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November 28, 2011

Next Steps

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Every holiday season I feel it. It usually starts off as a small feeling, almost imperceptible, but as time progresses and the holidays approach the feeling grows. More and more I am filled with the longing to be home. For me, being home is less about place, and more about people. Being home is being with those that are dearest to me. It is in being with family and friends that I find a sense of comfort and belonging. I find a sense of well-being and contentment. I find myself at home.

Even as the feeling of needing to be home grows each holiday season, I have found that it is never fully satisfied, not really. My time with family is encouraging, but it is short-lived. Home is always disrupted as schedules and responsibilities rush back in. My time with friends is fulfilling, but the relationships are never really what they could be. Underneath the surface is usually something that smacks of needing repair. Relationships bear the constant reality of stress and strain, give and take. Home is always a bit off-kilter. The reality is that I carry around this desire to be home, truly home. At times and seasons, in activities and relationships I can temporarily assuage the desire, but never fully. My longing to be home seems to be much deeper, much larger than any gathering or holiday could ever fill. Maybe that is because home, our true home, is much bigger.

When I look at Scripture I see that God created us to be at home with Him. He created us to experience life physically with Him for all eternity. Because of my Sin and the Sin of others, this true home has been lost, but not forever. God is moving to bring people back home to Himself. In the meantime I am filled with longing, a longing for home. However, this is a longing that can be fulfilled. Jesus promised that in him we could go home. In him we could find our heart's true home, for in him we find that the Father is both accessible and knowable. In Jesus we find that we can physically live with the Father in the present, and that in the future this life will only blossom into a greater reality. In Jesus we find our way home. So this holiday season I will celebrate, as I always do, with friends and family. I will laugh and enjoy the life God has given me to share with others. As I celebrate I will do so with the realization that I am now and will one day be fully at home. I am not home because I share a meal or celebrate a holiday with those I love, but I am home because of my relationship with the One who is the way home. I am home because of Jesus.

A fellow traveler,
Blake
Spiritual Formation Pastor

My Next Step

We encourage you to consider doing the following as a way of handing off faith to your family. . .

- **Give thanks:** This holiday season, consider starting a new tradition, one in which you express thanks to Jesus for offering and being life for us. In so doing, you will implicitly teach your family that life is truly found in Christ and you will fill your holiday celebrations with new and deeper meaning. One way you might consider implementing this tradition is by stating those things for which you are thankful. This can be done once in a large and extended way or once a day over a period of a month before your evening meal. After you state the things for which you are thankful you might consider reading James 1.17 and then offering a prayer that thanks God for giving us both the good things in life and life itself. You might also thank God for His greatest gift, life in Christ.

We encourage you to consider taking the following next step on your faith journey. . .

- **Memorize and meditate on John 14.6:** We were created to be at home with the Father. However, we often seek our heart's true home in structures and relationships here on Earth. Consider memorizing and meditating on John 14.6 this week. Allow God to speak to you about how He makes Himself accessible and knowable through the person of Jesus, and what this might mean for you personally. Consider journaling your thoughts or prayers in response.