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Relax And Enjoy The Ride

Dear Friend,

We as humans seem to have an unquenchable desire to know every last detail before we are willing to proceed with anything. It's something that began in us when we were children. I remember hearing my parents say; "Get ready Mark we are going somewhere." Can you guess the next words that came out of my mouth? "Where are we going?" I had to know all the details and I had to know them now!

What is it inside of a person that craves to know all the details and have every last question answered before moving? Maybe we think; "Well, I have a right to know!" That's how I felt as a child. The only problem was that my dad didn't share in my convictions. He knew that he was the boss and my job was to simply say, "ok", and do what he said.

Sometimes the trip was to the store to buy food, how boring is that? Other times, we might be going to do something fun. Regardless of where he was taking us it wasn't imperative that I know all the details. In fact, most of the time his answer to me was this, "you will know when we get there." How rude was that? I had a right to know, or at least I felt like I did. For what purpose? What difference did it make if I had all the details? It made no difference whatsoever. It was just my soul craving information and nothing more.

I knew my dad would never knowingly subject me to a life-threatening situation, so it wasn't that I was concerned for my safety. I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that wherever he took me he wasn't going to abandon me. I never had a fear of abuse or anything like that. My need for information was strictly to satisfy my immature desires to know what was going to happen next.

Sometimes dad graciously told me our destination and other times he ignored me until I shut up. Occasionally he would say; "It's a surprise." Now, I had to know if it is a good surprise or a bad surprise. A good surprise might be that we are going to the Zoo. A bad surprise might be that we were going to the dentist. If

we were going to the dentist then I might be heading towards a painful experience and I needed time to mentally prepare myself. Now, I must know. It's imperative so that I can be ready. My poor dad had to put up with this almost every time we got into the car.

Over time, I did finally grow up enough to relax and enjoy the ride to wherever he was taking me. That's exactly what our heavenly Father wants us to do, relax and enjoy the ride. I can't see how our incessant need for more and more information about where we are going in life is doing anything but causing our heavenly Father to wonder if we will ever grow up.

"But, Mark, I must know how to plan for my future." I don't mean to infer that our Father expects us to be irresponsible. But, if we demand to know more than we are ready to hear before we are willing to act then it looks to me like we are tying God's hands. What I am sharing here isn't something that I learned yesterday. What I am sharing has taken God years to get over to me. I believe that if you can learn the secret of simply resting in Him and trusting that He will never abandon you, God will be able to lead you strategically wherever He wants you to go.

I believe that we can trace our soul's incessant need for information back to the Garden of Eden. Remember when Adam stood by and watched as Eve disobeyed God's command by partaking of the fruit and immediately afterward he followed suit. You will recall that the fruit was from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Their hunger to know more than what they believed God had told them is the reason for man's fall. The serpent suggested that God was withholding something from them in order to lure them into questioning God's motives. Look at what satan said to the woman; (Genesis 3:1)

"...yea, hath God said, you shall not eat of every tree of the Garden?"

The woman responded that they could eat of all the trees of the Garden except the tree in the midst of the Garden, which she incorrectly said they could not even touch. If they ate or touched the fruit of it they would die. She had responded with an answer that was not exactly what God had said. The serpent saw an opening and what did he do? He baited the trap by suggesting that God was withholding something from them. This seed of doubt mushroomed into an idea that maybe they could not wholeheartedly trust God. Maybe God did not have their best interest at heart. Maybe they needed to look out for themselves instead of trusting God to have oversight of their future.

Can you see that when we relentlessly badger God for more and more information about where we are going and what we are doing we are falling into

the same trap that the serpent set in the Garden? We are refusing to trust our heavenly Father with our future. It seems to me that in those times when I have relentlessly tugged at God's coattails pressing Him for more and more information the truth of the matter is that I was just simply not trusting Him. What was I doing? In my clever little mind I was already arranging my fall back plan in case this thing with God didn't work out, as if He didn't know exactly what I was thinking.

My relentless need to know in detail where God wanted me to go and what He wanted me to do went on for years. Sadly, I gravitated towards teaching that supported this idea and I became entrenched in the notion of having to have all the details before taking the next step in God's plan. As I looked around at others who were following this same philosophy I noticed that there seemed to be a lot of fear of making a mistake and missing God. The common idea was that we have to be perfect at this or else. As a result, I saw many people in a perpetual phase of preparation, but few ever able to step out because they were never satisfied they had enough information from God.

Here's one example to consider. When God sent Abram out of his homeland He did not give Abram all the details as to where He was sending him. Instead God said this; (Genesis 12:1)

"...Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee."

Wasn't God really saying, "Abram, you'll know when you get there"?

When God led Israel through the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land, He did not give them a map. God didn't explain in advance all that they would experience along the way. He simply led them by a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. So long as they moved when He moved and stopped when He stopped they would be fine.

This requires trust, trust in our heavenly Father that He will provide for us, protect us, and that He won't abandon us along the way. We have to believe that He knows what He is doing. Does it mean we will never come face to face with difficulty or danger? Absolutely not! There may be times of difficulty. There may even be times of danger. But, we must know that God is bigger than any difficulty we will ever face. The Apostle Paul had his encounters with danger and difficulties and yet God was with Him, leading Him, in the midst of it all.

A while back, God began the painstaking process of moving Debbie and me out from under the influence of teaching that promoted the idea of having to know every detail of God's plan. He showed us time and time again through our own past experiences with Him that this was not the way He had led us prior to coming under this teaching. As we held fast to the truth that God had showed us over the previous years, we came to the place that we couldn't hold onto both ways of believing. We chose to cling to what we knew was God in our lives and how He led us, more often than not without the details, which has now brought us to Knoxville, Tennessee.

In March of this year we moved to Knoxville. God had confirmed to both Debbie and me, independently a year prior, that we would be moving to Knoxville. Many things had to take place before our move, much more than I can record here. Finally, our house in Tulsa sold and we headed for Knoxville with no idea what God had in store. Our first month in Knoxville involved living in a hotel room and having all our things in storage. Within one month of our arriving we purchased our home, which Debbie calls our "fixer upper", and we began to settle into life in Knoxville.

Since being here, I have to admit that my soul has desired more details about God's plan for us in Knoxville. But, I have learned not to wear Him out asking questions about the future. Instead, I have discovered that the best thing for me to do when I'm in the midst of transition is simply to do what I know to do and make sure I'm investing time in my spiritual growth, specifically my relationship with Him. Instead of struggling like a child to know what is next, I focus on resting in the fact that my heavenly Father knows what He is doing. So long as I stay close to Him I'm not going to miss Him. Here is an example of what I mean.

Just this week I had my first opportunity to go and visit someone who had been involved in a car accident and broke his back. What is so awesome is how the Lord put everything together in order for me to be at this man's house this week to pray for him. You see, I had never met this man until the day I prayed for him in his home. So, how is it that I was able to meet and pray for a total stranger at the exact moment that he needed prayer? Only the Holy Ghost can make these kinds of encounters happen as long as He has our cooperation.

Here's how it all took place. Back on July 13th, I purchased a drywall lift from a man I found on Craigslist. The funny thing is, Debbie had found other people selling lifts, but for some reason I was just not interested in looking at them. I called about one or two and they had either been sold or the person wanted too much. This one seemed to be the right lift at the right price. I met the man at a neutral location and did the transaction. He also told me that he could give me a price to finish my drywall work once I had all the drywall hung.

It just so happened that this past week I was ready to have him come by the house and give me a price. He came by and we talked for a while and he began to tell me about how last Friday his son had been in a car accident and had broken his back. We finished our conversation and he left. After he left, I thought about his son a number of times and it finally got to the point that I just couldn't seem to get the thought out of my head. Finally, I accepted that this was the Lord wanting me to go and pray for this man's son. To be honest, I had other things planned that I wanted to do, but I knew this was God.

I called the dad and asked him if his son, whose name is Mark, would allow me come and pray for him. The dad said yes and proceeded to give me instructions on how to get to Mark's house. I had a hard time hearing what he was saying and consequently I had no idea where I was going. All I had was the name of a small town about a half hour away from Knoxville. One thing I am learning about Tennessee is that the hill country is a little different than the city. The roads are narrow and generally look like they are going straight up, which was exactly what I was heading into. I was able to talk with Mark's mom a few minutes before I left and she provided me with a little better idea of where I was going.

I finally made it to their small town and with a little help I found Mark's house. He met me at the door when I arrived. He had a brace around his torso and looked to be in rough shape. He invited me in and I sat down and began to share God's word regarding healing. At first, Mark kept looking at the television show, but within a few minutes he stopped watching and I had his undivided attention, not really me, the Holy Ghost had Mark's attention. As I spoke I could see an occasional tear come out of the corner of Mark's eye.

All of what I was saying was new to Mark. He was saved, but his church didn't teach healing. I explained how healing was for us today and how we had to receive what Jesus did for us by faith. After about 30 minutes of sharing verses with Mark I told him I was going to pray for him. I instructed him to expect to receive something when I laid hands on him just like the woman with the issue of blood expected to receive when she laid hands on the border of Jesus' robe. When she did, something the Bible called "virtue" flowed out of Jesus into her. Jesus immediately knew someone had made a demand on the life of God from within Him. (Mark 5:30)

“And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that virtue had gone out of Him, turned Him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?”

I told Mark to expect to receive of the life of God when I laid hands on him. Just before laying hands on him I mentioned how I could sense the presence of God

and Mark said that he could feel His presence as well. I, then, laid hands on Mark and prayed. When I finished I stepped back and looked at Mark and he had the most unusual look on his face. I asked him what was happening. He said, "Something is going on inside of me." I knew that Mark had received. This was exactly what God had wanted me to do. I was at the right place at the right time and God had orchestrated everything.

As I left I began to think about all the things that had to have happened in order for me to pray for Mark that day. First, we had to move from Oklahoma. Then, we had to buy a house that needed renovation work. Next, I had to have a need to contact Mark's dad, so I had to be in need of that drywall lift and also discover that Mark's dad could do drywall finish work. Then, I had to be in contact with Mark's dad after the accident in order to learn he needed prayer. Finally, I had to be willing to take the next step and move beyond my comfort zone and minister to a total stranger in his home, outside a normal church setting. Praise God, I willingly obeyed the leading of the Lord.

As I drove home God whispered this inside of me. "This is what I want you to do." Now I knew what God wanted me to do. Remember, I had been asking Him since we arrived what He had for us to do here in Knoxville. We are to simply follow Him and let Him orchestrate our lives day by day. In short, we are to relax and enjoy the ride and stop trying to figure out where we are going. I recommend that you do the same. It is a much easier way to live when you put all your trust in your heavenly Father knowing He will never leave you nor forsake you. (Hebrews 13:5)

"...for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

So, relax and enjoy the ride.

(Matthew 11:29)

"Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls."

~ Jesus Loves You!

Mark Jenkins