

Sample Devotional from HOME, HOPE, AND HOLIDAYS: WINTER DEVOTIONALS

Making Memories

The last few days, I've talked about our vacation in San Antonio and our trip to Fredericksburg. The whole trip was beset by problems to the point that our catchphrase became "making memories." In other words, the only positive thing we could say was that the trip was unforgettable.

The phrase "making memories" represented our determination to make the best of each experience, whether good, bad or ugly. When I got us stuck in Fredericksburg, Wesley and the boys could have been furious with me. Instead, they offered grace and forgave my mistake. We could have been angry with God for not sending a ride home and letting our credit card get declined. Instead, we thanked him for the nearby hotel and a back-up credit card. We could have sulked over the convenience store food we had to eat for dinner. Instead, we thanked God for providing a convenience store that was still open. We could have grumbled at having to sleep in a ratty hotel in Fredericksburg while simultaneously paying for a nice condo in San Antonio. Instead, we were thankful that we found a room at all. We could have complained about the disgusting brown bathtub. Instead, we laughed and committed to solidarity in skipping showers. We could have spent the night bemoaning our misfortune. Instead, we ate gas station popcorn, watched a movie on the tiny TV, and relished our time together. What started out as a disaster has now turned into one of our fondest memories.

Before I close the San Antonio saga, let me share one more noteworthy memory. On the final evening of our trip, we wanted ice cream after dinner. Through an internet search, we located a shop within walking distance and plugged the address into the phone GPS

The temperature was becoming uncomfortably cold, but we decided to walk since the shop was nearby. As we walked, however, the streets became darker and more deserted, and the ice cream shop didn't seem to be getting any closer. We soon realized that the GPS had malfunctioned and led us to an unsavory part of town. Even worse, we were completely lost. As we walked down a dark street full of boarded up tenements, I shakily laughed and said "making memories." From a nearby dark alley, we heard a slurred male voice repeat "making memories." In near hysterical laughter, we increased our pace to a jog and prayed that no one was chasing us.

A few minutes later, Abel slowed down for a conversation with a new friend. We hadn't even realized he had stopped until we were across the street from Abel and his "friend." We furiously waved for him to cut off the conversation and catch up. Abel, refusing to join us, yelled across the street, "She just needs a dollar." Suffice to say, Wesley grabbed our son and we quickly left the scene. Thankfully, we soon made it back to civilization. Despite our mishap, we emerged unscathed, and we did indeed make lots of memories.

Although some of our memories were scary, we made the best of a rough vacation and we can now laugh about it freely. The Apostle Paul also understood how to be content in the



face of difficulties and disappointments. In Philippians 4, Paul explains:

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. . . . I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.

Philippians 4:6–7, 12–13

When our lives are rooted in prayer, gratitude, and faith, our minds can remain at peace in any circumstance. Because our hearts are full of his love, frustration, anger, and fear have no room to take root.

Lord, Grow my faith and shrink my fear. Fill my heart with peace so great that worry has no room to grow. Help me see the best in every situation rather than seeing only the negative. When I encounter difficult situations, help me remember to pray, give thanks, and trust in your strength. In Jesus' name, Amen

Personal Reflection

Review the strategies for living in peace and contentment from the last two days. Choose one to practice throughout your day today.

