

## Keep the Fires Burning

My wife and I were driving on the highway doing about 85 miles per hour. All of a sudden I saw break lights ahead and a major traffic jam. As we closed in on the pile up of cars I realized that what I had thought to be a traffic jam was a terrible accident. The timing was dreadful because just as we were able to see what was going on they were pulling a dead body from the wreckage. It was something I will never forget. It impacted me so much that after we made it through the accident, let's just say I wasn't driving 85. I dropped at least 20 miles per hour. I was far more cautious and attentive. Our conversation took on a whole new tone. There was something that I noticed though. The farther removed I got from the lights, the sirens, the bodies, the more I lightened up. Not only that, I sped up! Why? Maybe my memory is bad. Maybe I was already thinking of something else. Maybe I let the experience slip away!

So what do traffic accidents, high impact conference experiences, and short-term mission trips all have in common? All are incredible, life changing experiences. But the farther away you get from them, the easier it is to slip back into casual, normal Christian life. Why is this? How can we walk away from some of the most unique times in our Christian journey and within a month only have a photo album to show for it? Well, it is probably true that we all have a little bit of a bad memory and have a little bit more of a busy schedule. May I make a few suggestions that have helped me along the way?

Get Educated: For me, I know I was pretty behind on anything dealing with missions. Even though I had been involved in ministry and had been to my share of conferences, I could not tell you what God was doing in the world, where the least reached people groups were, or even how to find out the answers to those questions. One of the reasons it is so easy to lose sight of things learned at conferences or trips is because we don't have the resources to fuel the passion that is begun there. We have the world at our fingertips!! We need to start accessing information and becoming professionals at knowing the needs of the world. One of those resources is God's Word. It's the best place to find His heart. Other easily accessed resources include magazines and websites. I know first hand all the things that are competing for your time and energy, but make it a priority to pursue to understand the task remaining. Don't let the needs around us drown what God has begun.

Find Christians who care: You need fellowship. It is almost impossible to come home from your "mountain-top" and survive alone. You may be the only one with new convictions. You may be the only person who cares about the world and about making a change. One of the biggest reasons that you might find yourself cold, is because there are few like minded people to kindle that flame. Your parents have a plan for you, our culture has a plan for you, hey, even your own heart has a tendency to lead you down the selfish path! If you don't find accountability in other world Christians, you will find yourself sidelined rather quickly. Maybe you know of a handful, maybe you know of one. Start a small group or prayer group that you would feel comfortable enough to honestly share and pray with. This will help you keep the vision fresh and stirred.

Find Christians who don't care: This one is easy on one hand because they are easy to come by. It is difficult on the other hand because you will be challenged to defend your beliefs. Two things will most likely happen. First, you will become so frustrated with their lack of concern and it will solidify your conviction even more. Second, you will gain renewed compassion as you continue to be forced to look back to God as you seek to explain His heart. Just as you, through a mission trip, a conference, or a retreat had a vision passed on to you, so it is your turn to pass it on. In the process you will have your heart strengthened in your own vision.

Getting a passionate, excited heart for God and for His mission sounds hard. Its not. Staying that way, however, is one of the hardest things you will do in your journey in Christ. If you will pursue to know more and to fuel your passion with resources, like-minded people and people you can minister to, Christ will be faithful to conform you into His own image. And His steadfast heart for the world will become your own.

Christ will have won a huge victory, when He has won all of you.

Source: The Traveling Team

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