

MEN'S MINISTRY

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Proverbs 27:17

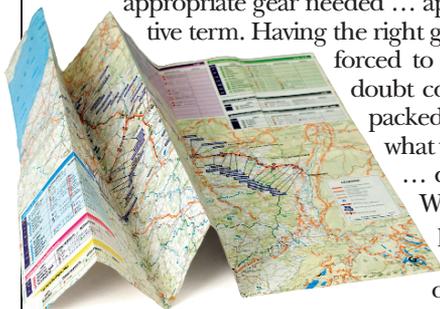
Preparing For The Trip By: Jeff Searcy

Welcome to February, the short month of the year. But, despite what every other human being on earth likely believes, February is the true beginning of the year. I can already see the wrinkles on your forehead. January, while actually the first month of the calendar year, is really the “recover from Christmas, New Years, and extended time off, trying to get back in the saddle at work as well as adopting a healthy lifestyle, again, finding myself making the same New Year’s resolutions as last year, still writing 2010 on everything, getting the kids back in school, and taking steps to make this the best year ever and realizing I don’t have the energy or the time to revamp everything so I’ll press forward as is” month. It usually takes a full 31 days to go through the aforementioned cycle but we do get through it, by God’s grace, and usually with a much better and more realistic perspective. That brings us to February. Now, on to 2011 and “Life from the road ...” We talked last month that in order to truly experience the divine appointments and experiences God has for us, we have to go where Jesus is ... out of the boat and into the waves. We have to get out of the house and on the road. But first ... we must prepare.

Whether you believe it or not, God is always at work in our lives and truly wants to be a part of every minute aspect of it. God’s Word says, “In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps,” Proverbs 16:9 (NIV). The harsh reality here guys is that despite our best efforts and desires, we are NOT in control. Think about all the plans we make during, and for, our lives. As many of us know all too well, a plan’s first brush with reality often ends in failure; failure according to our perspective, that is, not God’s. For the trip, we check the weather, consider traffic patterns, etc ... However, there is no way to plan for the unexpected occurrences that will inevitably happen along the way. I have hundreds of examples of things that have happened to me while “on the road.” I have no doubt you do as well. And since we cannot foresee everything that will happen to us during our trip, we have to get prepared. The key is not simply to plan. The key is to plan properly. *Hint: Taking planning advice from the One who does know what is going to happen to us is the smart thing to do. More on that in a minute ...*

One of the many things I learned while in the Marine Corps was the concept of The 7 P’s: Proper Prior Planning Prevents P— Poor Performance. For most audiences and applications, the 6 P’s are more than adequate. You just have to love the Marines and the colorful expressions ... hence the 7. Back to planning ... For our trip, the destination, conditions, and duration will determine the appropriate gear needed ... appropriate being the operative term. Having the right gear will keep us from being

forced to create some crazy, but no doubt colorful, story about why we packed what we did or didn’t pack what we should have. Been there ... done that ... got the t-shirt. We must be as prepared as possible in order to be able to handle whatever comes our way, both good and bad.



God has incredible things in store for us during our trip. However, not acknowledging that there are two sides to the coin is about as smart as only looking one way before stepping out into heavy traffic. In addition to the awesome experiences and blessings that happen while on the road, there are road blocks, detours, delays, potholes, accidents, and overall disappointments. God’s Word is the ultimate guide to trip preparation. Through Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, God provided sound instruction on how to prepare, each day, for the trip.

The following prayer, based on Ephesians 6:10-18, was given to me years ago. I have researched extensively but have yet to identify the author. Nevertheless, I humbly ask for forgiveness as I distribute it and share it whenever possible.

“Father, today by faith in Jesus, I put on the (1) GIRDLE OF TRUTH. I thank You today that I know who I am in Christ — a child of God whose name is written in the Lamb’s Book of Life. Lord, I want to by faith put on the (2) BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS to protect me from responding to circumstances and people emotionally rather than spiritually. Before I rise each day, Father, put on my feet the sandals of the (3) GOSPEL OF PEACE that I may be used by You to share the peace of God with other men. Father, I thank you that I can take up the (4) SHIELD OF FAITH knowing as I place my trust in You today, You are sufficient to protect me from fiery darts so that nothing can touch me. Lord, I place on my head the (5) HELMET OF SALVATION. Protect my thinking from things that don’t conform to Your will. Father, I take up the (6) SWORD OF THE SPIRIT which is YOUR WORD. This is my only offensive piece of equipment, but it is also defensive so that when Satan attacks me, I am armed and ready to ward off all his arrows. The victory has ultimately been won. I march today under that great banner of victory, washed by the blood, armed with the Word, dressed in the armor of righteousness, believing and thanking You for what You are going to do. Lord, I pray this day that I may recognize who the enemy is and claim VICTORY as I am properly dressed to face every challenge by Your causative, overcoming power. In Jesus’ name. Amen. Ephesians 6:10-18.”

I encourage you, daily, to pray it for yourself. Or, do what I do and replace the “I’s” with “We’s” and pray it on behalf of your family, friends, brothers in Christ, etc ...

Being properly prepared allows us to experience fully and recognize God’s providence in all of the things that will happen while on the road. Rain, while difficult to drive in, fosters a rainbow when it’s finished. And detours, while usually inconvenient and annoying, can reveal a much preferable route with breathtaking scenery, unforgettable experiences, or both. Besides, how boring would it be if all our travels were filled with blue skies, warm winds, open roads, and no speed traps? Until next time ... Keep it real. **PS**

Jeff Searcy is an outspoken and highly motivated servant of the Almighty, a husband, father of two boys, a very animated and half-way decent speaker, and an average golfer. For more information, visit www.jeffsearcy.net.

