



Fresh Hope for Weary Travelers

My husband proposed a brilliant idea a month before he was scheduled to attend a work-related conference in San Diego. "Let's combine the business trip with a family vacation," he said. I jumped on it and came up with a plan.

We borrowed my in-laws' teeny-tiny RV, loaded our three kids and a few essentials, and rumbled off the driveway on a Friday late afternoon. Five blocks from home, we stopped at the bank to take care of business before leaving town. That's when a pipsqueak voice from the back of the vehicle said, "Are we almost there?" Hubby and I burst into nervous laughter. *Are we almost there?* Twelve hundred miles lay between us and our destination.

We covered nearly half the distance by driving through the night as the kids slept. But then dawn came. The children woke bright-eyed and ready for adventure. Hubby and I greeted the day with droopy eyelids and tired neck muscles. As the sun rose, so did the temperature. That's when the air conditioner died.

Our family stopped at a friend's house hoping for a short rest and for respite from the heat, but she had prepared to show us a local market where her daughter worked. We didn't have the heart to dampen her enthusiasm.

Hubby and I felt bone-weary less than twenty-four hours into our trip, but we pressed on. We had to reach San Diego the night before the conference began, but more importantly, holiday fun awaited. The hope of creating unforgettable family memories gave us the motivation needed to endure several hundred hot miles more.

The perseverance we mustered was worth every minute. When my husband wasn't in meetings, our family spent time playing in the surf and on sandy beaches. We viewed animals and reptiles at the zoo. We pet the stingrays and got soaked in the splash zone at SeaWorld. We created memories that will last a lifetime, and for that opportunity I am forever grateful.

Sometimes life feels like a long journey, doesn't it? The past two years with their many global, national, and personal challenges have left us feeling like weary travelers.

In the midst of negative news headlines and life's twists and turns and unexpected detours or delays, we may be tempted to ask, "Are we almost there?" Our souls long for rest and for respite from conflicts within and without. Those desires may go unmet, but we press on because we know heaven awaits.

Someday, in God's good time, we'll reach heaven where we'll experience peace and beauty beyond our wildest imagination. Hardships will end. Pain will be a thing of the past. Relationship conflicts and war and death will be no more. Jesus will wipe away every tear and heal our wounded hearts.

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In the meantime, let's persevere by maintaining the apostle Paul's perspective: *"For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever"* (2 Corinthians 4:17-18 NLT).

The journey here feels long and we feel weary, but the hope of heaven will never disappoint. The joy to come will last for eternity. For that we can be forever grateful.

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