

Summer Road Trip - Enjoy The Ride

There are good parts of a road trip, and there are bad parts of a road trip. You have to take the bad with the good. It's all a part of the journey.

Somehow we tend to have this picture of a perfect trip in mind, where nothing goes wrong, everyone is happy the entire time...if that's you...you have either never been on a trip...or your brain is trying to protect you by blocking it out!

If our goal in taking a trip is to make it perfect, we're setting ourselves up for failure. What we need to do is learn how to Enjoy The Ride!

When we enjoy the ride, we take pleasure in or find pleasure in the journey. I think it's best that we find it and we take it.

Proverbs 17:22 (CSB)

A joyful heart is good medicine,
but a broken spirit dries up the bones.

The Proverb tells us that when we enjoy (find pleasure in) it makes us well....it's like medicine to our soul. But when we dwell on the bad, it takes away our strength.

You know what I'm talking about...that bad moment or day...it can ruin the entire trip if you let it.

Somebody say: "If you let it."

See YOU are the only one that can choose to enjoy your ride. You are the one that decides to find and take pleasure in it, or to dwell on the negative.

No you can't control all of the outside factors but you can control the inside focus. You can choose how you respond

Romans 15:13 (CSB)

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

See, hope is the expectation of good. It's joy because of what is coming, even if what you have now is not so joyful. And Jesus is the God of hope...and when you know Jesus as Lord of your life, He will fill you with all joy and peace....when? AS YOU BELIEVE

And He does this so you will overflow with this expectation of good...not even of your own power but by the power of the Holy Spirit!

Church...THIS is how you enjoy the ride.

Setbacks

On a road trip it can be so easy to be frustrated by setbacks. Can anyone relate? You have a timeline but there's traffic ahead or the flight is delayed or your very first stop that is supposed to take 12 minutes took 30 minutes...

How often do you let those setbacks frustrate you? Do they prevent you from enjoying the ride?

How does that parallel our faith journey? Has anyone had a setback on your faith journey? Something that didn't go according to plan...it caused frustration because it messed up your timeline...altered your plans...

Can I tell you this morning that you can Enjoy the ride even with the setbacks?

Here's the deal...you had a setback...your plans have now changed...the timeline is different...BUT you are still on the journey! Hallelujah!

If you take a trip to Florida and your plans get turned upside down...can't you still find some joy in the fact that you are in Florida? While the rest of us suckers are stuck here in Illinois?

It's the same in your faith journey! Listen...Jesus told us we would have some setbacks...

John 16:33 (NKJV)

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Jesus said you will have setbacks but be of good cheer...find joy...enjoy the ride. He has overcome the world!

Church, if you are on the faith journey...and things aren't going your way...it's OK...be of good cheer you are still on the journey...there are millions of people who are not.

There are people whose life stinks as bad or worse than yours...but they don't have Jesus! At least you're on the ride! Find that joy, take hold of it.

Don't let the frustration of setbacks steal your joy.

Beat The GPS

OK, let's be honest here...who tries to play beat the GPS? The GPS says 12 hours...I'm going to make it in 11!

I'm looking for a better route. I'm planning out what time to leave so I miss rush hour when I go through major cities and then it's a competition between me and the GPS.

Global Positioning System is a satellite-based navigation system that works in any weather conditions, anywhere in the world, 24 hours a day.

It can see things that you can not. It sees you and your position in relation to other things and their position. It's a guide that sees more, and knows more, and is trying to lead you in a way that makes the best of your time!

You are not in competition with the GPS. It's a helper. Does this sound familiar to you?

The GPS is to your road trip as the Holy Spirit is to your faith journey. He's absolutely there to help make the most of your time. To help you enjoy the ride.

John 14:26 (NKJV)

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

When you're on your road trip...following the GPS...your level of obedience to the GPS is dependent on your level of trust in the GPS.

I remember years ago (before smartphones), we had a Garmin GPS and we typed in Best Buy in Decatur (I think) and we began to follow the directions. We turned down an alley between two houses and it said "You have arrived at your destination". Needless to say, I lost a little trust in that GPS that day...

But the ones we have now on smartphones are pretty good. They are regularly updated and fairly accurate. In fact, USUALLY if something goes wrong...it's actually my fault. Like the time we were going to the Covered Bridge Festival in Indiana...I typed in Mansfield, IL instead of IN.

But what I love about the modern GPS, is that I'm not great with directions or with maps. So if I DO type in the correct destination, it makes it easier to enjoy the ride because I just do what I'm told.

And if I get off track...the GPS re-routes and gets me back on track!

That's how it is in your faith journey...if your destination is heaven (you have to go through Jesus) then you follow the direction of the Holy Spirit and when you get off track, you miss a turn, or turn the wrong way...He will re-route your course and get you back on track.

But it's up to you to listen!

But sometimes you don't...because you know better...right?

Who hasn't been traveling and you know the way...you know you are supposed to continue to travel down this interstate for a couple more hours and the GPS tells you to get off at the next exit and take a 2 lane highway...but you don't listen...because you know better...

THEN...lo and behold...up around the corner everyone comes to a stop. No one is moving. You can't see what's going on but it's not good...later to find out there was an accident and if only you had listened, you could have gone around it instead of waiting to go through it.

See the GPS warns of dangers ahead and will try to re-route you, but it's up to you to listen and re-route to avoid it

Similarly in your faith journey...the Holy Spirit will guide you down the best path for your life. But there are times when you think you know the way. You put the cruise on and enjoy the ride and all of the sudden the Spirit prompts you to take a detour...but you don't listen...because you know better...

Because you planned for your trip, you have it all figured out...but you need to remember that God is like that GPS system that sees everything from a view outside of this world. He sees where you are at, where you are going, and He sees everything else that can affect that...so when He re-routes you...you don't know better...you don't see what He sees...just trust Him!

He wants you to enjoy the ride! Even in the re-routing!

Comparing Rides

When we think about enjoying the ride...we should be more specific and say enjoy YOUR ride.

There will always be someone with a nicer car, better hotel, better looking photos...etc. But here's the deal...your journey might look similar to theirs and theirs might look more appealing to you, but at the end of the day, you have to find joy in yours....and comparing it to others does nothing but rob you from seeing the good in your own.

Maybe they went to the mountains of Colorado and you only got to go to the Zoo in St. Louis...how can you let someone else's trip rob you of the joy of your own? It's not about who has the "better" trip, it's about the one you are on.

The better trip for you is the one you are actually on! Because YOU are there.

The one thing that has to be present for you to find joy in your journey is YOU.

Likewise in your faith journey...there will always be someone that does something that seems better than what you are doing. Someone that seems to be making more of an impact. Someone who seems to enjoy the ride a little more.

You have to find joy in the journey that God has given you. There's no better place for you to be than where the Spirit leads you!

Philippians 4:11-13 (CSB)

I don't say this out of need, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I find myself. 12 I know how to make do with little, and I know how to make do with a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content—whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need. 13 I am able to do all things through him who strengthens me.

The spirit of comparison does not lead to joy...the Spirit of the Lord is what leads to joy!

It doesn't matter what you have. It matters who you have...Jesus.
It doesn't matter where you go. It matters who you follow...Jesus.

Deuteronomy 31:8 (CSB)

The Lord is the one who will go before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or abandon you. Do not be afraid or discouraged."

No matter what your ride is like...if God is your guide...you can find joy in the ups and downs, whether you are on your timeline or you have a setback.

God wants you to embrace all of life. He wants you to value the journey you are on...because it's yours...because He's with you...

He wants you to be present, but He wants you to enjoy the ride. A joyful heart is good medicine.

You have to find the joy. You have to take hold of it.
You have to know the God of hope. Do you know Jesus? Really know Him?
Have you made the decision to follow Him? He will lead and guide you.
He will re-route you in times of trouble.

Romans 15:13 (CSB)

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

He will fill you with ALL joy and peace....AS YOU BELIEVE

Overflowing with hope...expectation of good...by the power of the Holy Spirit

You can expect a good journey! You can expect to find joy no matter how hard the road gets.
You can expect tomorrow to be better than today.
You can expect Him to work all things together for your good.
You can expect to enjoy the ride!