

FOREWORD

Over 59,000 hotels, motels, and bed-and-breakfast inns dot the landscape along the major roadways and thoroughfares of these United States.¹ On weekday evenings, many of the occupants of these venues are individuals who are “on the road” for business-related reasons. The United States Department of Transportation recently reported that over 405 million long-distance trips (that is, trips of over 50 miles from home) were for business purposes, accounting for 16 percent of all long-distance trips in the country. Records indicate that 77 percent, or 8 of every 10 of those trips, were taken by men.²

Hotel ownership recognizes the lucrative advantage of housing business representatives and goes to extremes to cater to those customers. Spacious rooms—some nearly 800 square feet—combine both work space and bedroom accommodations. The business traveler doesn’t tend to work a defined set of hours, so hotels provide not just a table and a chair but also a “workstation,” where a guest can pursue business assignments while sitting in a “desk chair” illuminated with office-style lighting. Internet connectivity—often wireless—is a standard feature. Many hotels offer fax services and have printers and photocopiers in a “business center” as well.

Indoor swimming pools and exercise rooms are common, some of which have phones positioned by the equipment so an individual can both exercise and converse with clients (if not using his or her own cell phone). Lounges, sports bars, and snack centers are frequently provided in hotels catering to the business traveler, where one can eat, relax, and unwind. In an effort to help the business traveler, some hotels offer a “happy-hour” or “guest receptions” in

late afternoons, in which a dinner of sorts can be enjoyed. Many even pack a “breakfast bag” for the traveler who has to dash off to an airport for an early-morning flight.

It seems every detail is addressed relating to the business traveler, including in-room options for television viewing. While one may not find as many channels as are available at home, the business traveler is almost assured access to the “essential” channels. He or she can keep track of the latest developments on Wall Street over business-oriented networks. One can also expect that there will be CNN and/or FOX News as well as NBC, CBS, and ABC outlets. The Weather Channel and multiple sports channels are included in the package. Typically one or more of the so-called “premium channels,” such as HBO and Cinemax, are offered as well. Statistics shared by a national media company indicate that 98 percent of hotel guests turn on the television set when they enter the room.³ Hotels situate the television set to be the focal point of the room, and guests watch an average of 4.5 hours per day.⁴ All these viewing opportunities are included *free* as a part of the room rental.

But many hotels go a step further and offer pay-per-view programming.⁵ For a fee, an individual can choose to view a range of recent movie releases, many labeled “R” or “Adult Programming.” Lodgenet, the leading purveyor of pay-per-view in North America, reported recently that it is available in more than 1.9 million rooms in 10,000 properties worldwide and reaching more than 500 million travelers annually.⁶ Many of these pay-per-view selections would not be chosen by the family who’s traveling on vacation, but companies hope to capitalize on the fact that an individual in the room *alone* may choose to invest both time and money in their products. According to *Promo Magazine*, “Hotels offer a unique environment for companies to find a captive audience”⁷ that is in an “experimental and exploratory mode.”⁸

Since 77 percent of business travelers are men, the appeal to man's visually-stimulated side for entertainment can often be drawn to one of the premium channels, to the pay-per-view options, or to computer web sites. The man on the road is by himself, is perhaps lonely, is tired from a busy day and evening, and is in an isolated, private environment where nobody is the wiser. The businessman on the road is just one click away from programming that can prove to be detrimental to him, to his marriage, to his children, to his finances, and to his whole lifestyle.

Peter and Paul, two stalwarts in the faith, specifically addressed the fact that Satan is always seeking an entry point into one's life and that he is carefully looking for weak areas he can exploit. Peter pleads, "Keep a cool head. Stay alert. The Devil is poised to pounce, and would like nothing better than to catch you napping" (1 Peter 5:8, TM). Paul warns,

God is strong, and he wants you strong. So take everything the Master has set out for you, well-made weapons of the best materials. And put them to use so you will be able to stand up to everything the Devil throws your way. This is no afternoon athletic contest that we'll walk away from and forget about in a couple of hours. This is for keeps, a life-or-death fight to the finish against the Devil and all his angels (*Ephesians 6:10-12, TM*).

Paul continues with wise counsel in his letters. In Galatians 5:16-21 he admonishes us to—

Live by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy;

drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

“Get into their rooms and stay on their minds” is a business slogan adhered to by both advertisers and the creators of all sorts of “entertainment.” In his concluding remarks to the Christians living in the Roman colony of Philippi, Paul addressed the importance of man filling his mind with productive thoughts:

Summing it all up, friend, I'd say you'll do your best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious—the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse. Put into practice what you learned from me; what you heard and saw and realized. Do that, and God, who makes everything work together, will work you into his most excellent harmonies (*Philippians 4:8-9, TM*).

On the Road is a collection of devotionals written by men for men. It is meant to be an alternative for the man who finds himself in a hotel and wants to do just as Paul recommended: “to fill [his] mind and meditate on beneficial things” rather than things that will bring harm to that which is most precious to him: his relationship with God, his family, and others. Fifty-four individuals from a wide range of vocational perspectives, cultures, races, and denominational affiliations contributed devotionals around eight themes: sexual purity, marriage, fathering, spiritual disciplines, prayer, godly characteristics, the centrality of Christ, and godly living.

It is our sincere hope and prayer that these devotionals will speak to men *On the Road* and give them strength, wisdom, and guidance as they seek to be men after God's own heart in their personal, professional, and spiritual lives. 🏠

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