

So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with Him.

2 Peter 3:14



The Christian life is a journey.

TrailNotes speaks to forward movement, paying attention to the “landscape” we are passing through in this trail-laced, wooded hillside and valley, not to mention the world beyond. *TrailNotes* is an unfolding, ongoing journal of the people who share the trail with us and the things we’re learning and doing.

ElderTalk: Looking behind...and ahead

ERIC BYROM

This summer we have been doing more travel than the rest of the year. When we are on the highway, it is important to be aware of three things: The rearview mirror, the side mirrors and looking ahead down the highway.



This year as a church we have focused on the theme “Use your freedom in Christ to love God and others well!” We are wrapping up our time with this theme and would do well to keep in mind the car analogy. Our rear view mirror is “REMEMBER.” Our side view mirrors are “KNOW.” Our looking ahead down the highway is “HOPE.”

When we “REMEMBER,” we look at the past and what’s behind us. We are aware of how the past affects what we are doing right now. Much of 1 and 2 Peter involves Peter reminding the church of important things to “REMEMBER.” So how do we know what Peter is reminding us about? When he used the past tense in any verb, that is reminding us of things that have already happened.

Much of what Peter is reminding the believers about is what has happened to them with regards to Jesus transforming their lives and the power of the cross and resurrection that has been given to them. How has God rescued you? When did you give your life to Him? What ways has He shown up in your story? Much of the Christian life consists of “REMEMBERING” and rehearsing what has already happened.

I am so forgetful. When I forget all that God has done for me, I can be overwhelmed by present circumstances and worry about the future. When I am reminded of all that He has done, I am comforted and realize that I don’t need to worry.

The second aspect of driving well involves using the side mirrors. This would correspond to the idea of “KNOW.” Side mirrors alert us to what is presently around us. We can see very quickly if a car is on either side of us and “KNOW” if it is safe to change lanes or not. In the same way, 1 and 2 Peter have reminded the believers to grow in their knowledge of Christ. The idea of “KNOWING” in the Bible is often a bit more involved than we think. It has an aspect of intimate acquaintance with something. For example, before Ethan was born, I knew things about what it meant to be a father. However, when I suddenly had an infant boy in my arms, I “KNEW” what it meant to be a father. I was experiencing it.

Peter is calling the believers to “KNOW” Jesus and be in intimate fellowship with Him. This is a present reality that we can experience. When we are in intimate fellowship with Jesus today, we are aware of our surroundings in an entirely new way. We use our present lives differently.

The third aspect of driving well is being aware of what is ahead. We “HOPE” to arrive safely. I’ve been saved from many accidents by paying attention to the brake lights ahead of me. When I see them coming on half a mile down the road, I “KNOW” to slow down and give some distance between my car and the car in front of me. I am not caught off guard by the sudden slowing down that is coming my way.

In the same way, “HOPE” serves this purpose in our spiritual lives. We “HOPE” for something that is coming in the future. When our “HOPE” is certain, it makes a big difference in how we live today.

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Looking behind...and ahead

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2 Peter 3:13-14 explains how “HOPE” will affect how we live today. It says:

“But according to His promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.”

“HOPING” in the promises of God regarding the future will affect how we live our lives today. We won’t disregard God’s commandments but will obey them. We will use our freedom in Christ to love God and others well when we know that the King is returning soon.

So, Grace Fellowship, how are you driving these days? Are you living today in intimate fellowship with Jesus Christ? Are you living in light of the promises of God and the imminent return of Jesus? Let’s use our freedom to love God and others well!

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Casting Vision... (Concluded from page 4)

integrity, which will sustain them through a lifetime. By casting a vision grounded in the truth of God’s Word and seeking to walk in obedience to His purposes, we can help them navigate the complexities of this season with confidence, purpose, and hope.

I will leave you and your youth with the challenge I gave to my son: Are you willing to pay the price in this season to enjoy the blessings of a lifetime?

(Eds. note: This article was written by Christy Nunn’s brother, who is CFO for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, for a recent North Carolina homeschool publication. He has given us permission to reprint it here)

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A dream...and many prayers...

answered in Funehiki, Japan!

In July a service of dedication was held in the finished Funehiki Evangelical Church building. We are now able to show you a photo of the newly completed structure as well as one showing the group gathered for that service. To God be the glory!



August 2025

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31	NOTE: List of Grace Fellowship Church personnel will return next month!					

- 1-2** Final 2 days of Teen DTS camp.
- 2** GAMES REACH Family Game Night, 6:30-8:30 PM, Foursquare Gospel Church, 383 Davidson St.
- 3** Pastor Eric Byrom preaching on 2 Peter 3:8-10.
Special potluck lunch following Circle Church to honor American Heritage Girls work at GFC.
- 8-10** Family camping weekend.
- 10** Elder Jadaé Fox preaching on 2 Peter 3:11-13.
- 14** Pastor Byrom meets with women leaders, 4 PM, at Panera, Lexington, Ave.
- 17** Pastor Eric Byrom preaching on 2 Peter 2:14-18.
- 23** COMMUNITY CELEBRATION, 5:30-8:00 PM.
- 24** Pastor Eric Byrom preaching on Matthew 28:18-20.
- 31** Celebration Sunday Worship.



Casting Vision for Your Teenager

DAVID BEROOTH

As my oldest son was approaching 13 years old, it was vital for me as a father to cast vision for what the Lord desired for him in these teen years. Over a long weekend trip, including hiking, tennis, and white-water rafting, I discussed ten key topics with him which I see as outward growing concentric circles for a blessed life.

III John 4 says, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." Do your children know this to be your greatest joy? This is a great place to focus as they transition into adulthood. Beckoning them anew to walk in the ways of the Lord will impact their trajectory for a lifetime. Don't let this special season pass by without intentionally connecting with your children and discussing this overarching question: "What is a life well lived for the glory of God?"

What are these ten topics?

1. God and the Bible

At the heart of life's journey lies a need to embrace the Gospel and to deepen our understanding of Who God is and what He desires for us. Scripture exhorts us to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30-31), underscoring the centrality of God in every aspect of our lives. Life can only be appropriately understood if we embrace the fact that we exist for His purposes and not for our own. When His desires become our desires, we can have fulfillment in life. Challenge your youth to foster a lifelong pursuit of Him in order to grow in the discernment and understanding needed to navigate the uncertainties which lie ahead. Immersing ourselves regularly in His Word, developing a Biblical worldview of the fundamental issues of life (origin, meaning, identity, morality, and destiny), and focusing on His transcendent purposes solidify one's foundation for a lifetime.

2. Time

Ben Franklin's quote captured my imagination when I was young..."If time be of all things the most precious, wasting time must be the greatest prodigality." Ephesians 5:15-16 admonishes us to redeem the time, and Ecclesiastes 12:1 beckons the reader to remember the Creator in our youth. We need to exhort our young men and women to steward carefully this most precious gift and resource. I challenged my son to use this time of youth intentionally to maintain good habits, develop his mind, manage media consumption, learn various practical skills, and embrace responsibility. In a culture

marked by frivolity and distraction, learning to prioritize our time and investing in pursuits that align with God's purposes are essential for maturity.

3. Family

There is no doubt that how young people relate to their family in the present will significantly impact how they relate to a spouse and children in the future. Life skills such as healthy relationships, edifying communication, and conflict resolution are best learned at home when young and when the consequences of misbehavior are still small. Nurturing these foundational familial relationships now with grace, humility, and meekness will serve a young person well for a lifetime.

4. Learning

School may come to an end, but education endures for a lifetime. Embrace this journey to be a lifelong learner! With the rapid expansion of knowledge, your child will not be able to thrive in life if learning stops upon graduation. Constant learning, applying, and aspiring opens doors for more growth and more opportunities. I also discussed with my son about pursuing a marketable online skill (Quickbooks, coding, etc.) while still in school. Though college is not obligatory, we talked about three areas to consider about higher education: 1) Curriculum, 2) Culture, and 3) Cost. Many a life has been wrecked between an ungodly curriculum, a worldly culture, or an excessive cost. Pursue the fear of the Lord as the foundation for learning, and then prayerfully start planning for what types of learning (technical training, dual enrollment options, college possibilities, etc.) you think will be needed for the future.

5. Church

Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her (Ephesians 5). Even so, we should teach our young men and women that God's plan for their lives involves the church. It plays a vital role in spiritual development, healthy accountability, and mutual edification. It is God's plan to be the spiritual family to complement our natural family. It also provides the platform for service and preparation for spiritual battle which we find in Ephesians 6. With our young people seeing us engage the body of Christ, they see that we are not an island unto ourselves.

6. Work

Work is a gift; it is a sacred calling entrusted to us by God Himself. From the beginning of creation, God ordained work as a means of stewardship, provision, and fulfillment. Instead of resisting it, teach your people to embrace it. Colossians 3:23-24 reminds us to

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Casting Vision... *(Continued from page 2)*

work heartily unto the Lord as our labor has eternal significance. By focusing teenagers' energy and time, they can explore fields of work in which they can thrive for many years within the gifts and purposes to which God has called them. It is often the case that the focus and preparation through the early 20s will determine one's potential in life. Make the most of this season! Henry Wadsworth Longfellow aptly observed that greatness is not achieved overnight but through diligence and perseverance: "The heights by great men reached and kept were not attained by sudden flight, but they, while their companions slept, were toiling upward in the night." For inspiration I also commend to you Henry van Dyke's poem titled "Work," which I had to memorize in 7th grade and which has often encouraged me in life.

7. Money

As I have been a CPA for over 25 years, I find this to be a very important topic. Cultivating wise financial stewardship is an important part of life! One's use of money has the potential to be a tremendous blessing or horrendous curse in life. Discuss at least these five foundational financial principles: 1) Be diligent, 2) Increase the value you provide to others (thus growing your income potential), 3) Spend less than you make, 4) Be generous and honor the Lord with your wealth, and 5) Invest your savings wisely. Managing real money through small jobs or allowances gives your youths opportunities to implement and experience financial lessons before they launch into life. Start making financial plans for college, a car, and a house someday. All these lessons will be invaluable. Also learn as much as possible from Proverbs, such as Proverbs 22:4, which says, "By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches and honor and life." These are the underlying qualities which will truly make for an abundant life.

8. Health

Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit—we need to take good care of them. It is important to steward our physical well-being. Honoring God with our bodies involves nourishing them with healthy food, maintaining regular exercise, and prioritizing rest. These habits we establish in our youth will generally carry into adulthood. Bodies also change in these teen years, and it is best for these types of discussions to be initiated by parents and not by others.

9. Friends

The company we keep has a profound influence on our character and behaviors. Proverbs 13:20 and I Corinthians 15:33 make it clear that being friends

with the foolish causes harm. This is a topic where we must choose our friends carefully and not just settle for any available friends. Or as I tell my children, "Be friendly with all, but don't be friends with all." The friends of our youth will either encourage them in the paths of righteousness or wickedness. The power of influence will invariably shape their lives. Participating in Trail Life has been a good opportunity as part of our home-schooling activities to grow in healthy friendships and to determine the type of friend we should be. It is also good to cast vision for a godly spouse for your children. Stress that marriage will be one of their most important decisions in life. They need to prepare themselves well for marriage and then seek the Lord for a godly and virtuous spouse. It is also beneficial to describe a Biblical way to pursue marriage and not through the worldly dating game. Talking through what God has to say about friendships at this stage will help save you from grief in years to come, Lord willing.

10. World

The world undoubtedly wants to shape our children (Romans 12:1, 2), so it is incumbent upon us to squarely address it. Discuss ways you see the world trying to shape your family and the lives of your children along with what God's desires are. Your youths are entering a real spiritual battle; prepare them for it. The world may glitter, but it is passing away. Challenge your youths not to love the world, but challenge them to pursue the will of God in the midst of it (I John 2:15-17). With your children, seek to be ambassadors for Christ in a broken and hurting world. By assisting your children, they can learn how to navigate the world with the corresponding discernment to not be ensnared by it. We don't want to shrink from the challenges before us but address them for the glory of God and the advancement of His kingdom.

Conclusion:

Yes—as you can imagine, my son and I spent quite a bit of time talking. Talk is not action, but it does lay the framework for activities and choices we will consider in the coming years. I concluded the time with my son in 1 Timothy 4:12. Here Paul says to be an example to believers in word, conduct, love, spirit, faith, and purity. The taller the tree is going to be in life, the deeper the roots will need to be, so too must young men and women invest in the foundations of character, faith, and

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