

Off The Path

There was a story of a woman who was hiking the Appalachian Trail. She had wandered off the path. She became lost and could not find her way back. She decided to stay where she was in the hopes that someone would find her. She ran out of provisions and eventually died waiting to be rescued. She had wandered about 2 miles from the path and gave up and never tried to find the way back to the path. I read this and thought of the times I had wandered away from the path laid out for my life. When I was in Junior High, I was going through an extremely rough time. My brother had died, I had had Polio, I had missed a lot of school and was depressed. I had no friends, my best friend since birth, had found other friends because I was not in school that much. She was hanging with a rough group. I found myself not bad enough for the bad kids and not good enough for the good kids. I became a loner. I was failing. When I was going from 8th grade to 9th grade, I was passed on condition that my grades and attendance improve. A teacher that I absolutely disliked, was talking to me about what was happening and asked me a very pointed question. She asked me, "What do you want to do with your life?" In that moment I realized that I had choices, I could continue the path I was on and continue to fail, or I could get back on the road I had been on before all of this happened. I told her I wanted to be a nurse, and she encouraged me to work for it. I chose to try. In 9th grade my grades and attendance improved but teachers were looking at a subpar student and graded at times accordingly. I knew I had to improve that I was worth more than C's and occasional B's. In 10th grade I helped form and led a Future Nurses Club and was able to look into my dream further and my grades continued to improve to B's, but in 11th grade it began to be all A's, and I knew I was going to be okay. In 12th grade I had all A's and teachers were giving me other students to help. I had friends once again, not my lifelong friend, she quit school and was married at 16, but good friends that continue till this day. God placed a teacher in my path who knew the right question to ask me. A question that made me look to the future and what I wanted. A question that made me find my path again. I thank God for that teacher and her simple question "What do you want to do with your life?"

Psalms 119:105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light for my path.

Lord, we thank you for those people you have placed in our path who have led us out of dark and lonely places. Be with those who are ill, and those who are grieving. Be with our Pastor, bless his ministry and watch over his family. Be with our staff and leaders, bless them and guide them. Help us Lord to speak the words that bring others closer to you. Be with our church, guide us, help us be the hands and feet of Christ. In Jesus name we pray.
Amen.

Grace Epperson (2021)