

Road Trip



# Road Trip

Five Adventures  
You're Meant to Live

*A Modern Girl's Bible Study*  
**Refreshingly Unique**

JEN HATMAKER

NAVPRESS 

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*Road Trip: Five Adventures You're Meant to Live*

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*Holy Spirit, this has to go to You.  
I thought I knew You well before, but You've  
taken me to brand new places. For enlarging  
Your Word and stretching my experience, I love  
You. Thank You for being such an extraordinary  
Teacher. You are my secure confidence.*



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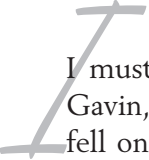
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# Introduction




Welcome to this crazy Road Trip! You're in for quite a ride! You are in the right place if you want to (1) learn, (2) grow, (3) laugh, (4) change, or (5) discover you're not the only Modern Girl out there. This is an adventure for you. The thing about us Modern Girls is that we just are who we are. We're not trying to be like our mothers or, heaven forbid, our grandmothers. We envy our girlfriends and get our hair highlighted. We might watch *American Idol*. When our generation approaches God, it has to be real. Don't try to sell us churchy stereotypes or a prepackaged relationship.

I believe God wants our spiritual journey to be as fun as it is authentic. To that end, I am a zealot for God's Word. After many years of mind-numbing VBS and Sunday school with eighty-five-year-old teachers who made the Bible the most boring waste of time on the planet (God bless 'em), I finally discovered that the Word is actually a fascinating place. Who knew? Evidently, it's even relevant. I hope you conclude the same.

So as you put the car in drive with this Modern Girl, I wanted to touch on a couple of things. We'll study five megathemes necessary for a healthy spirit. These are the nonnegotiables of true progress. A sustained neglect of any of these will derail your growth in one way or another. Having said that, I always find it annoying when the author of a Bible study tries to make

an issue for me that I don't have. I squeeze my eyes shut and think, *How has my dad wronged me? There's got to be something!* Listen, as we journey together, if I touch on a subpoint that's not your issue, don't sweat it. Don't force drama where there is none. By the same turn, if a "check in your spirit" pops up, as my Girlfriend Leah says, spend some time there digging it out with the help of the Holy Spirit. In these five areas, it's likely you're doing fine in one and struggling in another. So if you discover your own spiritual health along the way, celebrate it and concentrate on the areas you need to move forward in.

In addition to this book, you'll need a lined journal and a Bible. I mostly used the NIV, but Girl, do your own thing. I'm not your boss. Just your fellow Modern Girl.

You'll encounter three icons throughout the study representing three different ways to respond. The radio icon  indicates a time to dig into the Word, the rearview mirror icon  offers a chance to personally reflect on truth, and the telephone icon  opens the door to intimate prayer.

Enjoy the ride.

WEEK ONE

*Road Trip*



DAY ONE

*No Parking:  
Life Is a Trip*

My first real road trip was the summer after my freshman year in college. My three best friends—Andrea, Katie, and Stacy—and I decided we had reached the peak of maturity at 19, we had cash to blow, and we were entitled to a road trip. We'd grown up in Kansas and had basically been nowhere. So we put our heads of enormous hair together and dreamed. We dreamed large. We were going places. We were going to hit the open highway and head to . . . Dallas! I'm just saying no one lived on the edge like we did. We were travelers. *Sojourners* really.

So with a wave out the window of Stacy's mom's minivan and a squeal of our tires, we were off to The Big D. We road tripped like veterans. We saw every major attraction. We were up early and out late (behaving, of course). We budgeted to squeeze everything in. We laughed until we were sick. We took pictures we'd all like to forget. We left our mark. I'll be honest: I don't think Dallas was ever the same after us. They're probably still talking about The Weekend the Girls Came Down.

And when we returned to Kansas, we were all a little wiser. We had *seen things*, I tell you. We would never again be content just staying put. Moving forward, adding layers, growing and changing—this was our mantra. Life was a Road Trip, and we planned to enjoy the ride.

Today, I'm older. I've experienced more. I've traveled to other countries and Vegas. More significantly, I've traveled spiritually. Much to my surprise, I've discovered that my Girlfriends and I were right. Life is a road trip. God designed it that way. As it turns out, His plan all along was for us to grow. Progress. Travel ahead. Mature. Develop. Change. Expand. See more. Do more. Experience more. Become more.

The way I know this is simple: God repeated Himself enough times in the Bible for even the dullest student to catch His drift. This is how many times the following words or phrases appear in Scripture:

- grow—71
- journey—56
- go forward—52
- move—51
- advance—42
- travel—33 (MSG)
- mature—24 (MSG)

Do you see where God is going with this? He is completely about spiritual progression. I can empathize with God's position here as "Father." It's the Parent Factor. My youngest son, Caleb, just turned three. If you told me he would never grow up and would remain exactly as he is now, I'd get in my SUV and drive myself straight to LoonyLand where they could make it all go away with the pretty little pills.

Don't get me wrong: I love him. Many of his antics are endearing, but only because we know them to be *temporary*. To be fair, he acts like a toddler because he is one. If he is still

riding his scooter down the street buck naked in twenty years, then we'll have a real problem (as if we don't have one now). But truthfully, I sometimes daydream about when he's older, perhaps rational. When we can take Caleb's fun personality and add maturity, we're going to throw a party and get new carpet.

We are God's children in the same exact sense. He allows us a period of infancy in our relationship with Him either because we're literally young, or we're spiritually young as all new believers are.

In Matthew 11:28, Jesus spoke some of my favorite words: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." In verse 25, He described those He was talking to as "little children."

Matthew Henry said, "Some of the greatest scholars and the greatest statesmen have been the greatest strangers to gospel mysteries. . . . We must thank God that they are 'revealed to babes'; that the meek and humble are beautified with this salvation; and this honor put upon those whom the world pours contempt upon."<sup>1</sup> Just as with my Caleb, many of our qualities are endearing to God in our spiritual infancy. He plucks those out and urges us to keep them while the rest of our spirit matures.



What childlike traits does God want us to *maintain* throughout our journey?

Matthew 18:2-4

Matthew 21:16

Mark 10:13-16

1 Peter 2:2

\*Are any of these a struggle for you? Why?

In our humility and simplicity, we will learn from our gentle Savior. He promises that. Just like a parent of a toddler, He

cares for us uniquely during the early stages of growth. God spends time patiently teaching the spiritually young, whether in age or commitment. Jesus cried over Jerusalem in Luke 13:34: “How often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings.” This is Jesus. Gentle Teacher, Fierce Protector.

But salvation is only the beginning of the Road Trip.



\*Compare God’s role as Parent to our role as parents. From that perspective, list three or four reasons why God might desire growth in His children. Why would you want *your* kids to grow up?

You know what I look forward to? Some of the same things God does:

1. *A mature relationship with my kids.* Even though I once screamed at her for letting my sister get her ears pierced before I did, and she slapped me across the face and stunned us both into silence, my mom and I are now great friends. We talk about mature subjects and enjoy a relationship that couldn’t exist while I was a child.

This is more than possible for believers who are after maturity. “The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend” (Exodus 33:11).



At this point, how would you characterize your relationship with God? (A friendship? A parent-teen shouting match? Something else?)

2. *Graduating from the labors of constant discipline.* I can’t wait to see the benefits of this training. One, I’d rather enjoy my kids. Two, if I’m not having to constantly discipline, it means it’s working.



God trains us early to produce godliness later. At some point, we should graduate from constant discipline to consistent obedience. Hebrews 12:11 says, “No discipline seems

pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.” Where are you in this progression? (In the middle of painful discipline? Resting in the peace that comes after training? No idea?)

3. *Seeing my kids come into their own.* I can’t wait to watch them develop their own gifts and grow in productivity so I can brag. Plus, I need to know they are capable enough to carry on my work when I’m old and crazy and have twelve cats.

God’s not crazy, but He expects us to grow up into the gifts He gave each of us and do His work. A spiritual child is incapable of contributing. She neither knows her gifts nor has any inclination to impact God’s kingdom.



What reasons, if any, have you given God in the last six months to brag on you?

4. *Securing our family’s legacy.* Right now, my kids couldn’t articulate the spiritual dynamics of our family, nor could they be expected to carry it forward. My Girlfriend Jen’s son recently portrayed their roles in a pictorial (at school, of course): “My mom’s job is to buy expensive things on the computer, and dad puts them in the barn and rides around on his tractor and yells at her.” At age seven, that’s the sum of who his parents are. I diligently pray my kids will one day allow *our* faith to become *their* faith and continue the legacy of a godly home for my grandkids and beyond.



From the beginning of time, God commissioned us to pass on His legacy as only mature believers can do. We cannot teach what we do not know. How are you doing with God’s legacy in your home? Talk about what you think is and isn’t working.

This is why God constantly urges His children to journey forward. Just as certainly as our physical bodies mature and

grow as we age, our spiritual lives should also. It's a given. A nonnegotiable. It should be as obvious as the effects of gravity and ultraviolet rays.



But is it? If you are a believer, has your spiritual life progressed since you first stepped into faith? In what ways? In what ways has it not?

Would you honestly say you were *mostly* moving forward, holding steady, or falling backward?

Girls, if you've been held back, held up, or you're just trying to hold together, welcome to the Road Trip. Together, we will join forces with our patient Lord and begin the process of moving forward. Do you remember when I showed you the progress words that appeared so often in God's Word? Let me show you two more:

- run—71
- walk—133

Guess what? God values a steady pace almost two to one over a dash. Growing spiritually is a marathon, not a sprint. Just as I can't clap twice and transport my kids from elementary school to college graduation, spiritual maturity is a process that takes time. *A lifetime*. God wants to tuck you under His arm and gently put the car in drive. The road stretches ahead. Are you *willing* to go forward? That's all God needs from you to begin.

Psalm 143:8 in The Message says, "Point out the road I must travel; I'm all ears, all eyes before you." Girls, let's road trip.



Write a prayer to God. Offer Him your fears, reservations, willingness, and obedience. Include any Scripture or phrases that connected with you today.