

**Trekking to God**  
**Genesis 1:14-16; Psalm 8:3-5;**  
**Revelation 22:16; John 6:40**

So our theme for VBS this year is *Star Trek*. I have to admit, I got a little excited when I heard that. You see, I was 12 years old when the first episode ran on TV, and I quickly became a big fan.

Who could forget Captain Kirk, Mr. Spock, Dr. McCoy, Scottie, and Sulu? Funny, I don't remember the names of any of the women on the show, but I do remember them! Was it the women of Star Trek who introduced miniskirts to our culture?

I'm not sure, but there were lots of reasons my heart beat a little faster each week when I heard that theme song and these words:

***"Space, the final frontier. These are the voyages of the starship Enterprise. Its five-year mission: to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations, to boldly go where no man has gone before."***

Some of you are relating to this, right? Star TREK—now, the word **"trek"** means **"to travel or migrate, especially slowly or with difficulty."** That sounds more like what we did hiking the Appalachian Trail than what happened on the starship Enterprise. After all, THEY had warp speed!

But what I want you to see is that VBS is a kind of TREK, when you think about it. Its purpose is to help our children in their journey with God.

For some who have yet to find their way, it's their journey TO God. For those who are already on the journey, we're simply trekking along with them, hoping to help them and encourage them along.

It's not a fast trip, though. Faith is a life-long journey; and according to the "Captain's Log" today, we'll be traveling to several places in the Bible. I invite you to follow along as I read:

(First book of the Bible) **Genesis 1:14-16** **And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so. God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars.** (I don't remember them telling us THAT on *Star Trek*.)

(Middle of the Bible) **Psalm 8:3-5**

**When I consider your heavens,  
the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars,  
which you have set in place,**

**What is man that you are mindful of him,  
the son of man that you care for him?**

**You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings  
and crowned him with glory and honor.**

(Last book in Bible) **Revelation 22:16** "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star."

(One more verse) **John 6:40** "...My Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

So...Beam us up, Lord! Scottie is only make believe, after all. Jesus is the real deal, and He tells us that it's the Father's will that we look to Him and believe in Him and receive His gift of eternal life. And when the time comes, as it will someday for all of us, He promises to "beam us up"—or something like that.

Jesus is real, and the life He offers us is real. The invitation He extends to all of us is also real. The Lord tells us: "Believe it!"

Maybe in the kind of world we live in today—in a world where space truly is one of the few frontiers left--we have to be a bit more intentional about believing—more focused on making the decision TO believe. It doesn't seem that our world isn't making this any easier for us—or for our children.

There's a lot of cynicism about believing in God today. We choose to come together here, though, because we believe in God and we have a desire to be with fellow believers and to share what we believe with others. We want to help one another in our trek toward God—which is what we'll be doing this week in VBS.

Our wonderful Bible School Team tells me the focus for the week is "communication." This raises a question: what is it that we most need to communicate to our children? Well, here's my attempt at providing an answer.

I. First of all, we need to let our children know that WE BELIEVE IN GOD—the God who created the heavens and the earth and put the sun, moon, and stars in the sky.

We believe in the God who made US a “little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned us with glory and honor.” The God who is revealed in the Book that we study in Bible School--this is the God we believe in!

When we take on the responsibility of teaching our children, we have to ask ourselves a few questions. Do we believe in Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God?

Do we believe that God actually came to this earth as a baby? Just the thought of it is incredible. Yet, every Christmas, those of us who believe...celebrate this tremendous truth.

And then, do we believe in God on a cross? That’s even more incredible—that as He hung upon that cross, ‘God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.’

How could God’s Son die that way? Yet, our Easter trek takes us by way of the cross. This is the God we believe in--the faith we seek to communicate to our children.

“What must I do to be saved?” the jailer asked Paul and Silas. “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved,” they answered (Acts 16:30-31). We believe in God—the God who made Himself known to us through His Son, and so...

II. We’ll also want to make sure that we communicate to our children that GOD LOVES US. This is why Jesus said, “My Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life...” (John 6:40)

God wants this for us because He loves us—and wants you and me to love Him in return—to love Him now, and to love Him still “when all the stars have turned to dust.” What a privilege to tell our children about the God who loves us.

You see, we could fear a God who does not love us. We could perhaps serve and obey and be controlled by an unloving God. But being who we are—again, because God created us to be this way--we could not love God but for the fact that He first loved us.

I ran across something that Max Lucado wrote in one of his books. He takes God's love and humanizes it a bit. He makes it very personal. Listen to what he says:

"There are many reasons God saves you: to bring glory to himself, to appease his justice, to demonstrate his sovereignty. But one of the sweetest reasons God saved you is because he is fond of you. He likes having you around. He thinks you are the best thing to come down the pike in quite a while...

If God had a refrigerator, your picture would be on it. If he had a wallet, your photo would be in it. He sends you flowers every spring and a sunrise every morning. Whenever you want to talk, he'll listen. He can live anywhere in the universe, and he chose your heart. And the Christmas gift he sent you in Bethlehem? Face it, friend. He's crazy about you!"

Do you believe that God loves you—that He genuinely cares about you and for you? He does.

Try this. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son..." Take out "the world" and put your name in its place. For me, it would be, "For God so loved Jim Thomason that He gave His only begotten Son..."

Try it--it's powerful! Put YOUR name there and see how it feels: "For God so loves \_\_\_\_\_....that He gave His Son." It's powerful because WE know who we are. We know that we're not always easy TO love. And we realize that God knows this even better than we do—yet He loves us anyway.

This, friends, is a God that we can at least "begin" to "love back." Our love won't measure up to His, but knowing how much God loves us will make us want to try to love God more.

Let's make sure our children know this...and understand it in their hearts. If we do, this assurance of God's love will bless them and give them a wonderful sense of security...for the rest of their lives.

III. Then, something else our children need to understand:  
GOD IS GRACIOUS—amazingly gracious. This sets Christianity apart from all other religions. Our God is gracious!

So what's grace? Well, grace is often defined as "God's unmerited favor." That's a good definition, but I'm not sure children get it. What we need to communicate to them is that grace is all about giving, on God's side of things. And on our side, it's all about receiving.

Grace points us to the greatest gift of all. We don't deserve it. But here's the thing: we get it anyway!

And even though we know in our hearts that we haven't done anything to earn it, we simply choose to confess our unworthiness and reach out our hands in faith and receive the gift. If we do this, God's grace fills us with a gratitude that changes our lives forever.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son..."  
Everything God gives us is an act of grace, but it's the gift of His Son that makes His grace so amazing.

Do we recognize God's grace for what it is? Do we even begin to know how to be thankful for it—making it clear that "we get it" that the gift is ours only by grace? And are we communicating this to our children, teaching them to be thankful as well?

Friends, I don't know why God values my life so much that He allowed His Son to go to the Cross for me. When I first believed and became a brand new Christian, I accepted this truth even though I couldn't understand it. I still don't understand it, but my amazement grew as I had children of my own.

Parents, you know that the love we have for our children is too profound to put into words. We also know what it's like to lose someone we love or to see them suffer. Knowing this, and realizing that God still chose to allow His Son to go to the cross for us, should overwhelm us every time we think about it.

I'll never understand it, but I believe in grace—in God's amazing grace—in grace that gives us LIFE. Back to John 3:16 for just a moment. It says "whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." Every child should know this.

It's not hard to believe in death. We find death everywhere we turn. And in this age of instant communication, we face death "up close and personal" on a daily basis.

George Bernard Shaw observed: "The statistics about death are very impressive. One out of every one dies!" Whether it arrives as the gentle passing of an elderly saint or with the sudden fury of a tornado, no one is exempt from it. One out of every one dies!

The gracious God we believe in makes it clear He wants us to have life—

abundant life now and eternally in His presence. He offers us this gift freely through His Son, Jesus Christ.

He asks only that we trust Him, that we reach out in faith and receive His gift of grace, that we confess our need of forgiveness, believing that Christ died for our sin and now lives to be Lord of our lives forever.

Our children need to know. We all do—so that this journey we’re making—our trek to God—can be the most joyful, exciting, and fulfilling experience of our lives. We have the opportunity to help our children see this in Bible School this week.

Star Trek’s pretty cool, friends—but we get to tell our children about the Savior, Jesus Christ, who boldly went where no God had ever gone before. He took on human form and came to Planet Earth to bring us salvation and new life--to transform our lives—which, as a result, can bring about a new and better world.

We don’t have to go looking for it “out there.” In Christ Jesus, the potential is right here—in my heart and yours—which our Lord understands is still the real “Final Frontier!”

If you haven’t done so, I invite you to receive Christ Jesus into your heart today. Get started on your journey to God, and know that you have nothing to fear as you make your own “trek” toward eternity!



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