

In the Meantime!

Proverbs 3: 5, 6
January 8, 2012

So much of life is about the “in the meantime.”

I relearned this truth again coming back from visiting my grandkids. My wife and I had a great road trip from here to Ft. Walton Beach to Dallas and back. It was a journey of over 2200 miles in 5 days!

It was the trip back from Dallas that I really understood the “in the meantime” of life.

I had set my phone alarm to wake us up at 5:00a.m. to begin our 1100 mile drive back home. I forgot to silence the email alerts sound and so at 3:15 a.m. my wife and I woke up to an email alert. “Do we get up and go now or lay in bed till 5”, we asked each other?

We got up and got ready to start our 1100-mile, 17-hour drive home. We woke our son, TJ, to say our good bye and quietly headed out on our journey. Our journey started at 4:00 a.m. in Dallas. Our journey ended 17 hours, 4 stops later at home. This was our longest non-stop driving adventure yet.

The journey from Ft. Walton to Dallas a few days earlier was 12 hours of driving in the rain. No fun! We did arrive in time to watch our “3 o’clock” (this is Landen’s answer when you ask him how old he is now: 3 o’clock) grandson blow out his candle on his birthday cake. It was well worth the push through the rain to celebrate the joy of a smiling three year old!

Also along the way there was a 17-mile long bridge across bayou country. We have seen before how one breakdown or accident can cause a major delay.

On the way back we listened to “Deborah,” our GPS, and went a different route that saved us a half an hour of traveling. We were willing to “recalculate” to her directions.

There were slow downs, one near miss, and stops of stretching, fueling, running the dog to get her to do her business, snacks and meals eaten on the drive.

We counted the 4 stops, as reliefs of joy and nourishment and refueling. We celebrated each state line that was crossed as we made our way back home. We gave thanks to God as we pulled into our driveway!

My wife and I shared the driving responsibilities on the way home. Whoever wasn't driving was navigating. Along the way we had a lot of time to share with each other about family and other things going on in our lives and the lives of our friends. "In the meantime" was a time of learning and growing in our lives with each other and rekindled our love for one another.

A journey has a starting point...an ending point or point of destination and it has the "in the meantime."

"In the meantime" is so much a part of our lives. You don't have to drive 17 hours straight to understand the "in the meantime" of life.

When you read a book you don't read the opening paragraph and then go to the end and read the final paragraph and think you have experienced the book.

When watching a movie you don't watch the first minute then fast-forward to the final scene. There is the "in the meantime" of a book or movie that speaks the full meaning of what the author is trying to convey.

Look at your life. Each phase is a new "in the meantime." There is to be growth and newness...no matter how old or young you are or think you are.

I talk with folks who started sobriety from alcohol or going clean from drugs. They count their "in the meantime" in weeks and months and years. They celebrate each new day of life free from their addictions. "In the meantime" is a time of gaining personal strength, hope and joy.

Relationships have the starting points and then in the meantime till the end. Whether it is husband and wife or parent and child...the "in the meantime" can be a time of struggle, learning and growing together.

Illnesses or surgeries have their "in the meantime." You start with a therapy of medicine or surgery. Then you have the time of healing, rehab and restoration of your health.

School has the "in the meantime"...you start a new year...180 days of learning...then graduation.

Faith has the "in the meantime." We come to faith in Jesus in the midst of doubts and questions. We grow in our faith through questioning and learning. It is a time of struggle, detours, storms and new directions.

Through out life we have our "in the meantime." How we handle the "in the meantime" will determine if the journey was worth it or not.

We have started a new year...it will end 357 days from now on December 31st. How you handle the "in the meantime" will help determine what this year will be like for you.

There are a couple of "in the meantime" practices I want to make sure I practice each new day.

Our scripture reading makes it pretty clear what they are to be in our "in the meantime."

"Do not lean on your own understanding...but in all your ways acknowledge God and He will direct your path."

I want to strive to make sure that my life is not directed solely by me. I don't trust myself enough to make all of my life totally up to what I want, when I want it and how I want it. I know me and I know what a mess I would be if my life were totally left up to me.

There are a couple of ways I make sure this doesn't happen to me in my "in the meantime."

I am trying more and more to live a life of prayerful expectancy.

Any valuable relationship is one that has heart to heart communication. I am learning more and more to communicate with others from my heart. It begins with God. In my prayers I am listening more and communicating with an expectancy that He will answer.

That prayerful expectancy doesn't mean I will get what I want when I want it. It rather means I am trying to be more open to His will and ways for my life. It helps me to also see God at work in the "in the meantime" moments of my faith journey and daily life struggles.

He will direct my ways! The problem is will I take His advice and recalculate or will I still try to direct my own life? Will I allow Him to also speak to me, to navigate through the wisdom and advice of others who know me?

Another way I acknowledge God in my daily journey is reading His Word!

Daily I pull over from my daily journey and I look into the bible for direction. His word is life, hope and joy to those who follow it. (Psalm 119:105-112) I don't fully understand it all. I am learning "in the meantime" that His truths and promises have not failed me...even in the long storms of life.

I am learning it is okay to question God as long as I am open minded to listen to His spirit speak into my spirit His truth. There is a joyful expectation of celebration that through faith keeps me following His will and direction.

The "in the meantime" offers those stops to refuel, stretch, run, nourish and then head back down the road of life I am traveling. They are crucial to our growing and learning about life and our relationship with the Creator of Life. I discover that no matter how long or short the journey may be I am not traveling it alone. He is with me and He will never leave me or mislead me.

The challenge I offer to you during this “in the meantime” is to be willing to live a life of prayerful expectancy and reading of God’s Word.

Allow the journey, the “in the meantime,” to be honest and real. Don’t lean just on what you already know. Open your heart and mind and let God speak to you and direct you this year.

Jesus spoke of this truth of the “in the meantime” when He said, “Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don’t get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes.” Matthew 6:33, 34 MSG

Every day has a start and a finish...and an “in the meantime.” How are you living out your “in the meantime?” Celebrate each day the “stops” along the way...the small smiles of joy or victories. End the journey of each day with thanksgiving that God has traveled with you through another day.

What “in the meantime” are you going through right now?

Go through it with prayerful expectancy and trusting the truth of God’s Word to speak to you and guide you through your journey. Don’t worry, instead devote yourself to prayer (Colossians 4:2) and let God guide you where you are in your “in the meantime.”

How we journey through our “in the meantime” of life will determine how we finish our journey of life.

In between his birth and death Jesus had an “in the meantime” stop with his disciples. He took the bread and cup and refueled, nourished and challenged them in their relationship of love with him.

In our lives, our journeys, we stop and have this same “in the meantime” moment. May we use this “in the meantime” meal to renew our desire to daily learn and grow in our love for Jesus and others as we make the most of our “in the meantime” of prayerful expectancy and a life directed by His Word.

“In the meantime” is a part of your life.
How will you spend your “in the meantime?”
How will we look back on the journey of this year?
What will you have learned about yourself and your relationship with
God and others?

What struggles or storms will you go through?
What expectation of celebration keeps you on the road?
How will you make the most of your “in the meantime?”