

Bible Devotions: Lock Stock & Barrel
Devotional Reading for Outdoorsmen
(Old Testament)

Deuteronomy 19:14

Geographic Center

You shall not remove your neighbor's landmark, which the men of old have set, in your inheritance which you will inherit in the land that the Lord your God is giving you to possess.

It's a pretty straightforward command – don't mess with property markers. Doing so breaks three of the Ten Commandments: *You shall not steal*; and *You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor*; and *You shall not covet... anything that is your neighbor's* (Exodus 20:15-17). Even today there are strict laws governing property and boundary lines.

This reminds me of a true story that happened when I was a camp director. The camp's property totaled about 400 acres. The boundary was very irregular and uneven all the way around, like a jigsaw puzzle piece only with square, not round, corners.

After we built a new conference center building, I decided to develop a prayer trail nearby. That same year, leaders of our state girls camp asked if they could build a stone altar in honor of a retiring leader. We stood on the prayer trail and randomly chose where to place the altar in that neck of the woods.

When girls camp rolled around, my workers and I loaded the bucket of a backhoe with melon-size creek rocks and piled them near the chosen site. In a special ceremony, the children arranged the stones in the shape of an altar. We topped it with a large piece of shale, also a gift from a nearby creek. With the addition of a few benches, the prayer altar became a beautiful and meaningful place of meditation.

And now, for the rest of the story...

Not long after, someone inquired about the camp's property markers. Nothing serious, just a question about landmarks. With that incentive, I spent a couple of days locating all the corner stakes. It was a good exercise in surveying and orienteering. A map showed the property lines and some key topography. Using a compass and measured paces, I found every corner marker and cleared up the curious question.

About this same time, I came up with the bright idea of locating the camp's geographic center, not an easy task on a parcel of property shaped like a broken nacho chip. I carefully traced the map on a stiff piece of cardboard, cut it out, and balanced it on the tip of a pencil until level.

You're probably way ahead of me by now. I plotted the balancing point on the map and headed to the general location. As I followed the compass bearing and measured the distance, I was pleasantly surprised to find that we had unknowingly placed the prayer altar at the geographic center of camp. To be certain, I shot the course several times from different angles but kept coming right back to the prayer altar.

The story reminds us that God has everything under control. God doesn't work in coincidental ways. *He stood and measured the earth; He looked and startled the nations. And the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills bowed. His ways are everlasting* (Habakkuk 3:6). The Heavenly Father doesn't put His children at the mercy of luck. *I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever* (Psalm 52:8).

John wrote that *all things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made* (John 1:3). I'd say the Maker knows the geographic center of everything He created. Including a small wooded hillside near a shallow creek in the quiet land of south central Indiana. ...Where a bunch of little girls bid the Father show them something special.

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Bible Devotions: Hook Line & Sinker (study guide)

Deuteronomy 19:14
Geographic Center

HOOK

1. What is the length of your pace? How many paces equal 100 yards? One quarter mile?

2. Think about the geographic center of your property. Describe in detail where that might be.

3. Draw a picture of a compass and tell everything you know about it, at least the basics.

LINE

It's a pretty straightforward command – don't mess with property markers. Doing so breaks three of the Ten Commandments: *You shall not steal*; and *You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor*; and *You shall not covet... anything that is your neighbor's* (Exodus 20:15-17).

God has everything under control. God doesn't work in coincidental ways. *He stood and measured the earth; He looked and startled the nations. And the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills bowed. His ways are everlasting* (Habakkuk 3:6). The Heavenly Father doesn't put His children at the mercy of luck. *I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever* (Psalm 52:8).

John wrote that *all things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made* (John 1:3). The Maker knows the geographic center of everything He created.

Where is the most meaningful place you experience time alone with God? Why is this place special for you? If none, where would you chose it or make it, and how would you use it?

Describe an event in your life when God worked in a way that others might chalk up to coincidence or luck.

SINKER

Take a few minutes to write your thoughts on this devotional. Reflect on your own experiences.

Key words: landmark God's ways altar
