

Drifting

We are very fortunate that where we live there are 3 rivers that all come together. These three rivers of varied size give us many opportunities for outdoor recreation, especially in our kayaks or on our floating tubes. There is something about floating on a tube with a cold beverage on a hot summer day. You are probably asking yourself, “What has this got to do with the gospel of Jesus Christ and our life in Christ?”

We have learned a lot of lessons while floating and kayaking our local rivers. These lessons are easily applied to our life in Christ. Let’s look at some of these lessons and some Bible verses that teach us how to keep from drifting.

There are a few reasons why you can find yourself drifting when you are out on the river or any body of water for that matter. You may have lost power and are now at the mercy of the currents. You may have lost your point of reference or direction and are just moving forward aimlessly. You may not know which way to go and, therefore, decide to drift. We are going to share some stories of floating the Yakima River with you and apply it to our daily life in Christ along with solutions to help you keep from drifting in your faith.

The first reason you might drift is you have lost your source of power.

The first time we floated the Yakima River, we didn’t know what we were doing. We got our tubes inflated and had our supplies for the trip down the river and thought that was all there was to it. We didn’t know some things that would have been good to know. We didn’t know the river has wide spots where the current slows down a lot and you end up almost sitting still. Conversely, there are narrower places where the current picks up speed and you are at the mercy of the current.

We kept trying to either get ourselves moving or steer around obstructions, like rocks or logs, just by paddling with our hands. This was not very effective. We met some other folks on the river who had brought along small paddles. They recommended we do the same thing the next time we floated the river. Without paddles, we truly were at the mercy of the current going where and how fast it wanted to take us, not where we wanted to go or at the speed we wanted to go. We soon purchased small paddles to bring with us and turned a 5-hour float into a more enjoyable 3-hour float where we had more control of our tubes and our direction.

Our Christian life is the same. Sometimes we do not properly prepare for what is coming. We absentmindedly move forward without thinking things through or asking advice from someone who has already been where we are going.

We can end up drifting aimlessly, trying to do good things and serve others in Jesus’ name, but we have no control over where we are going or how fast we are getting there. We drift about at the mercy of what is going on around us and making little progress, if any at all. The lesson here is learning from others and seeking wisdom from other believers who have been or done where we are going or are doing.

Look at these Proverbs that speak about seeking advice from others.

Proverbs 12:15 NIV The way of fools seems right to them, but the wise listen to advice.



Proverbs 11:14 NIV For lack of guidance a nation falls, but victory is won through many advisers.

Proverbs 13:10 NIV Where there is strife, there is pride, but wisdom is found in those who take advice.

The second reason you may find yourself drifting is you have lost your focus or point of reference and are moving forward aimlessly.

We not only float the rivers we also enjoy being out in our kayaks on the local rivers. More than once we have been in conversation and not paying attention to the direction we are going. We are paddling on while in deep conversation. The next thing we know we are headed in a completely different direction than where we wanted to go, and we have to make a major course correction to get where we wanted to go in the first place. We have even run into shore while paddling on because we weren't really paying attention to where we were going. We would get caught in a drift or lose sight of our goal and then we end up drifting off course. It doesn't take long either. Especially when you are kayaking in a river that has a current. You have to maintain your focus on the destination all the time, or you will drift into trouble quickly.

Our Christian life, once again, is the same way. We have to keep our focus on Jesus in all we do. We think we will be fine if we glance away, even for a moment, but you will start to drift off course. The world would like to see nothing more than a Christian's life get off course from following Jesus fully.

The more we take our eyes off Jesus, the further we get from him and the further the reason we do things gets from him also. We not only must do everything we do in Jesus' name, but we must also do it for Jesus, and no other. We can feed 1000 hungry people, but if you don't do it in the name of Jesus and for his glory, you have not done anything praiseworthy. You can raise thousands of dollars to help the poor, but if you don't do it in Jesus' name, and give him all the glory, you have not done anything.

Moving ahead in our own power trying to please Jesus, instead of doing what he asks each of us to personally do in his power leads us to drifting away from Jesus. Before too long you can no longer even see Jesus. Jesus is out of sight and becomes further out of mind. You then drift even further.

Look at what Hebrews 12:1-4 says:

Hebrews 12:1-4 NIV Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, (2) fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (3) Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. (4) In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.

We must fix our eyes on Jesus and what he has done for us and what he calls us to do. Then move forward in the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish what Jesus calls you to do as it says in Acts 1:8

Acts 1:8 NIV But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.



We also must not move forward under our own power for our own reasons. Look at what 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 says.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 NIV If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. (2) If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. (3) If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

We have to be motivated by Jesus and do what he asks us to do for his purposes, not our own.

The third reason we drift is by choice.

Sometimes when we are out floating or kayaking on one of the rivers, we are not sure where we want to go. So we just tie our kayaks together and drift. We are purposely aimless. In a way, it can be a nice respite especially if we have been moving forward paddling for some time. It is nice to take a break. Unfortunately, it gets more and more difficult to get going again the longer you stop for a break. It is harder to start paddling and the further you drift on a break the more you have to paddle to make up for afterward.

We all need a break, the key is to keep people around you to spur you on when it is time for the break to be over. We need to always keep people near us so we can be encouraged and to encourage others. Look at what Hebrews 10:24-25 says.

Hebrews 10:24-25 NIV And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, (25) not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

We need to continue to surround ourselves with other believers regularly and encourage each other, in love, to continue to move forward in the ways of the Lord.

It is important to not drift in our Christian life. We must keep our focus on Jesus and be sure to listen to Godly counsel from others who have gone before us. We must do all we do with Jesus being the reason, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, not our own. Finally, we must be sure to keep our selves surrounded with other believers who can spur us on to greater things in Christ and we can spur them on as well.

That is how we keep from drifting in our Christian life.

