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## Opposite Directions

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## Opposite Directions

We have never seen a car going away from us and coming toward us at the same time. In most of the world, traffic is divided so that those travelling in one direction are kept separate from those going in the opposite direction with the very reasonable expectation that those on one side all desire to continue and not reverse direction.

When we make decisions that involve any of our values, we generally proceed according to habits, continuing in a similar direction. We would not decide on one day to refrain from taking something that does not belong to us, and the next day, given the same opportunity, walk off with another person's belongs. Most of our lives, we travel in one direction or the other, perhaps with some detours, but we do not strive for what is better today and then on the morrow act with no regard for the consequences of our decisions.

Keeping a destination in mind is rather automatic for us, whether we walk or use some means of transportation. In a similar way our deep desire to do what is right or to seek the better way (whatever expression we might use to identify the aspiration that best expresses the direction we set for ourselves in life) is perhaps seldom in our consciousness. But every so often, in prayer, reflection or peaceful consideration, we might find it helpful to check some of the "direction and traffic signs" which indicate that we are indeed heading in our chosen direction on life's journey. We do not have to constantly review every small decision we make, as long as we have evidence that we are moving toward our destination. But most travellers benefit from observing occasional reminders that the journey is proceeding as planned.

For those whose spiritual journey is aimed toward helpfulness of neighbor and to choosing options that are better rather than less-good, the movements of the spirit within their hearts encourage and support their efforts with readily recognizable "traffic and direction" signs. For example, feelings of peace and joy, and the general attractiveness of continuing their chosen path, occur naturally and frequently; contrary and discouraging thoughts appear as unattractive and not worthy of attention.

We try to help young people strive for what is better rather than let them become satisfied with mediocre behavior. We might point out to them that they most likely experience inner contentment when they strive for an ideal, and we also praise them. So too, the Spirit of God moves in our hearts with approval from within, eliciting confidence that we are heading in the right direction, and also providing us with external "compliments" through

spontaneous comments that we receive from others, affirming and confirming us in following our principles.

It is also true that someone who is heading the wrong way, in the direction of increasing selfishness and disregard for the welfare of others, will experience movements in their hearts, such as attractive images and options for more of the same behavior. But peace and joy do not come to those whose lives are oriented towards inner collapse, much less compliments from others on their words and actions.

God is good, and we who are created in God's image will resonate with all that is good when goodness is the path we choose to travel.