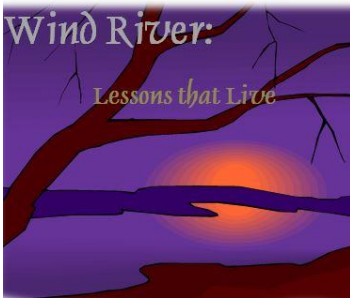


Wind River Series:

- **Remove Not the Ancient Landmarks**
- **When the River Dries Up**
- **Are you really Clean?**
- **Slippin' & Sliding**

Teen Wranglers

Includes: Four Lessons/Extras



Wind River Series:

Teen Wranglers Lesson One:

Remove Not the Ancient Landmarks

References: Proverbs 22:28; Deuteronomy 19:14; 1 Corinthians 15:58

Illustration:

Bring large stones to setup as corner stones or boundaries. As the message/lesson proceeds “scoot” or “displace” a boundary slightly. By the time the lesson is complete the area may be shrunk all the way down to a few square inches. This will demonstrate how our opportunities diminish and are stolen as our boundaries are moved.

Introduction:

We have a copy of the land survey to the farm we once owned near Yanceyville, NC in Caswell County. It is very old. It used a measurement called “Chains” and had landmarks described like “big Beech tree”, “cluster of boulders on hill” and “follows the creek”. When we bought the property we had it surveyed again to make sure the boundaries were correct and because the mortgage company required a new survey.

As a result we found out that some people in the past had moved some landmarks. The 40+ acres of farm was now only 36 acres of farm. The family selling us the farm had to reduce the price. Somebody had moved the landmarks and stolen about 4 acres!

From what we learned, it had actually been stolen many years before, a little bit at a time without anyone noticing.

Proverbs 22:28 Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set.

Deuteronomy 19:14 Thou shalt not remove thy neighbor's landmark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance, which thou shalt inherit in the land that the Lord thy God giveth thee to possess it.

So HOW do you steal land? And why does it matter anyway?

Moveable Boundaries:

No one dug up the dirt or the land and moved it. But it had been stolen from the owners nonetheless. It was not useable any longer for the original owner. Over many years the boundaries had changed as fences were moved;

the course of a creek had changed; or sometimes an older tree had fallen and so someone guessed at where the landmark should have been. Other times perhaps a not so honest neighbor would scoot a fence over a few feet in order to have more pasture land on his side. Whatever happened, the result was the same: Land area was not available any longer for use by those who paid for it. Then one day it “caught up” and an owner was selling to us and found out that his deed of 40+ acres was bogus. It was only 36 acres that he could legally sell. It was a loss for him for what he originally paid for.

The literal translations of Proverbs 22:28 and Deuteronomy 19:14 teach honesty. We were given the commandment not to steal. These scriptures go a little further and explain that moving boundaries is stealing.

There is much more to stealing than simply putting something into your pocket that belongs to someone else.

Sometimes you hear on the news that a business executive has changed around the accounting records at his company. He may move the numbers around to show expenses and earnings which are wrong so that he can boost stock values and make more profit.

Some people just do not believe God’s Word about removing or moving the landmarks that are setup to protect us.

1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Moving boundaries is not all that uncommon unfortunately. **We move the boundaries of what is right and wrong without much thought.**

Hopefully, you may not be a thief, but every time you compromise the boundaries that God has set up for us, you are stealing from yourself.

Blessings are LOST because we step out from under the umbrella of protection; we step outside the boundaries God has established to protect us from making major mistakes.

Unmovable Boundaries:

Psalm 16:8 I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

God set up boundaries to protect us. However, most people consider these boundaries as restrictions or rules on how they live and behave; thinking they are too hard to follow. As a young person in the 1960s I often heard from my school friends: What do you believe? Can you dance? Can you drink booze? Can you go to movies? Can you wear shorts? Can you play cards? If you cuss will you go to Hell? If you are driving over the speed limit it’s OK if you are going with the flow of traffic, after all if you go the speed limit everyone is passing you and it’s more dangerous to not go over it.

Then there is always the subject of “How far” is Okay in a personal relationship with a girl/guy? Should a born-again believer even date an unbeliever?

How much of “hanging out” with unsaved friends is over the line? After all, how am I going to get friends to come to church with me if I don’t hang out with them? Where’s the boundary line?

The kids would often say: Well our church says we can do this or that or MY church says I can’t do this or that. I still hear that from adults.

Little regard is taken for what God thinks; more concern is about what “our church” thinks. But Jesus’ own words say: *John 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

The Bible is the Word of God. It is TRUTH. We are to believe it JUST LIKE IT IS. **We are NOT to change it to suit ourselves.**

It does not matter what YOU believe or I believe UNLESS it agrees with God’s Word.

I accepted Jesus as Savior at age 7. That is almost 60 years ago now. I have watched both Christian culture and Church culture change over six decades.

Some of the changes have just been changing from one TRADITION to another; and that’s OK. Sometimes preferences have changed; and that’s OK, too.

However, some changes have involved serious shifts in the boundaries setup in the Word of God. Some of these boundary changes are resulting not only in missed blessings but also in dangerous behaviors that will cause people outside of Christ to perhaps never come to accept Jesus.

So let’s look at a few that you will need to seriously consider not only through your teen years but also throughout your adult years because it is RIGHT to stand on the Word of God.

The Great Commission:

Matthew 28:19-20 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

Many churches no longer have the emphasis on “Go out and bring people to Jesus.” But these are Jesus’ words. Go get them! He said get them to me, instruct them in Godly behavior.

There may be lots of activities, social events, and good community outreaches that are useful in many ways. Humanitarian needs are many. There is certainly a place and need for disaster relief, assistance to the elderly, needs for shelter and provision. But when these outreaches become simply humanitarian, then the missed opportunities to share Christ through them is lost and these might as well be administered by humanitarian groups alone.

Yes, the churches name may be on a T-Shirt of a person helping and humanitarian needs are part of being a Christian, **but the main event is still presenting Jesus Christ.** Somehow that has become the lesser priority when it should be the first priority with the local church.

While feeding the hungry is part of doing right, the Great Commission set forth by Jesus should be top priority.

Do not remove that ancient landmark!

The Place called Hell:

Revelation 20:15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Many churches no longer preach/teach that there is a real place of torment for the unbeliever. Jesus actually talks more about that place than He does about Heaven. He is not a liar. Do not be fooled by folks wanting to sugar coat God's Word.

People can philosophize and even joke all day long about "Hell on earth" or "being able to party with my friends in Hell" but all the rhetoric will not change the facts of Hell and that people are there today, right now.

Do not remove that ancient landmark! It has made many folks stop and think and consider their eternal destination.

Holy Living:

1 Peter 1:16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

Instead of Holy Living, many churches now have lists of rules much like the Pharisees in Jesus' time had. Holy Living is not about rules; it is about obedience to Jesus because you love Him and desire to please Him. **Do you want to please Him?**

The opposite of a lot of rules is LAX living in its place. Lax living is not Holy Living either!

If there is a question about a behavior that for one minute would cause an unbeliever to question my position in Christ, then I have no need for that behavior in my life.

Do not remove the ancient landmark!

Bible "Translations":

2 Timothy 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness...

During my lifetime I have seen different translations and different paraphrases of the Bible developed and sold. At first it was from people that thought they would make it easier to understand by putting the Bible into modern English.

But now there are hundreds of versions. It's as though if you don't like what one says, then pick another.

This will be a difficult boundary to know where the boundary actually is! But nonetheless this is a boundary you will have to determine through prayer with God to know if you are setting your boundaries by His expectations. We are often asked: Which version of the Bible do you use?

Not everything that is put out as a Bible is the Bible. For example, the New World Translation is the version used by a group of people called the Jehovah's Witness. It is a messed up, fouled up, unholy transcript. It completely leaves out the Holy Spirit of God.

Just because someone you "like" puts out a new translation does not make it a translation. For the most part there are many versions or interpretations and opinions available, many with "cute" language that may be more appealing in nature to a specific culture. [There are "bibles" for sports minded folks, for old people, for young people, for all sub-cultures you can think of.] But just because a book is readable does not make it an accurate "translation."

You will need WISDOM and DISCERNMENT when you decide upon a version or translation of the Word to use throughout your lifetime. Be careful, ask God for wisdom. Do not remove the Ancient Landmark!

In Summary:

Throughout today's message if you have been scooting the boundaries around. By now, they should not be anywhere near where they starting rearranging the rocks when the lesson started.

This represents how easy it is to be far away from God in understanding what is right and what is wrong.

Therefore, it is VITAL that throughout your life you stick to what the BIBLE says and shows you as your boundaries.

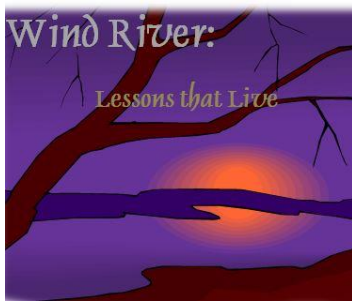
But before you can understand where your boundaries lay, you must first understand Who laid them.

Discussion Topics:

WHY is it important to have boundaries?

WHY is it important for the next generation that THIS generation take a stand on principles of the Word?

Name some boundaries that are set out clearly in God's Word.



Wind River Series:

Teen Wranglers Lesson Two:

When the River Dries Up

References: Psalm 84: 5-7; John 7:38

Illustration:

A water glass with sand; A water glass with water; A bar of Soap; A Bottle of Shampoo.

Introduction:

We moved to South Carolina for a job some time ago. We purchased a house on a few acres. As we were moving in, the well went completely dry. The well was working fine when we purchased the house, but it ran out while we were still unpacking our boxes. We had a well drilling company come out and check it out; not a pump problem, no, it was a DRY WELL. We considered just seeing if we could get by without water for a while to see if the well would recover. But it didn't.

Psalm 84:5-7 Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them. Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools. They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.

The Valley of Baca is an EXTREMELY DRY wasteland in the Middle East. I felt like my well was like the Valley of Baca. It was just like powder.

There will be times in your life when you feel like your well or the river has run dry spiritually. Let me explain.

Water Shortage:

Here is a water glass filled with sand. Will it quench your thirst?

Moses had a similar problem when he was just getting started leading the Children of Israel through the wilderness.

Exodus 15:22-27

So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water.

23 And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah.

24 And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?

25 And he cried unto the Lord; and the Lord shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them,

26 And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee.

27 And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters.

Moses has led the people through part of the wilderness when they got to Marah [bitter] in the wilderness of Shur where they find that they can't drink the water. There was no way to quench their thirst.

They might as well drink a glass of sand as to drink the water at Marah.

The Children of Israel COULD have trusted God. After all, they had seen great miracles in Egypt just days prior. God had brought plagues and changed the mind of Pharaoh to release them from slavery. They had crossed the Red Sea. Then just days afterwards they have a need and they get mad!

And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?

They could have had a prayer meeting and then waited to see what God would say or do. Instead they went to Moses complaining and threatening to kill him.

It is easy for us to look at the Children of Israel in the wilderness and criticize them, but just think about God's promises and how He has taken care of you and me in the past; then when something comes up in our life that we don't like we whine and complain instead of praying and expecting His help.

[Bring out the bar of soap.] They took out their bars of soap and rubbed it on their skin and they didn't get clean either. What was the problem? No water.

[Bring out a bottle of shampoo.] They brought out their shampoo to wash their hair, but it wouldn't work without water; it would have just been sticky with shampoo. What was the problem? No water.

[Hold up a Bible.] You can be in the same predicament in your spiritual life. You can open up your Bible; read a few verses; even shed a tear and pray a prayer to God, but still come up DRY! What's the problem? No Living Water!

The Israelites were not only dirty on the OUTSIDE; they were also dirty in their hearts. They were not trusting God. They were just upset that things didn't just fall into place the way they thought they should. Things weren't going their way. Without water, everything was in an uproar in the camp!

God used this incidence [and expense!] of our well going dry to remind me to trust Him for everything, including the BASICS.

It is easy to rise to the occasion and be faithful when something BIG is happening in our lives. However, it takes patience and endurance to live for God every minute of every day. Sometimes it will seem boring and dull in your Christian walk.

How's your faith walk when things are quiet and it seems Heaven is not hearing you at all?

You can get used to things the way they are. Then when a problem arises, the natural man kicks in before we think about prayer. It will seem like no one notices or cares whether or not we are doing right. When you feel this way remember:

Isaiah 12:2-4 Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted.

Draw some refreshing water from your well of salvation. Once you are born-again then you have the indwelling Holy Spirit living in you. **Isaiah says that when your well runs dry, call on the Lord!**

Psalm 40:1 I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.

Water of Life:

John 4:10-11 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

John 7:38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

Revelation 7:17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

[Bring out the glass of clean water.] Here I have a glass of clean clear water. Will it quench your thirst? You bet!! When you have been outside on a hot day, there is nothing better than a glass of cool water.

In the book of John Jesus asked a woman for a drink from Jacob's well at Sychar in Samaria. He had walked a long way and was thirsty, but He had something bigger in mind.

He really walked there to tell her that He had living water, salvation that would quench her spiritual thirst forever. The well that Jesus spoke of will satisfy us all of our Christian life, no matter how difficult things become.

Then Jesus will continue to satisfy after our death or His second coming because it will lead us to a crystal stream in Heaven that runs right from the throne of God with Jesus seated at His right hand.

How thirsty are you for a victorious Christian life, a life that causes others to want to have what you have?

So many “things” and “activities” get in the way of putting Jesus first! Wanting others to “like” us or just “accept” us becomes priority over what really counts. It is not how many “friends” or how “popular” you are in your circles that will matter for eternity, or will matter in the next couple of years in fact; but rather your relationship with Jesus; your walk with Him is what matters long term and in the short term as well.

If you are not thirsty enough, I encourage you to seek God in prayer for that kind of life. Examine yourself. What matters more to you?

- Keeping your words pleasing to the Lord or fitting into the conversation? Including cursing, foul language and gossip.
- Being modest in appearance or being immodest in order to attract eyes?
- Does Social Networking devour so much time, that you have no time for quiet time with God?
- Do you know more Sports Teams Stats than you do about God’s plan for your life?
- Do you care more about what that special girl/guy thinks than what God would think?

If any one of these scenarios fits your circumstances or made you feel angry or uneasy or uncomfortable, then it’s time to TEST THE WATER.

Are you drawing from the Living Water? Or are you drawing from a Dry River?

If you are a born-again believer, your spiritual river can run dry. You need to repent, turn around, go to the Living Water for your LIFE SOURCE. He is available to you already! Ask Him.

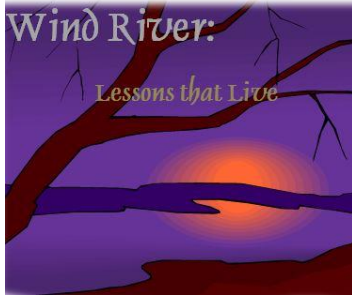
But if you are not a born-again Christian, then you do not have the Water of Life. You must first accept Him as Savior. Jesus is the Water of Life. He is the Living Water.

Present Salvation Here.

Discussion Questions:

How do you handle the social situation where peers that you are hanging out with throw curse words and foul language around?

How do you TAP into the Living Water that satisfies you not only for eternity but in this life as well? Where/How do you start?



Wind River Series:

Teen Wranglers Lesson Three:

Are you Really Clean?

References: Luke 11:33-36; 39-41

Illustration:

Prepare a small container of “arena mud.” Label the bowl as Arena Mud. Mix up some cocoa, flour, & water into a spreadable paste. Have a small artist’s paint brush, a towel [bib], and get ready for some fun.

You will need a volunteer student who thinks they are about to get their face painted with face paint.

Oops, it says WHAT on the container?

You can paint it up, fix it up, dress it up on the outside, but the truth is, God sees the inside and it is not clean! He sees right through the paint.



Introduction:

It is easy to get dirty! As a kid I had a knack for getting really dirty! I didn’t mind getting cleaned up, **but I realized as a child that getting clean took more effort than getting dirty.**

Dirt is all around us. It rubs off onto us without any effort. We wind up dirty without even noticing. However, we have to decide on purpose to be clean.

Luke 11:33-36 No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light. The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.

Most of us have heard the song “This Little Light of Mine.” That song came from these verses. Jesus is teaching that His Light should fill you. Will you let Him?

Jesus says our eyes determine the condition of our whole body. Are your eyes pure?

Do your eyes let the Light of God's Word fill you? Or are your eyes clouded over with dirt so that you are in darkness?

As soon as Jesus finished teaching this parable, He had a Pharisee invite him to dinner. Immediately the Pharisee was upset that Jesus didn't do the ceremonial hand washing before He ate. Jesus replied.

Luke 11:39-40 And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also?

Jesus tied this situation right back to the parable that He had just taught. He explained that most people don't understand what "clean" really means. Washing your hands does not make you clean. **Focusing your life on the Lord; now that is what makes you clean.**

In Luke 11:39-40 Jesus was explaining to the Pharisees [super pious religious group of Jews that had made extra laws and were super legalistic] that they were extremely concerned about the appearance of being holy and that had done nothing to make sure their hearts were right with God.

Matthew 15:1-3 Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?

Matthew 15:7-11 Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.

How do you put these teachings of the Lord into action?

Matthew 22:36-40 Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

DECIDE that Jesus is Number One:

Jesus said that the greatest command is to love the Lord with all your heart, soul, and mind. Jesus made it sound so simple, because it really is that simple.

If you keep your eyes on the Lord, all the time, you will see where He is leading. You will not be distracted by all this stuff around you. Your eyes will be upon Him and His Light will fill you up. Then, the Light of God can radiate from you

You will have His desires and you will react the way He reacts. You will see SIN for what it is and have no desire for it!!

Don't Worry about how you are Supposed to Behave:

Seldom does anyone truly love the Lord with all their heart, soul, and mind. **Because of this, most try to control their behavior** to please the Lord.

When you live trying to control your behavior, then you never really get clean! You only shine up a spot here and there. **You may reflect a bit of God's Light, but you are not the Beacon of Light that God intends.**

Your "little light of mine" becomes a Beacon when it is truly Jesus shining through.

Isn't it about time you graduated from "This little Light of Mine" to a Beacon?

In 1 Thessalonians 4, the Apostle Paul explains to the Church in Thessalonica that Christians are to behave a certain way, not because Paul liked it that way, but rather because it is the normal outcome of someone that loves God.

When you really choose to love the Lord above all, then you can forget about how you should behave! With your heart, souls, and mind consumed with a true love for God, then the behavior takes care of itself.

For example, I don't worry about whether a particular TV show is good or bad; the Holy Spirit tells me and it is taken care of automatically. I have known people that thought that smashing their TV made them spiritual. If you love the Lord, you won't have trouble controlling what you watch!

Summary:

To love the Lord with all of your heart, soul, and mind requires that you first accept Him as Savior. This whole message cannot mean a thing to you until you are born-again.

If you have not already been born-again, give your heart to Him today so you can experience His love. Then you will be able to allow the Holy Spirit to teach you how to Love the Lord with all of your heart, soul, and mind.

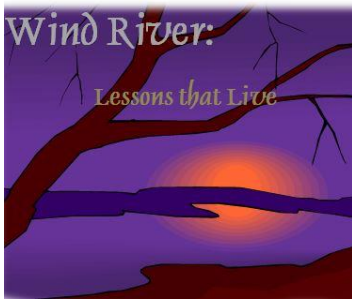
Discussion Questions:

How can you get to the place that you don't have to worry about how to behave?

Does this mean we can just act anyway that pleases us?

Three major points in this lesson:

- **Love the Lord with all your heart, soul, & mind.**
- **As a result you will be directed by the Holy Spirit of God on behavior that is God pleasing.**
- **Third Point? How do you begin to Love the Lord with all your heart, soul, and mind?**



Wind River Series:

Teen Wranglers Lesson Four:

Dangerous Slipping' & Sliding

References: Psalm 17:5; Psalm 26:1; Hebrews 2:1; Hosea 4:16a; Hosea 4:1

Illustration:

Lesson is best illustrated and presented outside. Either have a slip and slide in place OR prepare black plastic with liquid detergent poured on the wet surface to aid in the slipping and sliding.

Have a teen or adult preplanned and ready to illustrate some slipping and sliding on cue. Just watching someone else slipping and sliding on cue **every time the words slip or slide are mentioned** with the lesson will make the lesson memorable and fun.

Introduction:

Psalm 17:5 Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.

Psalm 26:1 Judge me, O Lord; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the Lord; therefore I shall not slide.

There are times when slipping and sliding is fun. Look at the Slipping and Sliding set-up here. We have deliberately made a place extremely slippery to illustrate the lesson. Most of you have played on a surface like this. Although this can be fun physically, it can be disastrous as well.

There are times you do NOT want to slip and slide. A few years ago we were at the Grand Canyon where you do not want to slip as you come close to the edge!

While we were there, we rode mules down into the canyon on some very narrow trails. The trails were so narrow in spots that all you could see was the canyon wall on one side of you and the BOTTOM of the canyon on your opposite side.

I thought about the little hooves on the mules and how smooth they were. They didn't have any Nike horse shoes on with cleats. It was some mighty uncomfortable thoughts when you look down for hundreds of feet with only big rocks at the bottom to land on if you slip or slide.

In Psalm 26:1 the Psalmist is not talking about a physically fall, however. He is saying that because he has trusted in the Lord, he will not slide away from God's precepts and approval.

It is easy to get used to things as usual, to get complacent about our spiritual temperature, and before you know it you are slipping and sliding away from the protection of being in God's plan for your life.

Just a little neglecting of reading the scripture; being in too big of a hurry to pray; running around with worldly friends, or listening to the philosophy in much of the music you listen to; just a little neglecting of what is right and wrong in God's Plan and there you are slipping and sliding before you know it!

Laughing at unseemly posts on social media; watching just a "harmless" movie that you know is not "harmless" can cause that slipping and sliding reaction.

Hearing can help restore our Steps

Hosea 4:1 Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel: for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.

God was describing Israel back then, but He could just as well be describing us today. God describes a number of sins and says a few verses later:

Hosea 4:16a For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer...

If you have ever been to a livestock sale barn or helped load cattle into trailers you have already gotten a mental picture of what God described. He says in essence that "You have created a big mess and now you will slip and slide down in it."

Around 1996 our son had a show calf named "Itty Bitty." She was a red heifer. He groomed her for show; taught her a few poses to wow the judges at the 4H competition. At the Bedford County 4H competition that year she took third in her class. His Grandmother called to see how competition had gone. It went OKAY he said; she came in third. Grandmother says, that is wonderful, how many were competing? He said, three.

Yes, Itty Bitty was not a top prize winner. In fact, she had nearly died that night unloading her at the barn. It was dark when we got back to the barn and the lights did not reach all the way out to the big gate where we backed up to let her out. It was on a little bit of a slope and as we got ready to open the stock trailer gate we heard her go down in the trailer. Ka-Boom!

If you have ever dealt with stock, then you already have the picture in your mind quite clearly. On the ride home she had made a mess in the trailer; it was parked on a slope now, she was slipping and sliding in the excrement in the trailer. She landed on her belly with her legs spread in front and behind her. This can be fatal for a cow. Once down, they can stop breathing because of the weight pressing down on the belly. It was comical to think she had fallen down in this mess and had been so gussied up earlier in the day; but it was no laughing matter that now her life was at stake.

We began to scramble to get her up. No one could get in behind her without being kicked from all of her flailing and flopping. She was struggling to get up and to breathe; her breathe was knocked out of her and her life was flashing before her face I am sure.

One of us ran for the truck and tried to move it forward enough to get the trailer on flatter ground. That wasn't helping, so we quickly drove the trailer at a greater incline and got in front of the trailer and assisted in scooting her out the back of the trailer. It was a rough landing, but it allowed her to get back up on her feet.

Spiritually speaking, sometimes, we can be like that backsliding heifer! We need some assistance to survive! Or we may need a swift push out the back of the trailer with a rough landing to save our life!

Heeding will prevent Slipping

Most of us learn the hard way, that is, after they have experienced something hard. But good news is you do not have to live that way!

You just don't have a long enough life to learn everything the hard way. If you "HEED" or observe and then remember what you see or read, then you can avoid problems altogether.

Hebrews 2:1 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

If you will give "earnest heed" to God's Word and teaching of God's Word, then you can avoid slipping into sin.

Summary:

As Christians, we can heed God's Word. The Holy Spirit causes it to make sense because He speaks directly to our spirit. But if you are not born again, then God's Word may not make any sense to you.

If you are not saved, you are doomed to slipping and sliding through this life; then at your death you will slip right into a place called Hell.

Present Salvation Here.

Discussion Topics:

What are some slippery slopes for us as Christians?

How can we avoid a lifetime of slipping and sliding?