



ROAD SIGNS FOR LIFE

People needed: 10 women to hold signs and read Scripture verses referenced
Props: 10 signs

Do you remember when you were young traveling through the countryside and watching for the Burma Shave signs – those small signs at the side of the road that carried a cute little message and the last one always had an advertisement for Burma Shave? They always held your attention until the last sign and you couldn't wait until you saw another series of them along the road ahead.

This Bible study takes us down the *road of life*. Reflecting back on Paul's journeys, he probably did more traveling in his lifetime than most of us today. Just as Paul, we face many detours, roadblocks and delays on our journey of life. Paul didn't let any of these things stop him or keep him from reaching his goal. He used these little setbacks as times to rethink his faith. Not only did he rethink his own faith, but he also passed these inspirations along to us through his many writings. Perhaps there are some lessons here for us. Let's see what *road signs* we can find from the letters of Paul.

LIFE – our first sign along the road is the very basic idea of life itself. None of us know how long our trip will take. We find in Philippians 1:21 the way Paul feels about life: *For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain*. What a positive way to begin our journey! Again in Galatians 2:20, Paul gives us the reason for our journey: *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me*.

PARDON – down the road of life we go, and as so often happens, we run into problems. The law is all around us and as we try to travel along, we constantly run into reminders that we must travel in an imperfect world. Paul's world was imperfect, too, but he offers us this hope in Galatians 3:10, 13: *All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."* Paul not only found the law in the world, but he found the Gospel in Christ, and as he traveled along, he was eager to share this Gospel with his fellow travelers as we see in 1 Corinthians 15:2 *For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures*. Renewed with this Good News, we can travel on.

PEACE – traveling on, no matter what kind of roadblock, rough road conditions, or detours we face, we now have peace. Paul shares that with us, as he did with the Romans of his day in Romans 5:1: *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*. It didn't matter to Paul where you lived, or how long you had been traveling on life's road, the message was the same, Ephesians 2:14, 17: *For he*

himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.

TRUTH – life’s road has many signs along the way that tempt us to turn from the pardon of peace that we have found in Christ. Just as in Paul’s time, it is hard to live in the world, but not be of the world. He reminded the Corinthians as he reminds us in 1 Corinthians 15:1-2: *Now brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.* Paul was not content to possess this truth alone, but rather he was always ready to share it with those he met along the way. We read his word to the Colossians in chapter 2:2-3: *My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.* Isn’t that a great message for us today? Is that our purpose?

HOPE – even armed with all of this wonderful inspiration, Paul was not free from problems along his road of life. Setbacks, bad conditions and detours seemed to be his constant way of life. Nevertheless, they didn’t keep him from his chosen path. To the Romans he wrote the following in Romans 8:28, 32: *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?* With truth like that, why should hope ever leave us?

LOVE – Paul never traveled alone and neither do we. As we travel along in the hope that is ours, we share Christ’s love for us and our fellow travelers. Paul reminds the people of the early churches of this love in Colossians 3:12-14 and 1 Thessalonians 4:9: *Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Now about brotherly love we do not need to write you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other.* Those words are as sure for us today as they were when Paul wrote them.

FELLOWSHIP – tied to this love is the unique fellowship that Paul experienced with the Christians of his time. We may look different and we may not always understand the language of our fellow travelers, but we do have something in common. Paul points this out to the people of Galatia in Galatians 3:26: *You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.* As different as we all may be, we still enjoy a special fellowship. God has something for each of us to do on our journey and Paul shows the Romans this in Romans 12:4-5: *Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.*

ASSURANCE – troubles seem to travel with us even in the company of our fellow travelers. Conditions beyond our control try to pull us off the road, but Paul offers us assurance in 2 Timothy 2:11-13 *Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us; if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.* He further tells us not to give up in Titus 2:11: *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.*

JOY – having this assurance, we can follow Paul's example in Philippians 4:4: *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!* There can be joy even in the face of trouble. He strengthens this thought in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18: *Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.* We should keep this simple, yet wonderful, road sign with us as we travel down life's road.

HEAVEN – the end of the earthly journey for each of us and our ultimate destination. For Paul, this, too, was the hoped-for end to his journey. He shares this with Timothy – and us – in 2 Timothy 4:8: *Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day – and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.* What a wonderful destination! The road won't be easy, the journey has no timetable and conditions may get worse before they get better, but what a trip to take!

Hopefully the brief time we've traveled together will help you along your journey and that, in times of bad *road conditions*, you never lose sight of the ROAD SIGNS FOR LIFE that we've shared.

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ROAD SIGNS FOR LIFE – Written by Helen Mayer
Published by Lutheran Women's Missionary League
May 2000

LIFE
Philippians 1:21
Galatians 2:20

PARDON
Galatians 3:10,13
1 Corinthians 15:3

PEACE
Romans 5:1
Ephesians 2:14,17

TRUTH
1 Corinthians 15:1,2
Colossians 2:2,3

HOPE
Romans 8:28, 32

LOVE
Colossians 3:12-14
1 Thessalonians 4:9

FELLOWSHIP
Galatians 3:26
Romans 12:4,5

ASSURANCE
2 Timothy 2:11-13
Titus 2:11

JOY
Philippians 4:4
1 Thessalonians
5:16-18

HEAVEN
2 Timothy 4:8