

“My Morning: Getting Started Right”  
by Rom A. Pegram (9/10/17)

When we hear the term ‘off track’, I think most of us are aware that means … something is wrong! Something is not normal. Something is not the way it’s supposed to be...

You may have read recently that my older brother and I had toys to play with while growing up that involved ‘tracks’—sometimes trains, but most of the time it was electric race cars that filled up our free time. I’ll never forget, both of us being very competitive, that my brother Byron usually won whenever we’d have a race on that track. I don’t even remember what kind of car I had, but I do remember he had a Corvette … and it hugged the turns better than any other car we ever had on that track. More times than not, my car would not hold the turns and would go flying off the track—off the rails, so to speak, and then the race would come to a halt … *until adjustments to either the track or the car could be made*; then, we’d get the race going again. But every time one of our cars would go ‘off track’, something was definitely wrong. And until we made some adjustments, the race just couldn’t go on...

...and it’s the same with our lives at times. Today’s new worship series is called “Back on Track: Daily Steps to a Vibrant Faith”. If we’re all honest about it, I think we could all say … this series is for us, because over the course of the past few months—the summer, just like those race cars of our youth, we’ve gotten off track in our relationship with God. We may feel *de-railed* … spiritually speaking. Folks, many of us are long-time Christ-followers; it’s not like we’ve gone rogue as Christians … but *we are human beings*. We’re not living bad lives, but over the course of time—with all the distractions of life, we’ve may not have been as faithful as we should be about our walk with God—doing those things we know keep us close to God (like worshiping together). And maybe you’re ready to say, “Yes, I do feel a bit off track in my relationship to God.” We all go through that at some point in our lives, don’t we?

If that’s the way you’re feeling today, I want you to know this: *Now is the time to do something about it!* No matter where you’re at in your walk with God, whether just a *little* off track or way off track, *now is the perfect time to get back on track*. You’re already getting ‘back on track’ with other routines in your life (i.e. school starting, etc.); so why not get ‘back on track’ with God too? Why not take a look at how you got off track and look for new ways to reconnect with God, as we leave summer behind and begin a brand new school year?

Please look with me at our *key verse* for this entire worship series, would you? It’s from the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah (15:19, NLT) and it says (*together*): “**This is how the LORD responds: ‘If you return to me, I will restore you....’**” Isn’t that great news? If we’re feeling like our life’s in a rut—feeling just a bit off track spiritually, *God’s willing to meet us right where we are!* I don’t know about you, but that’s GOOD NEWS to me! It’s like those race cars that used to fly off the track; maybe it’s just a little adjustment we need to get back on track—to get things going again in our walk with

God. So, folks, using this acrostic for the word ‘start’, *we’re going to see what difference a morning routine with God can make!* Here’s how to S.T.A.R.T. your morning with God:

**Start my morning the night before.** Isaiah makes this connection (Isaiah 26:9, NLT) when he says: “All night long I search for you; in the morning I earnestly seek for God....” So, *start your morning the night before*. Now, don’t panic, whatever you do. It doesn’t mean you have wake up while it’s dark outside (I could see the worry on some of your faces). No. It means *how you end one day has a significant impact on how you begin the next day!*

Isaiah had discovered this connection—between what you do at night and what happens when you get up the next morning. That’s why the best thing you can do before going to bed, to ensure you start the next day right with God, is to end the day thinking about God—asking God what to do at the end of this day … to make the next day what God wants it to be!

Now, here’re a couple practical things to think about, in light of this: *First, make sure you go to bed on time—to get enough sleep.* Now, you’re adults, so I’m not going to tell you what your bedtime should be, BUT … the fact is that *most adults aren’t getting enough sleep at night, and that affects their entire life!* Studies have shown that most people need between 7-8 hours of sleep at night—at least six, but many don’t even get that—regularly—and that even affects their spiritual life! Do you know how many people tell me they can’t spend time with God in the morning, because … *they’re too tired?!*? Your sleep habits can affect your walk with God! Let me ask you a question: *Is what you’re staying up late for at night more important than your relationship with God?* You’ve got to figure that out, so you can cut back on something, to carve time out for God…

Here’s another helpful tip: *Before you go to bed at night, lay out everything you need in the morning to spend time with God.* My father used to do this; every night, he’d lay out his clothes for the next day (just in case there was an emergency that night). He’d also make sure his Bible was out on the dining room table before retiring for the day.

So, get in the habit of preparing for *your* next day with God, before going to bed at night. Lay out your Bible, your devotional, or your notebook—whatever you use for that time. If you don’t, you’re more likely to grab your phone and check your email or Facebook before you check in with God! (You don’t want email or Facebook setting the direction for your day, do you?) And if you’re a coffee person, set your Bible, etc., beside the coffee pot; there’s the reminder you need of what to do first thing in the morning… Secondly:

**Talk to God before I do anything else.** Talk to God before *anything else*? “Rom, do you mean I should talk to God before I check my texts, Tweets, and emails?” YES! “Rom, do you mean I should talk to God before I check Facebook and turn on the news?” YES! “Rom, do you mean I should talk to God before I talk to my spouse or roommate or my kids?” YES, YES, and DEFINITELY YES (on that 3<sup>rd</sup> one)! WHY?

Because if you talk to God before your first conversation with those you live with, your conversations may just be a bit more loving ... and patient ... and kind!

That was Jesus' habit, you know. In Mark 1:35 (NLT), it says this: "Before daybreak the next morning, Jesus got up and went out to an isolated place to pray." Before the day got hectic, before everyone hit him with their demands, before he interacted with anyone or anything, Jesus first got face-to-face with his Heavenly Father!

I want you to think about this today: *What would your day look like if you followed Jesus' example, and you talked to God first thing in the morning—right when you got up?* That first conversation would set the tone for the rest of your day, wouldn't it? I also think you'd go through your day with more strength, more wisdom, more patience, more hope, and more peace. *To get 'back on track' in the morning, let your knees hit the ground before your feet do! Make sure you've knelt down ... before you stand up!* This is how we prioritize God in our lives; let God have the first moments of the day. So, to prioritize God in your life, to start your day on track, prepare the night before, talk to God before you do anything else, and here's the third step...

**Ask how I can improve my morning routine.** How can I improve my morning routine? Now, every one of us have a morning routine, if we think about it. For some, it's slow and relaxed—sipping your morning coffee or tea; for some, it's wolfing down your donut and getting out the door as quickly as you can. The question right now is: *What does your morning routine look like?*

Folks, it's not that we don't want to start our day right with God; it's not that we don't want to give God priority in our lives. It's just that our routines, many times, are set up to sabotage our relationship with God. *Our routines are messed up* (if I can be blunt)! Think of it this way: What if your routine was like ... I'm going to brush my teeth, then drink my coffee? Or, what about getting dressed for work ... then taking your shower? Wouldn't that be a little messed up? If you walked into work all soapy and wet?

Now, that may be a bit silly, but you get the idea. Folks, *how we spend our morning will determine—to an extent—what kind of day we're going to have.* And I know we're all different; each one of our routines will be unique to us. Whether you wake up in the morning saying, "Good morning, Lord!" or you wake up saying, "Good Lord, its morning!" ... develop your routine from there. Spiritually speaking, *what does God think of our current morning routine?* Learn to pray and say, "God, is there something better I could do with my time in the morning to get back on track with you?" Psalm 25:4 is our reminder: "Show me the right path, O Lord, point out the road for me to follow." Here's another way to 'get adjusted' for God...

**Reflect on God during my commute.** One of the biggest wastes of time in working people's lives is their commute to/from work; how are you using that time for God? My encouragement today is for you to ... reflect on God—somehow—during your commute to/from work (or in errands, etc.)...

I know comedian/talk show host James Corden started this phenomena called ‘Carpool Karaoke’ ('Anybody ever heard of that?) ... but what if we here at Trinity started ‘Carpool Karaoke for Jesus’? What if people driving to/from work were to start singing along in their cars—at the top of their lungs, I might add—to their favorite Christian songs? I can see it now ... people all over the area will be talking about it! They'll be seeing people driving to/from work, in their cars by themselves, singing to the top of their lungs! Wouldn't that be a sight? Now, some of you are thinking ... but, I can't sing! *Who cares!* God loves a joyful noise and if you're in your car, God's the only one (pretty much) who'll be listening!

Psalm 118:24 says, “This is the day the Lord has made; we will *rejoice* [italics mine] and be glad in it.” So, find ways to do that during this part of your morning—the commute. Sing, listen to Christian podcasts, listen to edifying audible books, and so forth. Here's the final way to get back on track with God in the morning (and don't forget this one!)...

**Trust God with my entire life.** Isaiah 26:3 (NLT) tells us: “You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in You, all whose thoughts are *fixed* [italics mine] on You.” Folks, if you haven't gotten my hint at this point, let me just say it: Your morning matters; it's important! I want you to see each new day as a gift from God, as a one-time opportunity for something great! You see, *tomorrow is the day you will never get back*; there'll never be another one, so don't waste it! Give God priority by starting it right—by trusting Him with your entire life, your entire day... That's what this series is really all about—*learning to incorporate God into the daily fabric of your life...*

So, here's my prayer for you today (Eph. 3:17): “Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong.” That's my hope & prayer for you!

Listen, would you be honest right now, and would just admit *with me* ... “Yes, I'm a little off track with God right now.” It's a constant challenge for me ... and I'm sure it is for you too. And, it may just be a case of needing a little adjustment to get back on track again—like those race cars when I was a kid. But remember what God says to us in his word (Jer. 15:19, NLT): “...If you return to me, I will restore you....” God wants to do that ... for *us*!

There's also the possibility it's not a matter of returning for you; maybe you've *never* trusted God with your entire life before. If that's so, and you're a bit off track in that way, the GOOD NEWS is ... now is the time. It may be time to trust God with your entire life for the very first time...

Folks, our final verse today is a reminder to trust your entire life to God—every morning, so God can lead you, and can bless your day. Please look at Psalm 143:8 (NLT) with me right now (follow along with me): “Let me hear of your unfailing love each morning, for I am trusting you. Show me where to walk, for I give myself to you.”