

## The Journey of a Lifetime

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How long will you live and what will you do in that time? No one really knows, but at different points in life we end up making and remaking life plans or goals. This journey of life is a very long road with many twists and turns, hills and valleys, and pit stops. Sometimes we need to refuel, reassess and possibly even plot a new course.

### Traveling Through Time and Space

I recently returned from a cross-country road trip with my daughter and I found this to be a very reflective experience. What else can you do but think while driving or riding in a car for 6 to 8 hours a day? Part of the trip was very scenic which caused us to marvel at the vastness and variety of God's creation, and recognize as well the human additions to the environment (for better or worse). Part of the trip was long, boring, tedious (endless cornfields and wind turbines) and even nerve wracking (endless desert with no exits).



Some experiences were a little outside of our comfort zone. When we got to our destination however, it all seemed worth it. Regardless of the ups and downs, twists and turns (even wrong turns), and the various uncomfortable parts of traveling, overall we were very happy that we did it and arrived safely. Now, the whole trip seems like a great epic adventure – even though during our journey I did have some doubts and second thoughts about my sanity in attempting this feat.

I think this is why “The Journey” is a good metaphor for life. If you never plan a trip you will probably never go on one, and that would be a shame. However, regardless of how much planning you do, the adventure may turn out quite different from what you expected. In which case it's important to be flexible, adaptable, open minded, aware and looking for the good in everything. Then you can have a great experience no matter what.

### Discovering our Blind Spots

Early on in our cross country trip we realized, to the dismay of several fellow drivers, that we had some terrible blind spots. There were a couple times when we could have had an accident while trying to change lanes. Fortunately for us the other drivers reacted quickly (beeeeeep, honk, honk) and let us know that we had a problem. They had good reason to be angry with us and we received their admonitions as a warning to be far more careful and aware of how our blind spots were endangering ourselves and others.



In life, we all have blind spots. No one has a personality that can encompass everything. No one is all knowing, all wise, and able to predict future events with 100% accuracy. There would be no purpose for someone like that to even exist because life is about learning and growth. Our blind spots are simply the areas where we need to grow or become more aware. More importantly, we need each other so that we can recognize our blind spots – we just can't see them on our own.

### The Journey is about Love

My daughter planned this trip because she needed to get her car across the country to her new residence, but more importantly this became an opportunity to visit many friends that she had not seen for awhile. A couple weeks before we left I became nervous about the trip and suggested she think about shipping her car. It's really not that expensive to ship a car across the country these days.

I knew my daughter had her heart set on seeing her friends, that this was the highlight and true value of the trip for her. I also knew that she would go with or without me, that she would find a way to make it happen. So for the love of my daughter and the love of adventure I determined to go despite the obstacles in my path.



To overcome the circumstances that were holding me back I had to have a heart to heart with God. There were some serious financial concerns and family matters that I was dealing with at the time. After passionately expressing my heart to God, laying all my circumstances out on the table, I felt a sense of calm resignation and went to bed.

The very next morning there was an email in my inbox with the promise of enough money to take care of half my concerns, and by the afternoon I received a call from someone who offered to buy one of the cars I had been trying to sell. I had been

trying to sell a car for 2 weeks and I was running out of time. This all happened only a few days before we were scheduled to leave, so for me it was truly a miracle and a sign of God's blessing over our trip.

Each night of our trip we were able to stay with friends or acquaintances of friends. We felt embraced by so much love and had a wonderful time visiting so many special people. It was a reminder to me of the incredible presence of God within each unique person. God is love, God works through heart (the impulse to love) and the fullness of God can only be experienced through relationship.

### **The destination is love too**

After 10 days of almost nonstop travel we arrived at our destination, my daughter's new home with her husband's family. Simultaneously he rushed out the door of the house and she jumped out of the car and ran toward him. I giggled as I walked by their passionate embrace and went into the house to greet the rest of the family. I was greeted with warm hugs all around. This was the purpose of our trip: to dwell in the embrace of loving family and friends.



There are many experiences along the road of life, some are joyful and some are uncomfortable (or worse). We can choose what to focus on, we can choose to interpret even the negative experiences in a positive way. Or we can choose to dwell in frustration, anger, criticalness and disbelief – but that would really be a sad choice causing us to completely miss the point of it all.

When we travel the path with God we can dwell in the presence of love no matter what. I thank God for the blessing of the life lessons I learned on this cross-country trip.