

The Scenic Route

What happens when we take the long way through the harvest?

There is something about getting off the highway and taking the backroads. You put the window down, slow your pace, and take in the sights and sounds of roads less traveled. You notice things you would have missed while rushing toward your destination.



Relationships can be like that.

Have you ever sensed that someone was talking with you because they wanted something from you? They listened, but you could feel them waiting for the moment to steer the conversation toward their goal. You may not have known exactly what their goal was. You just knew that being with you did not seem to be enough.

Now imagine being known by someone who remembers your story, enjoys your company, and keeps showing up without needing you to become an outcome.

People sense that you value them when you take the time to hear their story. They notice when you ask questions simply because you find them interesting and genuinely want to know more.

We live in an age of convenience. We look for the fastest route, the shortest wait, and the easiest way to get where we want to go. A quick win feels good because we can point to something we accomplished. I understand the appeal. I feel it too.

But that way of moving through life can follow us into our relationships. In a world of scrolling, we can start scrolling through people. We hear enough to form an impression, decide where a conversation should go, move toward the result we hope to see, and quickly move on.

People are worth more than a quick conversation.

I want my friends in the harvest to know Jesus. I love Him, and I want them to discover who He is. But I also want to know them. I want to hear about the places they have lived, the people they love, what makes them laugh, what they hope for, and what has been hard. I want to enjoy the friendship we have today without treating it as a waiting room for the day they believe.

This is one reason a small circle of friends in the harvest has been so meaningful to me. Over time, you remember what someone told you last month. You notice when they are quieter than usual. You celebrate good news together. When life becomes painful, you have enough history to know how to be there.

No two friendships take the same route. One person may want to talk about faith early. Another may need a long time before they are ready to tell you what they think about God. Someone else may surprise you with a question while you are doing something entirely ordinary. We do not have to map the relationship in advance to be faithful within it.

Jesus spent time with people around tables and along the way. He asked questions, received invitations, and made room for conversations. He did not need a person to fit neatly into someone else's plan before giving them His attention. His followers can learn to be present with that same care.

I call the first step *Holy Curiosity*.

Let your interest in someone be enough reason to listen to their story. Ask a question because you want to understand the answer. Ask because you find the person interesting and genuinely want to know more. Listen closely enough to remember what they share. Let the next conversation grow from the one you actually had.

This is the scenic route within a relationship. It has turns you could not have predicted and views you would have missed if you had rushed toward a destination. Along the way, a person becomes more than someone you hope to reach. They become someone you are glad to know.

Think of one person in the harvest you would enjoy knowing better. Invite them for coffee or dinner. Go with no agenda beyond this: ***learn their story.***

Put the window down. Slow your pace. Notice what you would have missed.

Unhurried. Unforced. Unscripted

Enjoy the scenic route.