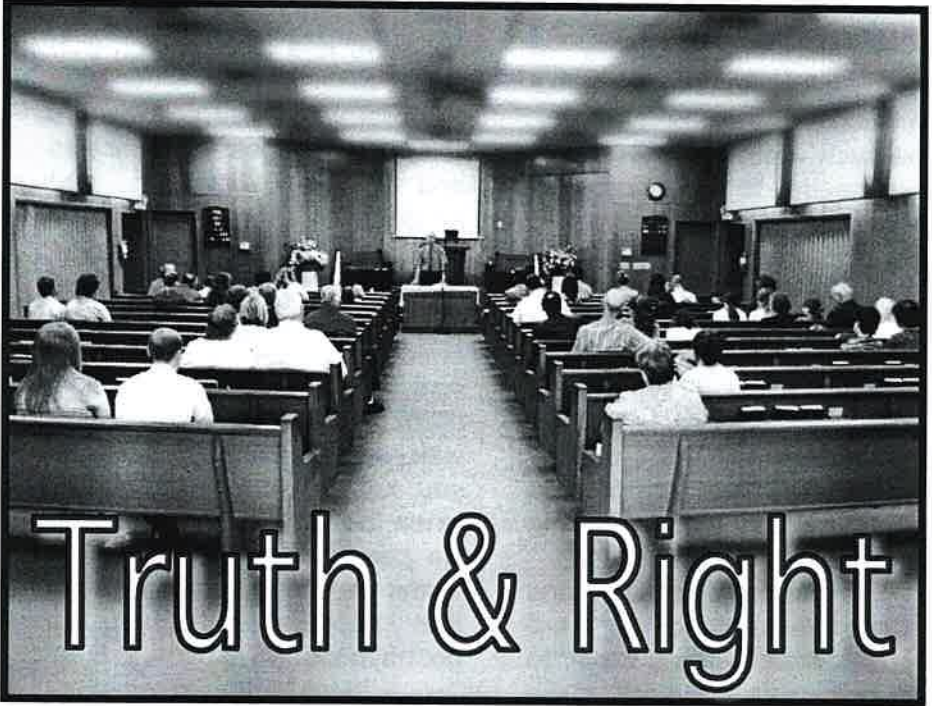


In search of...



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As You Travel...

Perhaps this year your home will serve as a hub, a central location for others to move towards. But perhaps not. Many of us will be traveling this week, and some will be traveling again in a months' time or so. As such, there is a lot for us to think about, including any number of the following: how long we can be gone from our jobs, how many clothes we need to pack, whether the car has good enough tires or enough gas in the tank or is in need of an oil change, etc. You

get the picture. Making journeys over a long distance is nothing new to any of us and, let's face it, is much easier for us today with all our technologies and creature comforts than it was for generations past. Still, yearly trips can potentially be cause for stress and SHOULD be cause for us to stop and reflect. Whether the journey is long or short, and whether the destination is near or far, why are you going, and what are you taking with you?

These questions, along

with many other important decisions & actions, must be made beforehand; after you've already left is no time to realize you don't know the answers. One such vital matter a child of God needs to take care of before getting under way is to pray. "For now we live, if you are standing fast in the Lord. For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you, for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God, as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith?"

Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints." (1 Thess. 3:8-13)

As with all things, pray. Pray for safe travel. Pray that the weather be good. Pray that you will return safely. Is going before God the Father on your checklist of things to do before departure?

Secondly, before you leave, consider this: is there a congregation of believers where you are going? Maybe you will only be gone for a couple days, or maybe it will be for weeks or

longer. Either way, have you investigated as to whether or not there is a local church with which to visit? Consider how you feel when you see visitors in our assemblies. It is nice to see new faces, and encouraging that others are interested in spiritual things. Now, wouldn't you want to bring that same kind of encouragement to others? And, while I'm on the subject, is there any reason NOT to visit with a sound congregation if you know you will be nearby when they are having services? Be careful that you do not let Satan convince you that it is not that important or that you will not have time!

"This is the reason why I have so often been hindered from coming to you. But now, since I no longer have any room for work in these regions, and since I have longed for many years to come to you, I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain, and to be helped on my journey there by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a while." (Rom. 15:22-24)

This week those of us who will be traveling know why: for Thanksgiving. But just saying that is too simple, as we are all well aware, because there is more to it than just a word. We go to see family, to share love and laughter, and to enjoy good food. It's a rarity

that people are able to come together and just enjoy that time in being thankful for all their shared blessings. There is an example in Scripture of the love families share and the emotion of seeing each other in Genesis 46:26-30.

"All the persons belonging to Jacob who came into Egypt, who were his own descendants, not including Jacob's sons' wives, were sixty-six persons in all. And the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt, were two. All the persons of the house of Jacob who came into Egypt were seventy.

He had sent Judah ahead of him to Joseph to show the way before him in Goshen, and they came into the land of Goshen. Then Joseph prepared his chariot and went up to meet Israel his father in Goshen. He presented himself to him and fell on his neck and wept on his neck a good while. Israel said to Joseph, 'Now let me die, since I have seen your face and know that you are still alive.'"

One last thing to consider: when you travel, be it this week or not, do you change anything about yourself? Many do. Leaving your usual town, job, school, etc. means that the people you'll see on the road do not know you. So if you want to come across as someone with a different image or reputation,

traveling could be your chance. But that is not what a Christian should do, no matter the circumstances. Whether at home or away, we need to be consistent, letting "our yes be yes and our no be no." Also do not be deceived that how you act on trips has no relevance to the rest of your everyday life. What happens in Vegas, as the saying goes, does NOT stay in Vegas. It stays with you.

"All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Cor. 5:18-21)

May God be with you as you travel!

Jarred Currence

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Thursday evening some of us got together to visit Ann Rudolph, and she and her son Robert were happy to open up their home to us, so we had the opportunity to visit with them and sing hymns of praise. Ann was so pleased to have so many visitors, and it was an encouragement to all to sing with her about God and his blessings. If you have not recently visited someone who is older or sick, I recommend you do so soon. You will not regret it. Hopefully we will always take advantage of opportunities to praise God in song!

