

Middle of the Lane

Ready:

“Let your eyes look forward; fix your gaze straight ahead. Carefully consider the path for your feet, and all your ways will be established. Don’t turn to the right or to the left; keep your feet away from evil.” - Proverbs 4:25-27

Set

Was it on the track, on the playing field or in the pool? How focused were you during your last race? Years ago, while swimming the 100-yard backstroke, I drifted to the side of my lane as the turn approached. Exploding off the wall after my flip-turn I looked up and saw the lane line floating directly overhead. Not good!

Life, like swimming, comes with relational lane lines. Straying, even accidentally, can cause us to collide with and hurt others. Drifting left or right with gossip, social media conflict, unclear expectations or assumed priorities can bruise, tear, and break friendships. The Bible tells us to be mindful of the course corrections needed when we cross personal "lane lines."

Here are three biblical course corrections when you drift:

Forgiveness heals what is **bruised**. Regardless of whether someone else apologizes, God wants me to release grudges and correct my course based on His example. God helps me bandage my bruise, correct my drift, and get back in the race.

Reconciliation heals what is **torn**. Imagine what happens when my friend and I, both, drift into the lane line. We drag each other’s wake. We scrape each other’s leg, suit, and arm. Returning to the middle of our lanes requires mutual effort to heal the hurt we both caused and overcome the offenses shared between us. Together, we repair the tear.

Restoration heals what is **broken**. Time mends what breaks. Proceeding cautiously through forgiveness and reconciliation, we mend and exercise brokenness. Restoration is a process, not an event. There are no shortcuts. Given time and careful course corrections we exercise and strengthen our bonds. Mended breaks never look the same but, by God’s grace, they become stronger and tougher.

Faith is anchored by do-over confidence knowing that forgiveness, reconciliation and restoration can overcome drift. Paul encourages us to "be at peace with everyone, so far as it depends on you" (Romans 12:18).

Go

- Share how a friend's action made you feel bruised. Share how God healed you as you released your grudge(s).
- Share your perspective on a torn friendship. How did you overcome hurt, forgive and stitch the rift?
- Confess a broken friendship. How did it break? Has "speaking the truth in love" healed the break? What strength and conditioning lie ahead?

Workout

- Romans 12:18
- Colossians 3:13
- 2 Corinthians 5:18

Overtime

"Lord, I drift and You know it. When I do, let me humbly confess my actions and readily forgive others. Help me mend relationships that are bruised, torn or broken. Let me open doors to recovery as I share the truth in love. Amen."



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