

DO THE INSTRUCTIONS MAKE SENSE?

By Ruth Silver

A bicycle trip convinced me of the need to constantly check the Lord's road map of life.

Several years ago I went on a bicycle trip in France with my sister, sister-in-law, and her daughter. Each morning we were given three pages of detailed instructions that, if followed exactly, would guide us to our destination of the day. While we were cycling through vineyards, the directives might instruct us to “go 165 feet (50 m) north, then turn left and go 330 feet (100 m).” More often, the instructions gave signs and street names.

One morning we cycled down an attractive road but soon realized that our instructions no longer fit the territory. Rapidly becoming lost, we decided to return to where we last knew we were on the right track to see if we could sort out where to go.

Sure enough, when we got there, we found a small road sign, noted in our instructions, that we had failed to see. Soon we were on our way again, matching our progress with

the instructions, which again were making perfect sense.

The experience served as a metaphor that answered a puzzling question I'd had: Why, when someone has had a testimony of the gospel, would he or she ever fall away? It became clear to me that when we take a wrong turn (sin) or fail to follow God's commandments, the instructions (the word of God) no longer make sense. The map, as it were, no longer fits the territory we're in. If we haven't strayed too far, we may recognize that the fault is ours and that we need to return (repent), or recommit to live as God has commanded, to where we knew we were following the route correctly.

Too often when the instructions no longer fit where we are, we question the instructions. Instead of turning back, we blame the instructions and then eschew them altogether. Finally, having given up the vision of our

destination, we become lost, wandering in paths that may seem, temporarily, very attractive but will not get us where we need to go.

Every day we have the opportunity to study the scriptures. And every six months, we are treated to a general conference of the Church. Are not these times when we can check our road map and make sure we are where we need to be? Once, as I listened to conference, I felt that, imperfect as we are, we can know we're on the right road if these instructions are making perfect sense to us.

Even as following right directions will get us to destinations in this life, studying the scriptures and heeding the counsel of living prophets allow us to check our course and adjust it if need be so that, ultimately, we arrive at our celestial home. ■

The author, who lived in Colorado, USA, passed away last year.

