

One Thing You Must Do to Experience Holy Spirit's Ultimate Adventure

My parents loved me the best they could, but our home was a claustrophobic place by the time I was 18. The four walls of my bedroom were not going to contain me. The world was beckoning me to leave.

My imagination alone transported me. I'd seen pictures of the world's many wonders, but if ever I was going to experience the volcanoes of Indonesia or the expanse of the Great Rift Valley, I was going to have to leave.

As children, we look to our parents and friends for our identity. A child says, "My dad is better than your dad." Why is that significant? Because if his dad is better, then the child, by extension, is better too. His identity is secure. We are who we are in part because of the people we care about.

But as children mature, being an extension of a parent is no longer enough. They become aware of other points of reference. Psychologists call the process "individuation"—becoming an individual, learning to think for yourself.

To understand objective truth, we have to pull free from our subjective reality. And this is why it is important to leave home and see the world.

Those who never leave their hometown don't get the chance to get outside their own bubble. Jim Carrey's character in *The Truman Show* is the last one to realize that he's living in a phony world. If he's ever to see things as they are, he needs to leave.

The same goes for all of us. A fish can't know how small its

tank is until it's dropped in the ocean. We have to leave our familiar world behind to begin to see how small it really is.

Typically, this comes around age 18 when young people go off to college. But more and more young people are seeing that even college may be too small a venue to perceive the world through the right lens. They have so much to leave if they are to see the world correctly.

Things That Define Us

Consider some of the outside voices and forces that come to define us:

- our relationships.
- our looks.
- our roles.
- our accomplishments.
- our stuff.
- our preferences.
- our habits and experiences.

None of this is really us. And leaving it will cost us along the way. We may get fired and lose our place. Our trophies may look good today, but soon they'll be collecting dust. Our clothes and cars too quickly go out of style.

All of these things are rooted in the opinions of other people. But as long as we look to others to tell us we're OK, we'll never be OK. If life changes, our identity should not. God wants us to see ourselves as his children, independent of the opinions of others or the forces of culture.

We need to get away from the familiar in order to get perspective. By leaving, we create space for new experiences to expand our worldview. Truth must be tested if it is to endure.

We Call It Abandon

We call this process of leaving the world of our adolescence “abandon.” Good parents will recognize that in nature, baby birds must leave the nest if they are to learn to fly. Though it is tempting to want to continue to mother our children once they are grown, to do so is to keep them in extended adolescence. Only leaving home gets the job done. And paradoxically, this is actually the very thing that shows young people how valuable home actually is. You have to experience the absence of a thing to appreciate it’s worth.

To get beyond the limiting influence of culture, we have to not only leave home, but we have to go somewhere beyond our borders to understand other factors that have defined us. We also have to leave for long enough to begin to get perspective and to walk in a different reality.

Jesus led his disciples on a three-year journey away from home. In my experience, to really begin to walk in a kingdom-based lifestyle, this is a good amount of time. This allows you to begin practicing new behaviors.

You have to leave your culture to see it.

There are many cultural artifacts that define us that we will never see unless we get some distance from them by leaving home. For example, as you move away from a culture of materialism, purging what you don’t need, you are free to experience a lifestyle of simplicity.

You may grow up surrounded by media. But leave that for a while, and you may begin to walk in a measure of discipline, deciding for yourself how you will use your time.

Your victimhood may seem normal until you get feedback from others showing you that it’s not. And only after beginning to take responsibility for yourself do you see cause and effect more clearly.

Leaving Is Hard

Of course, leaving is hard. It is often painful. But if you stick it out, you have the chance to discover who God made you to be.

In 20 years of taking young people on journeys of initiation, I've seen that the pain of leaving is often more than many can bear. On their own, they find it almost impossible to disconnect from social media and the comforts of home.

That's why I advocate journeying as a member of a group. In a group, you can stay accountable and encouraged. Our World Race teams are a place of continual encouragement in a journey that tests their endurance.

For those who stick it out, the rewards are rich. We all inwardly long to walk out of insecurity and into true identity. We were built to be loved and to live out of that place of safety.

Getting there will cost you, but it is so worth it. {eoa}

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