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DON'T PAINT YOUR RED FLAGS GREEN

By Richard & Tanya Curren

To live a life of purpose, you have to live it ON purpose! **Living a life of purpose means that you daily choose to make purposeful and directed steps toward goals you value.** And this means that you have to be able to identify and red flag warnings from the Holy Spirit as you discern what your next steps will be. Too often we become so focused on what we want to do that we ignore Godly warnings and choose to move forward when God is either telling us to wait or go a different direction. We know how hard it can be to wait on God, but to successfully navigate your life's course, it is vital that you don't paint your spiritual red flags green!

Think of the significance of the color red. Red stop lights and stop signs tell us to stop. Red flags signify a warning. And even in nature, God created certain animals with a bright red color to ward off other animals. (It's a way of saying, "If you eat me, you'll regret it!") Just like we understand this concept in our everyday lives and world today, it is SO important that we grasp the red flag concept spiritually, because this is exactly what God uses to develop our character. He also uses this concept to teach us how to hear His voice and the voice of the Holy Spirit.

When Tanya was growing up, her dad gave her the "red flag" talk numerous times. He would sit her down and tell her when he saw red flags appearing in her life. Often he and her mother saw them way before she could recognize them. Just like most typical teenagers, she did not appreciate these talks at the time. But those talks and that wisdom stuck with her and saved her from many, many heartaches. **If you have children, we highly encourage you to take the time to teach your children how to discern red flags from the Lord.** They may act like they are bored or aren't listening, but we promise that your words are penetrating their hearts and will develop roots that will bless them throughout their life!

The Holy Spirit gives you red flag warnings when something is not right, when God is trying to tell you something or when He is guiding you in a different direction. This is why it is so very important that you take the time to read your Bible, pray and talk to God and learn how to hear His voice. If you spend all of your time staying busy, talking to your friends and you never turn to God for answers and His will, you will not be able to identify these red flags. Your peace, your inner peace that passes ALL human understanding, will come when you are

able to identify and listen to the red flags that the Holy Spirit shows you.

So you might be thinking, “How will I be able to tell that I’m getting a red flag?” There is a big difference between what you’re thinking or even feeling versus what you **KNOW THAT YOU KNOW** from the Lord. We describe the ability to hear from God as this inner – deep in your soul – ability to know God’s will. It goes beyond what you are thinking, because God sometimes calls you to do things that don’t seem to make sense, and it goes beyond what you are feeling because our human emotions don’t always line up with what God calls us to do.

But it is an understanding that you can’t deny. It is asking for God’s will to guide you and then acting in obedience. **Obedience is a key ingredient to heeding your red flags.** It’s so important that you are not only able to recognize when God is speaking, but that you are also able to listen and respond in obedience. **Your obedience will bring you ultimate peace.** In fact, if you have ever ignored or disobeyed a red flag warning from God, you know that it brought you frustration, bad results and a restlessness that you couldn’t deny.

Our character is developed through moments of obedience. Character takes a while to develop, but can be compromised in a moment. Sometimes we get so focused on what we want to do, how fun it is and how it feels good and doesn’t really hurt anybody. So we ignore God’s red flags and paint them green. We choose to GO forward and do what we want to do because it satisfies us in that moment.

We have seen devastating effects from those who do this. We know many who have ignored red flags in their lives and we keep watching them take their red flags and dip them in green paint to justify doing what they want to do. Clearly, this never works out for them. And the reality is that it never works out for any of us. We may get away with ignoring God’s will for a short time, but it will ALWAYS catch up with us. And ignoring God’s will always has consequences. Never try to minimize the consequences for short term gratification. No, your consequences may not seem severe, like going to prison, but recognize that doing anything that takes you further away from the holy presence of God is severe. **Never classify your consequences into different levels to justify your actions.** Do whatever you can on a daily basis to stay in a close and constant relationship with God your Father. There is nothing that will compare to the feeling of peace, joy and wisdom that you will receive from this!

For you to be a powerful, strong, unshakeable person of faith with a trustworthy and admirable character in our world today, we encourage you to continue seeking God in all you do and to keep asking Him to show you red flags in your life. God will show you His loving red flags and how to recognize them. He loves you more that you can fathom and He loves your obedient heart and willing spirit! Remember that these flags come from a loving place, too. God doesn’t send warnings or guidance your way to frustrate you, kill your mojo or keep you from doing things you want to do in life. He never sends them to squash your fun, slow

you down, keep you in a box or make you a super boring lame goody-two-shoes Christian.

God sends you this type of guidance to protect you, protect your name and character, to guide you and to lead you to where you need to be to be effective for Him. He uses red flags to teach you and provide you with the ability to know Him more. What a gift! Don't visualize God beating you over the head with a stiff, hard red flag. Instead, try visualizing our very loving God who handcrafted you going before you as a caring parent would. Any good and loving parent will do anything to protect their newborn baby. Imagine how much more our God protects us! When you start to visualize God in a loving and compassionate way, it makes it easier to follow His will. If this is something you struggle with, start today by trying to change the way you view God. The more you practice viewing Him in this way, the more you will be open to hearing from the Holy Spirit as you make wise decisions.

If you are thinking about things you have said or done where you have ignored red flags from the Lord, don't beat yourself up. Ask for forgiveness, forgive yourself and move forward. This is such an important step! If you are like us, we don't need any critics. We can be very hard on ourselves, so when we mess up, we don't need anyone else to point it out. And sometimes it can be very hard for us to forgive ourselves— even though we know God forgave us long ago.

So if you do have a personality like ours, choose to forgive yourself and ask God to give you the wisdom to recognize the red flags He sends your way.

This is a loving process that He has designed for YOU, and if you embrace it and don't paint your red flags green, you will have peace, clarity for your steps and wisdom beyond your peers. Others will start coming to you for prayer and advice because you will become known as someone who understands the Lord's ways. And you will find that you take less and less detours in your life. You will have the ability to make clear and focused decisions quickly because you will be able to instantly determine which color flag God is sending your way.

As we were writing this article, we had several discussions about character. Listening to red flags from the Lord develops your character and gives you an unshakeable faith. We found several Scriptures and quotes that were both interesting and worth remembering that we want to share with you. We encourage you to share these with your family as you pass along the incredible wisdom that comes from understanding how God speaks to us. Red flags are just one of the many amazing signs that God sends to us as we live our lives for Him. Embrace this concept today and enjoy the peace that will flood your life!

In Him,
Rick and Tanya

Scriptures & Quotes To Encourage You:

“Character is much easier kept than recovered.” - 1 Timothy 4:12 – “...in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.”

“Character is not made in crisis, it is only exhibited.” - Psalm 16:8, “I have set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.”

“Do not in the darkness of night what you would shun in broad daylight.”
Romans 13:12: “The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.”

“Character is the ability to carry out a good resolution long after the excitement of the moment has passed.” - Cavett Robert

“Fix your thoughts on what is true and good and right. Think about things that are pure and lovely, and dwell on the fine, good things in others. Think about all you can praise God for and be glad about it.” - Philippians 4:8 (TLB)

“That old law about ‘an eye for an eye’ leaves everybody blind.” – Martin Luther King

“I have noticed that nothing I have ever said ever did me any harm.” – Calvin Coolidge

“Always do right – this will gratify some and astonish the rest.” – Mark Twain

“Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything; tell God your needs and don’t forget to thank Him for His answers. If you do this you will experience God’s peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand.” - Philippians 4:6-7 (TLB)

“We tend to forget that happiness doesn’t come as a result of getting something we don’t have, but rather of recognizing and appreciating what we do have.” - Frederick Keonig

“Personality has the power to open many doors, but character keeps them open.”

“Be great in the little things.” – St. Francis Xavier

“One of the greatest discoveries a man makes, one of his great surprises, is to find he can do what he was afraid he couldn’t do.” – Henry Ford

“Swallowing angry words before you say them is better than having to eat them afterwards.”
– Proverbs 18: 20-21 – “From the fruit of his mouth a man’s stomach is filled; with the harvest from his lips he is satisfied. The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.”

“Wisdom is the quality that keeps you from getting into situations where you need it.” – Proverbs 4:11-12 (TLB) “I would have you learn this great fact: that a life of doing right is the wisest life there is. If you live that kind of life, you’ll not limp or stumble as you run.”

SCRIPTURES FOR HAVING A POWERFUL CHARACTER:

1 Peter 2:9-10: “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God, once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

Commentary: “People often base their self-concept (self-esteem/self-worth) on their accomplishments. But our relationship with Jesus Christ is far more important than our jobs, successes, wealth or knowledge. We have been chosen by God as His very own, and we have been called to represent Him to others. Remember that your value comes from being one of God’s children, not from what you can achieve. You have worth because of what God does, not because of what you can do.”

Romans 8:5-9: “Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you.”

Commentary: “Daily we must consciously choose to center our lives on God. Use the Bible to discover God’s guidelines, and then follow them. In every perplexing situation ask yourself, “What would Jesus want me to do?” When the Holy Spirit points out what is right, do it eagerly. Have you ever worried about whether or not you really are a Christian? A Christian is anyone who has the Spirit of God living in him or her. If you have sincerely trusted Christ for your salvation and acknowledged Him as Lord, then the Holy Spirit has come into your life and you are a Christian. You won’t know that the Holy Spirit has come if you are waiting for a certain feeling; you will know He has come because Jesus promised He would. When the Holy Spirit is working within you, you will believe that Jesus Christ is God’s Son and that eternal life comes through Him. You will begin to act as Christ directs, you will find help in your daily problems and in your praying, you will be empowered to serve God and do His will, and you will become part of God’s plan to build up His church.”

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Richard R. Curren III is the co-founder and President of Boundless Limits International, Live Guilt Free and Best Life Strategies. He is a regular co-host of WATC TV's *ATLANTA LIVE*, an inspirational television show broadcast internationally. He is the co-author of **ON COURSE: Strategies For Successful Living** and its companion **ON COURSE: Life Application Study Guide**. He is also the producer of several inspirational videos including "*IT'S ABOUT TIME!*", which has been broadcast on television worldwide. He is also the developing producer for Scaly Adventures, a positive influential outreach to children using animals and nature to explore the wonders of God's creation. Rick's passion is to speak and motivate others to live to their maximum potential physically, mentally and spiritually. Through their events and publications, Rick and his wife Tanya inspire others and show that every person has boundless potential to change our world. He is a former United States Army Officer. Rick serves on the Board of Directors for the So Help Me God Project as an Advisor and is a founding Board Member. With a passion for health and fitness, he is a 2nd Degree Black Belt in Korean Olympic Tae Kwon Do, and serves as an Associate Instructor for Palmetto Martial Arts School.



Tanya Curren is the co-founder of Boundless Limits International, Live Guilt Free and Best Life Strategies. She is a regular co-host of WATC TV's *ATLANTA LIVE*, an inspirational television show broadcast internationally. She is also the co-author of **ON COURSE: Strategies For Successful Living** and the **ON COURSE Life Application Study Guide**, which has been distributed worldwide. In 2004 Tanya Curren was in a life threatening coma for 8 days as a deadly infection ravaged her body. Given two hours to live, she survived only to face the ordeal of a painful three year recovery. She is the author of **Broken Places, The Proverbs Devotion Guide, Embracing Change & Conflict**, and several other audio CD's. Tanya and her husband, Rick, are developing producers for Scaly Adventures, a positive influential outreach to children using animals and nature to explore the wonders of God's creation. In her conferences and seminars, Tanya shares with others the life-lessons she learned through her journey to restoration. Tanya travels and speaks at local, regional and international venues, and is passionate about guiding others to have a personal, real relationship with Jesus Christ. As an active homeschooling mother, she resides with her family in the mountains of South Carolina.