

SIGNS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

100 Signs for Your Journey of Faith

*Set up road signs; put up guideposts.
Take note of the highway, the road that you take.*

Jeremiah 31:21 NIV

LISA DONELSON

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ISBN: 978-1-7352570-3-7

Deluxe Color Edition

Signs of Encouragement: 100 Signs for Your Journey of Faith
Published by Speak Life, 745 31st Ave E, West Fargo, ND 58078

Donelson, Lisa, 1962-

Signs of Encouragement : 100 Signs For Your Journey of Faith / Lisa Donelson.

ISBN: 978-1-7352570-3-7

1. Religion – Christian Living – Devotional. 2. Religion – Christian Living – Spiritual Growth. I. Title
242

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INTRODUCTION

When asked about the signs, I always said, “Everyone has a relationship with Jesus, they either love Him, hate Him, or are ignoring Him.” I wonder, what kind of relationship do you have? No matter what you think of Jesus, Jesus loves you!

The short sayings at the beginning of each reading appeared on roadside signs along Highway 2 in northeastern Minnesota for almost seventeen years. The messages were meant to encourage those who love Jesus, and make everyone else think about their relationship to God. They were bright pink letters on big black signs. Maybe you traveled that road and saw them.

I believe the roadside signs were, *Signs of Encouragement*, for people traveling the highway. My husband Tom and I owned the property next to Highway 2 just east of Floodwood, MN. We had purchased the signs hoping to rent them. The business never developed. Instead we put a message of encouragement on the signs in our yard. We put a different message on each side and changed them each month. We knew people would read whatever they saw beside the road. I saved most of those sayings in a computer file. This book is a collection of some of those sayings, along with a short devotional reading.

Over the years, many kind people stopped to visit with us because of the signs. We have received notes in our mailbox and met many great people who love Jesus. Some of the people we count as friends to this day. One man, early on in the sign ministry, was going through a very bad time in his life. He loved Jesus, but his life was kind of a mess. He was on his way to Duluth one day, and as he went past our place, he noticed the signs. He said to himself, “If those people are in the yard when I come back from Duluth, I am going to stop.” Tom was over at the neighbors having coffee that afternoon. He had a strong feeling he should go home. Just as he drove in the driveway, this man was coming past on his way home. He saw Tom in the driveway and turned around to stop. He and Tom visited that day and Tom encouraged him. We are still friends with him and we have seen God do amazing things in his life.

Another time, a lady stopped to say thank you for putting up the signs. She told me she had driven to work every day past our signs and was always encouraged by the message. She was retiring from her job and just wanted to let us know how much she appreciated the signs.

Others stopped to take pictures. Some stopped to tell us the message on the signs was just what they needed. Sometimes they told us the message

had encouraged conversation with others they were riding with who did not know Jesus.

Many have asked where the messages come from. Often, I just had a feeling about a particular topic. So while driving, or early in the morning when I woke up, or sitting in church, I would start working with an idea and God would help me develop it into a message to fit on the signs. You know, it could only be so many letters across, it could only be four lines long. The message had to fit on the sign. Also, when driving by at 60 miles an hour, a person can't read a long message.

I know God used the black signs with the pink letters to bless many over the years. They have blessed us also. Many times the message spoke to our hearts and lives as well as those going past on the highway.

May the abundant blessings of a life lived with Jesus be yours. May you know His peace which passes understanding, the love of the one true God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, both now and forever.

AMEN.

FAITH

Now faith means putting our full confidence in the things we hope for, it means being certain of things we cannot see.

Hebrews 11:1 Phillips



GOD WILL OPEN DOORS WHEN NO ONE ELSE CAN

Let me share a testimony about our God who opens doors. One of my friends found out she had fast-growing breast cancer. She needed surgery and many chemo and radiation treatments. She and her husband did not have health insurance, or the finances to pay the bills themselves. However they DID know how to pray! God helped them find a grant that would pay up to a million dollars in expenses for her treatment. The grant was not based on income. What a blessing! God opened a door for them!

Prayer and praise are the two things that will open the doors of heaven. One of the best things we can do for our family and friends is to pray for them. We know every spiritual battle is fought in heaven, as well as by those of us on earth. What a blessing to know we serve the Mighty Warrior himself, Jesus, who will open doors when no one else can. Whatever challenges you are facing today, talk it over with Jesus and let him show you what to do. He wants to be your burden bearer and your champion.

*For everyone who keeps on asking receives;
and he who keeps on seeking finds;
and to him who keeps on knocking, [the door] will be opened.
Matthew 7:8 AMPC*

WHEN YOU FOLLOW JESUS YOU ARE NEVER LOST

When we walk by faith, it is important to follow the path God has planned for us. It is much easier to follow God and walk in His way than it is to try to make our own way through life without a path to follow. God does not promise us a wide and easy way. In fact, Jesus says in Matthew 7:13-14 the pathway to heaven is narrow and few find it.

It says in God's word in Ephesians chapter 1, He chose us before the foundations of the world were laid. God has good plans for us as His children. He has things only YOU can do. If you are going to do the things God has prepared for you to do, then you have to follow His path for your life. This takes faith. Sometimes it is hard to see the path, and sometimes, honestly, we get off the path and have to find our way back. We serve a faithful God who tenderly leads us when we allow Him to.

Take some time this week to consider the path you are on right now. Is it the path God has set out for you? Are you spending time reading your Bible and seeking God's plan for you this week? Do you need to make any course corrections to get back on the right path? Have you lost the path entirely? If so, ask God to help you. He is faithful and will show you how to find the path again. Trust in His ability to lead you. He loves you and desires the best for you at all times.

*For I have stayed on God's paths;
I have followed his ways and not turned aside.*

Job 23:11 NLT

HIS EYE IS ON THE SPARROW HE SEES YOUR NEED TOO

When we had the black signs with the roadside faith messages in our yard, people would occasionally stop to comment on the sign, or tell us a story. When the message above was on the signs, a woman stopped one day and talked with my husband. She commented on how the song, *His Eye Is on the Sparrow* was one of her Mom's favorites. She told him her mom had recently passed away. She said what a blessing the sign was to her, as a reminder of how God was watching over her during her time of grief.

God always knows our needs. Each day, as you begin your day, ask Jesus to help you with whatever you are facing. From the smallest detail to the biggest problems, He knows your needs and He wants to help. He is a loving and compassionate God who SEES you. Just like he sees each sparrow and pays attention to everything that happens. Never forget, He's on your side, He's there for you, even when you don't feel it. Trust Him. He knows your need before you ask. You will not be disappointed when you have faith in God.

*But not a single sparrow can fall to the ground
without your Father knowing it.*

Matthew 10:29 NLT

GOT QUESTIONS JESUS HAS THE ANSWERS

How often must God wonder about our indecision when His word clearly speaks to us? There are times when we can't decide if we should choose path A or path B when following God. He is faithful when we put our trust in Him. We ask ourselves, "Is this my idea? Or God's idea?" It seems so unclear sometimes, but I believe God created us with the ability to choose. We are not just robots doing the same thing all the time. I think it delights Him to see what we will choose at times. He is a creative God, not a God who demands we do things one way. He gives us room to explore and find our way as we follow Him. He does have a right way, and there are rules to live by, but we also have some choices within those guidelines.

God can work with us, even if we chose the path that may take longer to get to the destination He has planned for us. When we ask God, and spend time seriously listening for answers, we will get them. Sometimes the answer is *not yet* and sometimes it is *no*, for a reason we cannot yet understand. And sometimes it is YES! Those are the answers I like the most! But no matter what the answer is, we know we can trust Jesus to always give us the RIGHT answer!

*You said, 'Listen and I will speak! I have some questions for you,
and you must answer them'*

Job 42:4 NLT