarter of an hour or so with, "Are we nearly there yet?"

Life is full of twists and turns and changes in direction. It's a journey rather than a destination and hopefully it will be a long, interesting and enjoyable one for us. But often along the way breakdowns and accidents occur or we misread the map and take the wrong turning. Many of us have probably experienced situations in the past where, instead of finding ourselves on the motorway, we've ended up taking a rough old track leading to what seems like a dead end and we've had to retrace our steps. It's especially difficult and sometimes dangerous when it's dark and you're driving on a road that you're not particularly sure of. I had a situation just like that recently and one of my headlamps wasn't working either!

Even the bumps and potholes...can be negotiated safely!

At the beginning of a year many of us start thinking about our hopes, plans and dreams in the various aspects of our lives for the coming twelve months.

We make resolutions, which all too frequently are broken

within a short time, and our aims and goals are frustrated. Despite that, personally I think it's important to have objectives because as the old saying goes, "He who aims at nothing is bound to hit it!"

But where do we find that road map for our lives?

There are numerous self-help books available which provide excellent material on how to tackle issues that affect us such as our attitudes, motivations and intentions. And there's plenty of help available in relation to the physical aspects of our lives such as how to manage our time or finances, to lose weight or quit smoking. But where does faith fit into all of that?

The Old Testament prophet Isaiah speaking on God's behalf said, "**Along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light**

before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them."

What a fantastic promise! Isaiah was actually talking about those who were spiritually blind and bankrupt and it is so often the spiritual aspect of our lives that we tend to forget and neglect. Many of us want to understand it all before we feel able to believe but God calls us to have faith in Him. Not blind faith, because He has equipped us with brilliant minds, intellect and understanding, but a willingness that says, "Even though I don't understand it all, I'm still willing to trust you God."

There's a legendary story about Charlton Heston during the making of "Ben-Hur". Heston spend hours working with the trainers and stuntmen to perfect the chariot race scene but despite his expertise, even he found it difficult keep up with the pace. He eventually went to the film's director, Cecil B. De Mille and told him that whilst he thought he could drive the chariot well enough, he didn't think he could actually win the race. De Mille simply smiled and replied, "You just drive, I'll direct."

Isaiah gave us another great verse that I love which goes like this. "**Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, 'This is the way; walk in it.'**"

He may be the all-powerful God of the universe but He desires a personal relationship with each of us. And when we're prepared to put our trust in Him we can confidently drive knowing that He's doing the directing.

This year why not step out in faith with God by your side? Let Him guide and direct you. It's as we hand over to Him the doubts, fears and apprehensions we have that we'll find even the bumps and potholes in the road can be negotiated safely!

If you are interested in finding out more about God's purposes for your life, log on to www.lifting-jesus-higher.org.uk which provides information on local Churches together with contact details, plus other Christian resources and activities.