



June 2016

Vacations are something we all look forward to. Getting away from the routine of everyday life can renew your spirit and rest your mind... renewal and rest are essential and God wants them for us. That's why He designated a day every week specifically for rest. And, it is good to take more than just a day or two now and then when you get a chance.

God gave our family the opportunity to get away for two and a half weeks at the start of summer. We were all exhausted from a challenging school year, an even more challenging work year, and life circumstances that stretch us to our limit some days. We had decided late last year to save up for a road trip through the wide open spaces of the West – Utah, Wyoming, Colorado, and Idaho. These states are so incredibly different than what we are used to seeing here. The sky seems 10 times bigger, the land seems to stretch forever and the mountains are unbelievably huge.

Throughout our time away, we often talked about what God was teaching each of us. One thing that struck me was how God grows flowers EVERYWHERE. The middle of the desert, on the sides of sheer cliffs, popping up out of snow. I realized many of the flowers on this earth will never be seen by a human. Why would God do this?

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Psalm 19:1

For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Isaiah 55:12

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. Genesis 1:31

God creates beautiful things for his glory. He enjoys being a Creator. He is glorified by flowers and fields and animals and mountains, whether or not we humans ever see them. He is infinitely holy and deserves all the glory His creation can give. Yes, He wants us to enjoy creation also, but it is He who deserves all of the praise we and the rest of creation have to offer.

Our kids loved the adventure of getting to go and discover lots of great places that were unlike anything they had ever seen. We hiked some at every stop to try and experience as much as we could. One day the boys saw a cave far in the distance as we were driving and asked if we could go check it out. We were pretty hesitant because it looked really far away. But, they were persistent and we thought, why not. So we walked. And walked. And walked. It was hot. We were in the desert. We were in flip flops. But, we finally made it to the cave – it was massive and felt really cool after walking in the hot sun for a couple of miles. Then we saw that the inside was covered with rock drawings from an ancient Native American tribe. Our oldest son has always been fascinated by Native Americans, so he was especially excited about our discovery. As we were leaving, we had to walk through a little pond/puddle to get out. He was the last one to walk through the puddle and stepped on something sharp. It turned out to be an arrowhead.

We talked a lot about how God gave him this gift especially. He had told us numerous times in the past that he struggles to hear from God and longs to have interactions with him that he is sure of. This was a clear gift from God for a young man who needed something concrete to strengthen his faith. God doesn't have to give us things we can touch and see, but He does because He loves us more than we can fathom.

Another special moment for us was one Sunday morning in Grand Teton National Park. They hold church services at an outdoor amphitheater, so we went. It was so sweet to worship our awesome Father with brothers and sisters from all over the country while looking at stunning mountains and a crystal clear lake. We have a friend who has recently had a brain tumor removed and has a long road ahead with chemo and radiation. We asked the group at this outdoor church to pray for our friend and they were genuinely glad to pray for this guy they would never meet. They asked us to write down his name so they could continue to pray for him after that day.

We all came back home overwhelmed with thankfulness for our time away as a family. We had so many great conversations with each other and with strangers, and countless opportunities to give our Father glory for all He has made. We want to do those things wherever we are. His glory is all around us if we simply look for it. We can take a few minutes, a few hours, or a few days to break from our routine to marvel at our great God and give Him our praise. But, it's crucial that we do take a break from our normal work days, school days, housework days so that we can rest our souls and commune with God. He wants us to spend time with Him and enjoy rest, just as He did after He created our world and us.

“Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.”

Hebrews 13:16