THE WAY

-Ryan Parsons-

Before the days of GPS, Amanda and I would travel the roads between Searcy, AR and Houston, TX regularly. Being directionally challenged, I often relied upon Amanda's superior sense of direction to get us to the right location. However, one day on that very long trip, I found myself, by her instructions, on a dead end road in a cemetery deep in the piney forest of East Texas. After 20 years, that trip is firmly embedded in my mind.

Today, we take navigation for granted. Our paved roadways, reflective road signs, 70mph speed limits in air-conditioned vehicles, and the ability to travel hundreds of miles on one tank of gas has spoiled us. Moreover, the advent of GPS and the ability to ask Siri for map directions to our point of interest has all but numbed the sense of direction of billions.

Believe it or not, many "highways" existed in ancient times. In Palestine, there was the Way of the Sea (Isaiah 9:1), the Way of the Land of Philistines (Exodus 13:17), and the Kings Highway (Numbers 20:17). Although they claimed the name of "way" or "highway," they were often little more than worn tracks or paths with sharp turns and steep grades covered with rocks of all sizes. Not only were the pathways dangerous to travel, but they were also perilous to travel alone (Luke 10:30).

Without a mental map and a sense of direction, travel in ancient times could be deadly. Somewhere along the way, God's people recognized the same significance of a spiritual map that would lead them in traversing the spiritual landscape. Knowing that they needed direction in the pathways of righteousness (Psalm 23:3, Proverbs 12:28), they reached out in reliance upon God to provide the map.

David, the man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14, Acts 13:22), says plainly:

Psalm 25:4-5

*Make me to know **your ways**, O Lord;*
teach me your paths.
***Lead me** in your truth and teach me,*
for you are the God of my salvation;
for you I wait all the day long.

For over 5 years, I was privileged to work with homeless individuals who we affectionally called "travelers" as they navigated the I10 corridor from Florida to California. One of my first questions was always, "Where are you headed?" With that, I would sit back and listen to the story of their journeys. Often, I would follow up with, "How long have you been a traveler?" and "What caused you to live your life out on the road?" It was interesting to hear their perspective as people who were completely focused on the journey that was their life.

While we are more rooted in one place, we have much more in common with the "travelers" think we probably care to admit. Like them, we are constantly on a journey called life. The big question we must ask ourselves is, "Where are we headed?" and "How are we going to get there?"

David's song reminds the nation of Israel that (1) they are on a journey, (2) their journey should be aligned with the ways of God, and (3) the only way to figure out the way is to ask God.

How is your journey going? Where are you headed?