

Are We There Yet? (No!)

Joe Slater

I've never watched "The Simpsons." I have a low tolerance for the obnoxious, and just the ads tell me to move on. One ad stuck with me in particular. The father was taking the family somewhere in the car. Bart asked, "Are we there yet?" A split second after the dad said "no," Bart asked again, "Are we there yet?" Annoyed, the dad responded, "No!" Repeat endlessly. See what I mean about being obnoxious?

Think of your life as a Christian in terms of a journey. Destination: your Father's house. Are you there yet? No!

Paul knew he wasn't there yet. *"Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus also has laid hold of me"* (Philippians 3:12). Jesus had "laid hold" of Paul to save him and, eventually, take Him to heaven. If you're a Christian, the same is true for you.

But since we're not there yet, we must be like Paul: *"press on!"* Hear him again in 3:14 – *"I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."*

During the time we've been Christians, we ought to have made some progress on our journey. Shall we, then, coast along in self-satisfaction as though we have arrived? May it never be! To the contrary, we must continue on that right path. *"To the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule"* (3:16).

Are we there yet? No!

Press on!

Flexibility

Flexibility is part of successfully living the Christian life in many ways.

Repentance demands flexibility. Not every lost soul can be approached or taught the same way. There is but one gospel that can save, but how that gospel is conveyed can and must vary. Paul said, *"I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some"* (1 Corinthians 9:22). That was flexibility. Jesus demonstrated a mastery of flexibility. Top a woman who came to a well to draw water, He spoke of living water (John 4:7-13). To a Jewish ruler, He spoke of being born again (John 3:1-3).

Living like Christ demands flexibility. Paul tells us to have the mind (attitude) of Christ just after encouraging us to regard one another as more important than ourselves (Philippians 2:3-5). Insisting on having my needs met, or having things done my way, is neither flexible nor Christ-like.

Marriage demands flexibility. Husbands are instructed to live with their wives in an understanding way (1 Peter 3:7), and wives are instructed to be in submission to their husbands (Ephesians 5:22). Successful marriages include much flexibility.

Someone observed that the same wind can topple a large tree while leaving a sapling virtually unscathed. Why? It has a great deal to do with flexibility.

Though it may not be a direct Biblical quote, it certainly reflects a Biblical principle: "Blessed are the flexible!"

--David Deffenbaugh (via *Voice of Truth International*)

THE PATH OF LEAST RESISTANCE

"... that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that you may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man..." (Ephesians 3:16, 17).

The Continental Divide is the line that follows the highest peaks of mountains from Alaska to the tip of South America. In North America, the line travels the contour of the Rocky Mountains. On the east side of the Rockies, rivers and streams flow east. On the west side of the Rockies, rivers and streams flow west.

To those of us who grew up on the east side of the Rockies, the rivers and streams on the west side are flowing backwards. It is a strange sight. The reason for the direction of water flow, of course, is that the water follows the path of least resistance. It flows downhill.

God designed the Earth this way, but He did not design His people to follow the path of least resistance. Our Father wants us to be strong. We should have Christ in our hearts so we are rooted and grounded in His love. When we are grounded in the love of Christ, we are strong to do His will. We're a mighty warrior in the battle against Satan. Filled with God's Word, we carry the shield of faith to quench Satan's fiery darts. Our feet will be shod with the gospel of peace and we will wear the breastplate of righteousness.

Clad with the whole armor of God, we are ready to fight against the spiritual hosts of wickedness and the rulers of darkness in this world. We won't be following the path of least resistance and giving in to Satan's temptations. We'll be fighting them with the strength of God's might.

--Donna Wittlif (Denver, CO)