

Summer Road Trip - Planning Your Trip

It looks like Spring this week but summer is in full swing! The days are getting longer, boats are on the water, berries are being picked, farmers markets are taking place, and kids are everywhere!

But one of the most telling signs of summer is that it seems like everyone knows someone who just got back from vacation, they are on vacation, or planning for a vacation.

And as I reflected on our recent family trip, I saw so many parallels between a road trip and our journey of faith, that today we are starting a series titled "Summer Road Trip".

I do realize that not everyone can go on vacation, but we can all go on a road trip, you just need to know someone with a car and a day off!

If you decide to go on a road trip, the first thing you need to do is Plan Your Trip.

Where do you want to go?

- What destination would you like to see?
- Beaches? Mountains, cliffs, hiking trails? A city? Scenery? Just anything new? No idea..maybe just a direction, an area?

We tend to make this the biggest decision in planning a trip. Where are we headed? See where you are headed has such an impact on the rest of the planning process...it's a pretty big deal.

And when you relate this to your journey of faith...it's the biggest question you need to ask. Where am I headed? Where do you want to end up in life...and in eternity?

If you are one that doesn't really care...you're just in for the ride and you'll go where you go...it's not going to end up well. Where are you headed?

How long will you be gone?

- How much time do you have?
- Do you have a week off work, 2 weeks? Is it just a day trip, weekend trip?

These are considerations when planning your trip because the amount of time you have determines how much you can do and really even how far you can go.

But if you were uncertain about how long you could stay...wouldn't you get after it right away? You'd do the important things first just in case you run out of time?

That's a good picture of your faith journey. We have NO IDEA how much time we have!

So we can plan...but shouldn't we do what's important first?

James 4:14 (CSB)

Yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring—what your life will be! For you are like vapor that appears for a little while, then vanishes.

God alone knows your future. He knows the days you have, how long your trip is...

Job 14:5 (CSB)

Since a person's days are determined
and the number of his months depends on you,
and since you have set limits he cannot pass,

You don't get to extend your journey...when it's over, it's over! So shouldn't we do what's most important as soon as possible?

On a trip that would be what is the most impactful...what will make a lasting impression or memory. So what should you be doing in your faith journey that will make a lasting impact? Do that now! Don't wait...time could run out!

In planning your trip...If you know where you're going and know how much time you have to work with, what's next?

What is the cost?

- What can you afford?

You might want to tour Europe and you might have 4 weeks of vacation time. But can you handle the cost?

And not only can you handle it...but is it worth it? Is it worth all that you would have to give up, in order to pay that price?

This is the question many DO NOT ask in their faith journey...until they've got on a plane and landed in Italy, only to realize they like the food better back home, and they like being where everyone speaks their language.

Lots of people like the IDEA of following Jesus...it looks fun when others do it. Everything is different but in a good way...it's exciting...but they never considered the cost...they just had the time off and jumped on an airplane.

Luke 14:28-30 (CSB)

“For which of you, wanting to build a tower, doesn’t first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, after he has laid the foundation and cannot finish it, all the onlookers will begin to ridicule him, 30 saying, ‘This man started to build and wasn’t able to finish.’

This is about faith. It’s about following Jesus. Have you calculated the cost. Because if you haven’t...you’re going to land in Europe...and it’s going to be fun at first...But it’s going to cost you more than you think...the food is different...the culture is different...the talk is different...

And you have to be willing to give up what you had here to enjoy what you have there.

The most overlooked aspect of following Jesus...is the cost! Salvation is a free gift...you can have it for free! But it costs you everything to take that step to follow Jesus.

Matthew 4:21-22 (CSB)

Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat with Zebedee their father, preparing their nets, and he called them. 22 Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

They left their old life behind! They didn’t bring their nets. They didn’t tell Dad “we’ll be right back”. They were willing to give up everything.

Just like a good trip where you leave your life behind. You don’t take your house. You don’t take your bed or TV. Or your work (unless you are insane). You leave it behind and focus on what’s in front of you...your trip.

And our faith journey should be the same...you have to be willing to leave your life behind for a new life in Christ! **It’s free but it costs you everything!**

You have to count the cost! I believe that so many Christians who didn’t finish the journey just looked at a brochure and booked a flight but they never counted the cost...and they ran out of money...they had nothing left to give and decided to go back home early...

But what is the cost if you don’t go?

If you don’t go on a road trip, maybe you just lose out on some memories but you can make more in other ways. Maybe you lose out on some relaxation, but you can relax another way.

But if you don’t follow Jesus. If you decide the cost is too much. You go to hell.

There is an afterlife. There is a heaven and there is a hell. And you get to decide where you go. It’s just which one trip you want to pay the cost for.

Where do you want to go? How much time do you have? What is it going to cost?

How are you getting there?

- Car, plane, train, boat, a combination?

When it comes to travel we have lots of options in the US. In fact when you live where we do, you're probably going to have to take a combination of travel types. They all have their pros and cons. And different people prefer different modes of transportation. But when it comes down to "How do you get there?" It's all a matter of choice and preference...eventually you can still get there.

When it comes to your faith journey...there are lots of different "ways", Scientology, Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Atheism, etc. You can travel but many different modes of transportation...

But if your desired destination is heaven...there's ONLY ONE...all of those others lead to hell....

The right vehicle is Jesus...

John 14:5-7 (CSB)

"Lord," Thomas said, "we don't know where you're going. How can we know the way?"
6 Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except **through me**.
7 If you know me, you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

It's one thing to live the right way but it's another to GO the right way. You MUST be born again...and that's ONLY possible for you through faith in Jesus. The only God who LIVES!

John 10:9 (CSB)

I am the gate. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture.

Sure it matters where you want to go, how long you have, and what it costs...but you've got to take the right transportation...and Jesus is the only way to heaven.

Choose how you are getting to where you are going!

Where are you staying?

- Hotel, camp site, friends house, your car?

On a trip you can stay in a lot of different places. We've done many trips where we stay with family. That's a great option because it's free. This last trip we stayed in a hotel but we also stayed in a tiny house and also in a star dome in the middle of the desert (glamping).

What I realize is that where you are staying greatly impacts your trip. If with friends or family, their life and schedule affect your trip. If a hotel or air bnb, check in/check out, amenities affect your trip. If you are camping or even glamping, comfort such as heat/air or plumbing affect your trip!

Where you stay affects your trip...it's the same in your faith journey!

Galatians 5:25 (CSB)

If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

If you live by the Spirit...if this is your life in Christ...keep in step with the Spirit! If you live there, stay there. If you don't keep in step with the Spirit it greatly affects your journey!

On a trip you might wake up grumpy because the bed is hard or the pillow is flat. Or have to take a cold shower with a worthless showerhead while the tub is filling up with water.

What do those things do to your trip? They make you miss what you left behind...

If you choose to follow Jesus, and you don't live by the Spirit and stay in step with the Spirit...you will get grumpy and begin to miss what you left behind.

Colossians 2:6-7 (CSB)

So then, just as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to walk in him, 7 being rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, and overflowing with gratitude.

When you continue to walk in the Spirit you stay rooted in Jesus, you become established in the faith. When a tree is rooted deep...only then does it really begin to build up. Only then it is strong. And the result is overflowing gratitude...the branches grow out and become full.

This is you on your faith journey. Get rooted in Jesus, He is the foundation. And if you stay rooted you will be built up, get strong...and if you can grow and get strong...you will overflow with gratitude...you go from up to out...and that is when your faith becomes full...

That is when your journey bears fruit...and that fruit shows the goodness of God. And it impacts the lives of those around you...

Your trip doesn't only affect you. It affects those you take with you, and those you leave behind.

Who's going with you?

- Family? Friends? Alone?

When you plan a road trip...you take people that are close to you. People that mean a lot to you.

But on your faith journey, it's not a matter of seeing the beach or the mountains, it's a matter of eternal life or death. Every soul matters. Every Soul has value. Every soul needs to know the way to Jesus!

Luke 6:31 (CSB)

Just as you want others to do for you, do the same for them.

Wouldn't you want someone to tell you if there was a better way? Aren't you glad someone did?

Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

When it comes to planning your trip:

Where do you want to go?

How long do you have?

What's it going to cost?

How are you going to get there?

Where are you going to stay?

Who is going with you?

YOU HAVE TO START THE TRIP.

****IF YOU DON'T START A TRIP YOU WILL NEVER GET TO WHERE YOU ARE GOING**

THIS IS A TRIP THAT NEVER ENDS - YOU WILL ALWAYS BE ON THE ROAD LIKE A WANDERER...

WANDER WITH PURPOSE

YOU HAVE A HOME...BUT THIS IS NOT YOUR HOME...IT'S IN HEAVEN