



Beautifully restored Rainbow Bridge on Route 66, near Riverton, Kansas, built in 1923



66 Drive-In Theatre, in Carthage, Missouri. Shows current movies.

See and Seek



*A*s we start out from Springfield toward Joplin, Ann is reading from Tom Snyder's book, *Route 66 Traveler's Guide*. (We enjoy and use that little book like a road map and tour guide on our Rt. 66 travels.) She is reading a very appropriate segment in the guide just as we are traveling through some areas where there are numerous abandoned dilapidated buildings and communities. Here is Tom's counsel on viewing ruins:

"Indeed, from this section of the old route on west, through parts of Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona, the number of abandoned businesses and highway attractions increases greatly.

In some ways, that's a sad fact. But there is a more cheerful view, championed by observers like John Brinkerhoff Jackson, that there is a great need for relics like these.

Since we can only experience history through our imaginations, they suggest, the ruins we encounter serve as vital props for any journey of the mind in time. In viewing some roadside ruin, then, we are better able to re-create for ourselves the period in which it stood. An interesting thought — that by seeing clearly what remains, each of us gives some ruin a second life. A chance to exist again, as it once was, in the projection of our mind's eye.

Just knowing this can make the traveling more passionate, the seeing more profound, as you make your way along this old road — which is itself a relic. Yet a relic that you may revive, if only for a moment, by your passing."

Eyes to see, and to see clearly; now that's what we need! We see a great example of this in 2 Kings 6. Elisha, a prophet of God, was surrounded by enemies during the night. His servant/friend got up and went out early the next morning, and saw that an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. He was alarmed, and pleaded with Elisha, "What are we going to do now?" Elisha's response is recorded in:



Mile Marker 12 – 2 Kings 6:16-17

"Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them."

¹⁷And Elisha prayed, "O LORD, open his eyes so he may see." Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he

looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

Eyes need to be opened, not just to see history, but to see all that God has in store for us. We cannot travel backward. Nor can we change the past, but we can change the future. Thus far, my experience in life has been that I travel through time straight ahead.

Be careful when reliving the past that you do not miss out on the future. As we travel through life, we are created to go forward, not in reverse. Erwin McManus says in his book, *Seizing Your Divine Moment*:

“Studying history can be a powerful tool for launching into the future, but living in the past is an enemy of the future. ... We were not created to walk backward into the future. Just the decision to look forward to the future has a healing power in itself. No wonder God would constantly point Israel to His promise that for them there was always a future and a hope. These two dynamics always come together. ... Moments are an intersection between the past and the future.”

Ann and I have had some of those “moments” in our travels of the old road. Several years back, on our first trip west on Route 66, we were driving a very old, remote alignment near Oatman, Arizona. We were in somewhat of an “Elisha mode,” with open eyes. We were winding along, desert grasses growing right up to the weather-worn road, when just ahead appeared a roadrunner, doing what roadrunners do best. But then we saw something we’d never seen before. The first feathered jogger, “Dad,” was followed by a second adult bird, “Mom,” followed by one, two, three, four baby understudies!

We literally had to stop in the middle of the road to

allow the family to pass by right before our eyes. Had it not been for the roar of the powerful four cylinder engine in our Achieva, we are convinced we could have heard a chorus of, “beep beeps.” We were laughing so hard, that it was a moment before we could continue driving. It’s a good thing there were no other cars on the road. What a reminder of all God has in store for us as we travel through life and keep our eyes wide open.

So, as you soak in all the history you can absorb, keep your eyes open for all the ways God wants to reveal Himself, His love, and His purposes to you. He reveals Himself through His Word, “The Eternal Route 66,” through history, and through the marvels of creation. There is more to come on this trip in all categories!

Tourists seldom take great photographs, mainly because they don’t make the effort to be at the right spot at the right time to get the right angle of light in the optimal conditions. Professional and gifted amateur photographers take time to view the scene from various angles, during different times of the year and different times of day.

In seeking God, we need to embrace the diligence of an accomplished photographer. David gave his son Solomon some sound counsel on this subject of seeking God:



Mile Marker 13 – I Chronicles 28:9

And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts. **If you seek him, he will be found by you.**

It is too easy to miss the full picture of the love, beauty, and wonder of God, and arrive at wrong conclusions about who He is. This misconception might be based on a failure

to investigate, a bad church experience, or a run-in with someone who claims to be a Christian, but isn't living like Christ. In any case, the haphazard seeker seldom gets an accurate portrait of God.

The pursuit of God requires more than point and shoot observation. King David told his son, Solomon, "If you *seek* Him, He will be found by you." In fact, God's whole desire is for us to seek Him and know Him! The prophet Jeremiah wrote down God's promise, "'You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,' declares the Lord." (Jeremiah 29:13) Jesus said, "seek and you will find." (Matthew 7:7) So keep seeking. God's clearest revelations of Himself come only when we humble ourselves and pray. Our next mile marker will point that out pretty explicitly.

Before we get to that Mile Marker, I need to give you a little bit of background information. Highway advertising came into its own during the Route 66 era. One of the premier innovators in the advertising art was a shaving cream company, Burma-Shave. In 1925 young Allan Odell ventured an idea to his father. It was to use small, wooden roadside signs to promote their product, a brushless shaving cream. Clinton Odell was skeptical, but decided to put up \$200 to let his son give it a try.

Sales skyrocketed! Soon, Allan and his brother, Leonard, were putting up signs along roads all across the country. At first, the signs were purely promoting the product, but over time, the young innovators expressed their sense of humor through safety tips, pithy wisdom, and just plain fun.

Their creative strategy was to place a series of white-lettered, red signs on posts at the motorist's eye level, spaced just far enough apart for the thought on the previous sign to register in the mind of the passing traveler.

The last sign in the series would always have the Burma-Shave logo.

At their peak of popularity, 7,000 Burma-Shave consecutive sign series adorned America's highways. The familiar signs, grouped by fours, fives, and sixes, were as much a part of a family trip as the words, "Are we there yet?" The signs were prominent on the Route 66 landscape until things began to change in the late fifties. With the coming of the superhighways the witty little signs were replaced with huge view-obstructing billboards.

In 1963 the last signs were taken down, ending what was arguably the most famous outdoor advertising venture of all time. Travelers who began their journeys after that year never got to experience the red and white nuggets of roadside wit to embellish their drive. There is one set of Burma-Shave signs on display at the Smithsonian for posterity.

Just for fun, here are a few samples of some of my favorite Burma-Shave signs:

**His cheek
Was rough
His chick vamoosed
And now she won't
Come home to roost
Burma-Shave**

**Don't stick your elbow
Out too far
Or it might go home
In another car!
Burma-Shave**

**Passing cars
When you can't see
May get you
A glimpse
Of eternity
Burma-Shave**

**We're widely read
And often quoted
But it's shaves
Not signs
For which we're noted
Burma-Shave**

I believe that historians would beg to differ with them on that last one.

Now, back to our journey. We're driving along on our way to Carthage, enjoying the scenery, when there it is, "Burma-Shave" style, on little signs appropriately spaced:

*If My people,
Who are called by my name,
Will humble themselves and pray,
And seek my face
And turn from their wicked ways,
Then will I hear from heaven
And will forgive their sin
And will heal their land.
— 2 Chronicles 7:14*

Now, I ask you, what are the odds of that verse, out of all the verses in the Bible, being right there, at the very moment we're traveling between I Chronicles and Ezra? ...

And Burma-Shave-style at that! I don't think the Lord wanted us to miss this Mile Marker:



Mile Marker 14 – 2 Chronicles 7:14

(See previous page)

What great counsel this verse is for us as we travel the Mother Road alongside the Father's Road. We can start by humbling ourselves. That means admitting we don't have all the answers. There is a God, and I'm not Him.

And we can pray. That simply means to carry on a conversation with God. But, maybe you have not done much praying. A good place to begin might be something like this: "God, I don't know much about you, but, if you are real and you are really who you say you are, please reveal yourself to me."

The next Burma-Shave-esque sign contained God's warm invitation to His people, — "Seek My face." That means, "get to know me for who I really am." God's deepest desire is that we get to know Him as more than a distant deity. He wants us to know His heart, His plans, and His purpose. As a small child looks at and touches his father's face, God wants people to be well acquainted with His presence and love.

Make it a daily practice to humble yourself, pray, and seek the Lord. Remember what He has promised, "You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart." (Jeremiah 29:13)