

The Journey and the Destination

by Bethany Notgrass

We assume that starting a journey means knowing the destination. We study the map, we ask for directions, we figure out how long it will take to get there and how many food and bathroom stops we'll need to make in between. I have never asked anyone where he or she is headed on a trip and heard, "I don't know. I'm just goin'."

Each of our lives is one whole journey made up of smaller journeys from one place, time, and chapter to the next. Sometimes we can tell when a new journey is starting and sometimes we can't. Sometimes we see the end of a journey coming and sometimes we don't. Unlike physical journeys from your house to the beach, to your grandparents', or to the campground, we don't always know our exact destination.

We human beings have a tendency to think that our lives will unfold according to a script that we have written for ourselves. We have certain expectations and goals and think that if we keep at it and work hard enough, and everyone else cooperates, we'll get there.

When I graduated from high school ten years ago, I had what I thought was a pretty good script written out for myself (not literally; it was all in my head). I was pretty confident of whom I was going to marry and had a pretty clear idea of when that would happen. I expected to have children pretty soon after that and get going on my dreams.

My script had to be scrapped. Nothing turned out the way I was planning back then. With each passing day and year, each passing difficulty and disappointment, each new challenge and responsibility, each new opportunity and relationship, I had to let go of my script and accept God's. I haven't always had a good attitude about that or a spirit of trust. Giving up my script--not only the whats but the whens as well--was really hard. I knew I was setting out on a journey and I was full of hope, but in my head I had the destination all wrong.

Now that I can look back, I can see all the ways and times that God's script was just plain better. Better for me, better for my family, better for my friends, better for His kingdom. That was really hard to see in the midst of the dark woods, lightning storm, desert, or even the fertile valley. God sees what we can't: the entire journey, from be-

ginning to end. He asks us to trust Him with what He knows and we don't and to let Him write the script.

There are times in our lives when we make big decisions about the direction we will go. Followers of Jesus know that we should pray, seek wise counsel, and pay close attention to how God is leading to find the right path. We at last come to the point of decision and strike out into the consequences, for better or for worse. Sometimes we arrive right where we set out to be and everything is clear and we're smiling and confident. But the reality is that more often it doesn't turn out the way we thought it would. "But I thought I was doing the will of God," we say to ourselves. "How could it have turned out this way? It is so different from how it was supposed to be! Now I don't even know where I am."

But maybe you were on the right path. Maybe what you were doing was just exactly the will of God. Maybe you did make the right decision. Sometimes a road leads to a place very different from where we thought it was heading. Maybe the destination wasn't the important thing all along; maybe it was the journey itself.

Not all our decisions are right. Sometimes we do set out on the wrong road. Amazingly, though, God has grace for that and keeps working with us. I haven't done everything right. I have made some wrong decisions and I have regrets, but I can see how God has stuck by me and kept me from wandering away from Him through my journeys. Things are so different from what I wanted, planned, and expected. And, really, it's a very good thing. I'm thankful to be living God's script and not my own. I confess, though, that I have not always lived out His script with a sense of gratitude and a trusting spirit of adventure, "Where is he taking me?"

God really does more than we can ask or imagine. His ideas are much better than ours. "Where are we going, God?" Most times, He answers, "You will find out when we get there!" I pray for grace to keep running on the right path and for faith to leave the destination in His loving hands.



about this issue

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about the editors

Editor:

Bethany Notgrass

Assistant Editor:

Mev Notgrass

Contributing Editors:

Annalisa Perry

Amy Puetz

Rachel Starr Thomson

about amie

amie is the monthly newsletter of the **amie** network for Christian homeschooled teenage girls.

web site:

www.notgrass.com/amie

mailing address:

amie network

370 S. Lowe Ave.

Ste. A

PMB 211

Cookeville TN 38501

e-mail:

bethany@notgrass.com

Let us
consider
how to
stimulate
one another
to love
and good
deeds.

Hebrews 10:24

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Long Live Freedom!

by Amy Puetz

The Story of Elizabeth Lewis

Since the beginning of time the desire to be free has burned deep in the hearts of mankind! After thousands of years of human history a few brave men conceived a document that would secure the liberty for which they longed. Wisely, these men based this document, the Declaration of Independence, on the God-given truths found in the Bible. The signers pledged their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor to the cause of freedom. They gave us the gift of self-government. Many of the signers and their families paid dearly for their vow to independence. A good example of this is the story of Francis and Elizabeth Lewis of New York. The suffering and hardships endured by the Lewis family during the Revolutionary War should be remembered by those who love liberty!

Born in Wales, Francis Lewis was orphaned at a young age. Raising the youngster was left to a maiden aunt, who provided him with a very thorough education. When he came of age he invested his money in merchandise and effectively set up trade in New York City. He formed a partnership with Mr. Edward Annesley who had a lovely sister named Elizabeth. After a couple of years, Francis and Elizabeth were married. In 1754, the French and Indian War broke out, and Francis was captured by the French at Fort Oswego while trading supplies with the British. The French handed some of the prisoners over to the Indians. Strangely, Francis could converse with the Indians. He had a thorough knowledge of the Gaelic language and found the Indians' tongue very similar. Returning him to the British, the Indians asked that he be released. Instead, the English sent him to France where he was later exchanged. The war was over! England had won! Peace returned! As a reward for his service, the British crown gave him 5000 acres of land. Francis moved his wife and children, Francis, Jr., Morgan, and Ann to his estate on Long Island, New York.

Onto the peaceful domestic life of the Lewis family erupted the Revolutionary War. Francis was elected as the representative from New York to the first Continental Congress. Bravely he was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. In a tactical move to destroy the leaders of the Revolution before it became uncontrollable, King George III put a price on the heads of the patriot leaders. During the Battle of Long Island, God protected George Washington and his troops by allowing them to escape total annihilation by the English. After

the battle, the British controlled Long Island and they were given orders "to seize the lady [Mrs. Lewis] and destroy the property." Led by Captain Birtch, a troop of light horse soldiers quickly went to carry out the command. As they approached the front of the house, a man of war moved toward the house from the water, and the latter opened fire. Nobly, Mrs. Lewis watched from the window. The shot nearly hit the spot where she was standing. A servant frantically cried, "Run, Mistress, run!" to which she replied, "Another shot is not likely to strike the same spot," and she remained in the same position. The soldiers entered the house like outlaw bandits, and she met them with the calm dignity of a queen. The British then began a cruel pillaging of the house as they destroyed the large library that Francis had collected along with many fine portraits. One soldier went to tear the buckles off Elizabeth's shoes thinking they were gold but turned away in disgust when he found they were only pinchbeck, which is made of copper and zinc. Wisely, Mrs. Lewis responded to the disappointed soldier, "All is not gold that glitters." After the destruction of the house the English departed, taking Elizabeth with them. Harshly they threw her into a prison in New York City. Deprived of a bed and extra clothing and given only scant amounts of coarse food, Elizabeth lingered in the cell for several months.

At long last, a ray of hope began to glimmer in her dark and foreboding future. A faithful Negro servant contrived to send her some clothing, paper, and food. He was even able to smuggle some letters she had written to her friends, which was no easy task because New York City was under martial law. Congress learned of her condition and worked feverishly to get her released, but because of her wealth and position the British were determined to make an example of her. Hearing of her inhumane captivity, George Washington ordered the arrest of Mrs. Barren, wife of the British Paymaster-General and Mrs. Kempe, wife of the Attorney-General of Pennsylvania at their homes in Philadelphia. Washington boldly sent a message to the British stating that unless Mrs. Lewis received better treatment, Mrs. Barren and Mrs. Kempe would be subject to the same conditions. The intimidation achieved the desired effect and an exchange was arranged. Mrs. Lewis was freed but was not allowed to leave the city.

continued on page 5

We Have Seen His Glory

a study of the book of John, part 7

1. Read John 10:1-6. How can we come to know Jesus' voice?
2. Read John 10:7- 21. What does it mean that Jesus is the door and we are to enter through Him?
3. Read John 10:22-42. What are the reasons that you believe that Jesus really is the Christ, the Son of God?
4. Read John 11:1-4. How is God glorified when Jesus is glorified?
5. Read John 11:5-28. What do Martha's words reveal about what she was thinking and feeling, and where her faith was?
6. Read John 11:29-40. How was God glorified in this situation even before Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead?
7. Read John 11:41-44. Think about what it would really be like to see this happen, and then describe it.
8. Read John 11:45-57. Why do you think people react so differently to Jesus and to what He does?

*My sheep hear My voice, and I know them,
and they follow me. John 10:27*



Brain Bender Answers:

1. Afghanistan
2. Argentina

3. Belize
4. Liberia
5. Romania

6. Switzerland
7. Indonesia
8. Canada

9. Madagascar
10. Finland

Letters from Rachel Starr Thomson

Beauty

Have you ever heard of speed dating? I read an article about it in a Christian magazine recently. Participants sign up for a speed dating event, held at a location near you. They gather in a meeting room and form their chairs in two circles—inner circle for the women, outer circle for the men. Each participant has a card with the other participants' names, with appropriate boxes to check for how highly you rate each person.

A supervisor with a stopwatch gets the night going. For a few seconds, each female participant speaks with a male participant. Just as the conversation gets going, the buzzer goes and the men move one place to the right—once again, ready, set, date.

There was a time when most girls believed in true love and eternal commitment—or if they didn't, at least we thought they should. The world was full of young romantics, sashaying around the kitchen humming "Someday My Prince Will Come." And while most of those young romantics were never exactly carried away by a knight in shining armor, at least they had an ideal to believe in.

Nowadays, that innocent belief in romance and true love has been replaced by yet another episode of "The Bachelor." We date the way we shop for shoes, trying each new person on to see what criteria they meet—are they comfortable? The right color? Could I wear that with anything else in my closet? And most important—do they make me look good?

Some young people still believe in true love, albeit a skewered version of it. But the culture at large has taken romance, which for generations has been the most beautiful thing we knew, and sucked all the beauty out of it. Mystery is gone, replaced by immodesty. Faithfulness is gone, replaced by a credo that says we should only stay with someone as long as they make us happy.

The bottom line: romance, as presented by our culture, used to be beautiful. It isn't anymore.

This is not the only area of life that has suffered from a stripping-down of beauty. There was a time when family life was beautiful. Call to mind a scene from *Little House On the Prairie*. The Ingalls family sits around the fire at Christmas-time, stockings hung with care, snow blowing past the windows outside. It's a cold night, but it doesn't matter; there's love in the room, and that is beautiful; and when you're surrounded by such beauty, who cares what the weather's like outside?

Now call to mind a scene from "Married With Children." "The Simpsons." "Eight Simple Rules." "Seventh Heaven," even. 'Nuff said. Whatever happened to beauty in our daily lives?

And then there are the artists: the singers, dancers, poets, painters, writers, and composers who once made it their business to make the whole world open their eyes to the beauty around them. There are still artists who present beauty in their work. But there are many more who seem concerned only with ugliness, with presenting jarring, bitter truths or twisted imaginations.

I am a writer; I spend five to six hours every day writing and reading. As a child I was drawn to reading because it opened up whole new worlds, and in those worlds there was beauty and won-

der. Narnia and Middle-earth took my breath away. I rode on the back of George MacDonald's North Wind. I loved the silky darkness of an Indian night in Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Books*. I loved to watch as time after time, the good guys defeated the bad ones.

But now? It grows harder and harder to find that kind of beauty in books. So many people use their creativity to create horrid things, disgusting things, jarring things; and more times than not, it's hard to tell the good guys from the bad.

All of this is simply to say that the world has changed, and not for the better. There is a dearth of beauty in the world, and it is a tragic loss.

It's easy enough to see the cause of it. God is the original of Beauty, and our culture has moved away from Him. The farther they go, the more warped their creations become. Instead of working as God works, to create that which is beautiful, wise, and good; they work as Satan does—twisting and perverting that which God has done. As the world grows uglier, it is imperative that we as Christians pray the prayer of Moses: "And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it." (Psalm 90:17 KJV)

In our lives, let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us. In our families, in our friendships, in our romances and our marriages. In our art, let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us. In our work. In our very souls.

The call of our time is to stand up in sharp contrast to the darkening world around, to shine a light into gross darkness: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee." (Isaiah 60:1-2 KJV)

I have seen beauty in dark places. I've seen it in the face of a wife and mother who gives and gives and gives for her children, who walks by her husband even when the road is mired in difficulty. I've seen it in young women who have kept themselves apart from the dating game, who have waited—and what a hard thing waiting can be!—until their prince came at last. I've seen it in the young men who have struggled to become worthy of a princess. I've seen it in my friends when they've clung to God through times of hurt and confusion. I've seen it at night, lying in bed, as I think back on my life and the people in it, and I think on the God who brought me this far. I've seen it in arms stretched out on a cross, in a scarred face, in the bloody footsteps of the Master.

Become a student of the Beautiful. Do beauty, think it, sing it, pray it. Stand against the tide of ugliness.

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8 KJV).

Rachel Starr Thomson is the oldest of twelve children, a homeschool graduate, and the author of several books including the fantasy *Worlds Unseen* and its sequel *Burning Light*, *Tales of the Heartily Homeschooled*, *Letters to a Samuel Generation*, and *Heart to Heart: Meeting With God in the Lord's Prayer*. She is a believer in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and hope of the world, and she loves to write about His goodness and grace. Rachel loves long walks, good books, and the fellowship of God's people. She is an incurable tea-drinker and a counter-culture revolutionary who thinks life would be far, far better if we all chucked our television sets out the window. Visit www.rachelstarrthomson.com

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BRAIN BENDER

What do you think?

Independence Day

We the people of the United States of America are not the only ones that have an Independence Day! We've listed the day of independence and some clues. Can you figure them out? Answers are on page 2.

1. August 19, 1919 _____

This country is surrounded by several other "stans" in the Middle East. It was taken over by a regime known as the Taliban in 1996.

2. July 9, 1816 _____

This country declared its independence from Spain. It is way down south in southern South America. Its capital city, Buenos Aires, and its suburbs are home to about 13 million people, one-third of the country's total population.

3. September 21, 1981 _____

This tiny country is wedged in between Mexico and Guatemala. It exports cane sugar, bananas, and citrus fruits, though tourism is the most important sector of its economy.

4. July 26, 1847 _____

This West African country declared independence from the United States. It was begun in 1822 as a settlement for former slaves from the US. Its capital city, Monrovia, is named for US President James Monroe.

5. May 9, 1877 _____

This European country joined with the Allies in WWI and the Axis powers in WWII. It is near Ukraine and Hungary. It has a significant population of Roma, or gypsy people.

6. August 1, 1291 _____

Definitely one of the world's oldest countries, this mountainous place is famous for banks, cheese, and not taking sides in wars.

7. August 17, 1945 _____

This country is made of more islands than people have been able to count: in the neighborhood of 13,700. It is the world's 3rd largest democracy and, surprisingly, has the highest Muslim population. It is a neighbor to Malaysia and Papua New Guinea.

8. July 1, 1867 _____

This country's largest population sectors are people of British and French origin, and has two matching official languages: English and French. It is an enormous country, but only about 4.5% of its land is arable.

9. June 26, 1960 _____

This island African nation is in the Indian Ocean. It is the 4th largest island in the world. It was a French colony from 1896 to 1960. It has three official languages: English, French, and Malagasy.

10. December 6, 1917 _____

This country spent many centuries under Swedish rule, then one more under Russian rule before becoming independent. This was the only Scandinavian country to join the European Union when it began in January 1999. Its population is over 93% of the same ethnicity (if we told you what it was, then we would give away the name of the country!).

Long Live Freedom!

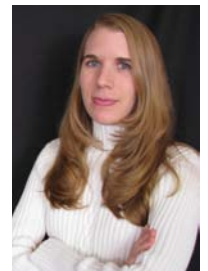
continued from page 2

Sadly, the Negro servant who had been instrumental in getting her released became ill and died. After a while Elizabeth was allowed to join her husband in Philadelphia. Her months of suffering and harsh treatment had greatly affected Mrs. Lewis' already fragile health. Bravely she faced death. Diligence, determination, and dependability were the noble gems that graced her eternal crown. Slowly she sank into the grave. Thus the life of the Lewis family was forever changed.

Mr. Lewis was not completely alone, however; he had his three children. Although seven children had been born to the Lewis family, only three survived childhood. Their oldest son, Francis Lewis, Jr., married the daughter of a Tory family. Her parents opposed the marriage, saying his father was sure to be hung. Shortly before Mrs. Lewis died, Morgan Lewis, their other son, brought his intended, Gertrude Livingston, to meet his mother. Morgan and Gertrude were married in 1779; he went on to become the governor of New York in 1804. When the Lewis's daughter, Ann, fell in love with a captain in the British navy named Captain Robertson, her father refused to give his consent to their union and they married secretly. Soon after their marriage, they went to England and Mr. Lewis and his daughter never saw each other again. After Captain Robertson's death his widow was annually sent an amount of money anonymously. The source of the money was not discovered until Queen Charlotte, the wife of George III, died. She is reported to have said she did not want the wife of so brave a sailor to suffer loss. Ann's daughters all married respectable and honorable men. Mr. and Mrs. Lewis' greatest legacy was their children.

Elizabeth Lewis was a living example of true bravery. Although she was not a soldier or a spy, she was a victim for the cause of independence. Enduring inhumane treatment and deprivation, she demonstrated her commitment to freedom and she never regretted her husband's actions for freedom. Liberty and freedom burned deep in her heart! Inwardly she longed for her children and grandchildren to be free. Her name may not have appeared on the Declaration of Independence, but she was the heart behind the hand of Francis Lewis, one of the men who signed a document that secured our freedom. Their sacrifice is our heritage. Freedom is not free; someone had to pay the price. May we embrace and keep alive the ideals for which so many died. LONG LIVE FREEDOM!

Amy Puetz, a homeschool graduate, loves history, sewing, and working as a graphic designer for her company A to Z Designs. She is the author of an e-book series for young ladies called *Heroines of the Past* as well as a growing number of historical books. Visit her website at www.amypuetz.com to see many resources relating to history. Join her mailing list and



Wings of Hope the amie Writing Contest

Thank you to all entrants. Watch for the winning entry in the September newsletter!

A Message from My Heart

Interviews with women of God

by Annalisa Perry

A Talk with Danielle

Danielle lives in Texas with her husband, Ken, and her three children, Sam, David, and Sophie.

What draws you closer to God?

I am drawn closer to God when I look back and see my answered prayers. God answers prayers in His own time-frame and the way He knows is best, though it's not always what I want to hear.

Sometimes parents put their children off: "I'll talk about that later; right now is not a good time." God says, "I'm listening and I'll give you an answer; I promise." He is faithful and He always answers.

Something else that draws me closer is prayer journaling my conversations with God. I have four parts: adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication. Adoration is acknowledging whom I'm talking to. I confess who I am and what I have done. With thanksgiving, I thank Him for his blessings, and with supplication, I remember who is in control.

When building your relationship with God, it's important to be accountable to someone. A friend and I wanted a structured prayer time so we read through the Bible at the same time, beginning in the Psalms. At the end of the week we would send each other a postcard with a verse that had impacted us that week. We did that for several years and became very close friends. If I know that someone else is having prayer time and counting on me, I will force myself to work it into my schedule.

Jesus always sent out two together. When there are two, you have someone to hold you up and encourage you, bounce things off of and tell you, "We can do it."

Sometimes I feel frustrated at the people around me. When should I bring up the issue and when should I avoid conflict?

Satan often gets us to do things we regret by making us react to others. Here is a saying: When you react you often regret, when you are proactive (in how you respond) then you will be pleased. It's all about self-control. Remember how much patience God has with us.

When something is going on that I don't like, I need to give myself some time to think and give God some wiggle room to do what He wants to do. Most importantly, cover the situation with prayer and give it to God. I am to be first and foremost a Christian. Check my motives: is it really my job to bring this up? Are my reasons Christ-centered or selfish?

If it's with a person you do not see very often, let it go. If it will hinder a relationship with someone dear to you, you should address it, otherwise a lot of bitterness and resentment will build up. Sit down with the person and try to work it out. Remember: I am only responsible for the way I act. God can bring something good out of every situation.

How can I find out what my spiritual gifts are and best use them to serve God?

Allow God to put you in situations to serve. You will be stretched, but that's a good thing. Afterwards you may find out it wasn't so bad. To find your spiritual gift ask yourself, "What do I like to do?" Get in that area and be available for whatever God sends your way. Look for opportunities. If you like to look after children, volunteer in the children's class. If you like to write, write something for the church bulletin or start a newsletter for the youth group.

It doesn't have to be something big and complicated. I know a couple whose gift was hospitality. They often had people over to their small house for popcorn and water. (The man even grew the corn kernels himself.) We ate, played games, and sang together. Everyone had a great time and relationships were built. The spirit in which you serve will always surpass the details.

As we allow ourselves to be stretched and allow God to work through us, we will grow.

What puts you in a thankful mood?

There is a bird's nest on our porch. My husband and I watched the baby birds hatch and grow. While we were on a trip, the birds flew away. The next morning we went to look at the nest and the baby birds came back. They just flew around and had a good time.

God gives us simple reminders like that to be thankful, and if you don't see them you will be thankless. God is always watching over us; He is even concerned about the baby birds. We take so much for granted. If we look for the simple everyday events to be thankful for, He will show us the big ones.

I'm thankful to be able to get into a car that starts and has air conditioning. I'm thankful to sit down at the table with food and my family. I'm thankful to be able to see and hear and comprehend.

Look for the simple everyday reminders that God is who He is.

Annalisa is the eldest of eight children. She enjoys reading books, writing stories, talking to people, and spending quality time with her family. Annalisa and her family were missionaries in Germany for five years and now live in Arkansas. She enjoys homeschooling because it gives her independence and unique opportunities. She is in 11th grade. You can write Annalisa at annalisaperry@yahoo.com

