

ROAD TRIP DEVOTIONAL

WEEK 4



Luke 15:20-24

“So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him. His son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.’ But his father said to the servants, ‘Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast, for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.’ So the party began.”

Last August, we decided to take our family to Texas! It was not what we were hoping for when we began planning a more extensive and elaborate road trip to the Grand Canyon and Yosemite the previous summer. But we were so excited! It was our first time to travel that far. It seemed like the perfect vacation—and in many ways it was.

However, it soon began to seem like nothing would go according to plan. It was hot with temperatures of over 100 degrees in the daytime. We were pulling our travel trailer, and moving slower than we expected, making the drive at times a nightmare. To make matters worse, there were many delays along the way as construction seemed to be everywhere! Traffic was unbelievable and it put us getting into San Antonio after sunset!

But, when we got there and settled into our camping spot, our perspective changed. There was a renewed excitement for the adventure that awaited us!



Consider This...

PAGE

1

Expectations are an amazing thing. I have found this to be true on nearly any Road Trip. You go with the idea of getting one thing and something unexpected happens. It is like that in the parable of the Lost Son. If you remember, the youngest son asked for his inheritance and wanted to leave. Luke 15:13-14 says, “Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need”



Consider This...

The youngest son felt life would be better free and unattached! But he ended up wasting all he had – and then – unexpectedly – a famine spread throughout the land and he found himself in need. In despair, he was forced to resort to a job feeding pigs just to survive! He became so hungry he wished for the pigs’ food! He expected one thing, but the opposite happened!

He decided to humble himself and go home because he remembered that his father’s servants had food to spare and that was better than what he had.

When he arrived home, the unexpected happened. His father ran to him with open arms! Verse 20 says “...while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.” This is how God meets us when we come back to him. It reminds me of the disaster of our trip only to be met with love by my family.

However, the youngest son wasn’t met with love by everyone. The older brother was furious. In verse 29 He told the father, “Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends.” The older brother’s expectations were also unmet... and because of that, his heart wouldn’t let him celebrate with his family. He let his disappointment be the obstacle to his joy.

In verse 31 and 32, the father responds, “My son, you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.”

Sometimes, that's what we do to ourselves. We let our unmet expectations ruin a perfectly good party or vacation. That could have happened to us on our trip. In fact, it almost did! There were many times we just pull over, short of our intended destination. But, we had a promise of a great day coming.

Sometimes, we just need to see things in a different way. Sometimes we need to see things from God's eyes and that can change everything.



The Prayer

Lord, Thank you for being a loving Father. Sometimes I forget that your love exceeds my expectations. There may be areas of disappointment in my life that are keeping me from celebrating the good things that you're doing. Show me what they are. Give me Your eyes to see the good. Give me Your hope to hold onto your promise. Open my heart to love hurting people and receive them with open arms - just like you did for me. In Jesus name, Amen.

- Can you remember a time when you expected one thing and received another?
- Are there unmet expectations in your life? Is it possible that unmet or unrealistic expectations have robbed your joy? How do you typically respond when life doesn't go according to your plan?
- What are times in your life that God has exceeded your expectations and brought good out of a difficult situation?



The Questions