



The Beginning of Life on The Field

To my Readers,

I want to share a verse that we have studied the past week or so.

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

It is so easy to be discouraged in a world that highlights what's wrong with it. The media is a tool that allows us to stay connected to the events that have an impact in the lives of man. We see the worst sides of everyone and everywhere, the media brings to light the skeletons in the closet. Media outlets have a unique ability and impulse to center in on the part of the story that keeps the audience watching, we are fascinated by inequity. This passage to me is a reminder that we acknowledge there is wrong in this world, and we acknowledge the damage, but we don't focus on it to the point we forget the light at the end of the tunnel. God promises something better, a completeness in Him that transcends this world. No longer are we restrained by the bonds of discouragement because the Lord is our joy!



And so it begins. On the 20th I arrived in the city of Arlington, tired from travelling for a week with my Dad from Washington to Texas. We started the trip on Monday the 13th and had decided to make it as far as we could. We drove through southern Washington and cut through the corner of Oregon and into Idaho. That night we slept in the car, my intention was to save as much cost as I could on this trip. We started again early and finished out Idaho and into Utah. We cut East towards Wyoming, sacrificing an Hour for a more scenic drive. My family has made the trip quite a few times already so we knew the route

we wanted to take. The

next night we chose to stay the night in Colorado Springs. After driving eleven hours the first day and ten the next, I figured a bed and shower were in order so we stayed in a hotel to recuperate. The next morning my dad suggested we take a detour to go and visit Pikes Peak, we left that morning and stopped at the Garden of the Gods on the way there. I took some pictures of the stones that stood vertical and shared them with my friends in the moment, one messaged back and shared some wise thoughts that got me thinking of God whispering in Nature.



When we stand dwarfed in the presence of the giant natural monuments of this world, or step among the small treasures that are tucked away hidden in the unknown, we see the artistic strokes of a God who made every inch of it for us to know. There are so many breathtaking sights and wonders on this world and just on around the corner another one surprises us. We will never see them all, nor can we grasp the lengths our God has gone for us. We take for granted the miracles He grants each day because we normalize the wonder they hold. The sun rising and setting, the mountains on our horizon, the bodies of water that hold mysteries, the animals big and small who are unique and thriving, the growth of the plants as they bloom and wane with each season. The normalization of His wonder can leave us forgetting His power. Nature is God's canvas, and Man His audience. When we take time to step out of the flow and appreciate the art and complexity around us, we see the character of the Artist and the love in each detail.

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After the Garden we visited another tower of stone, Pikes Peak. It stands over 14,000 feet above sea level and is on the list of Colorado's "fourteeners". The drive is breathtaking and caution was advised. When you get close to the top they ask that you take shuttles the rest of the way. We passed by a 1,000 foot drop where someone lost their brakes and their life as well. The oxygen at the top is 30% so you get kind of funny in the head. We had some chip bags that nearly popped from their expansion. After we



left we made it to Lubbock that night. On Sunday we had plans to visit the congregation in Pecos and say hello before we got to the field. I spent a few days catching up with friends and saying goodbye to others. I am so glad I got to stop there, I left encouraged and ready for my field after my time there. Sunday evening we rolled into Arlington and got another hotel for the night. I ended up sharing my purpose to the clerk and she expressed her excitement for me to start and how the Church has helped her, she then asked for prayers for her son who is starting college this fall. God works in funny ways, am I right?

Since then we signed a lease and began a quarantine to put at rest any concerns over the virus. My time has been in Zoom meetings with the coordinator, bible studies on the will of God, book studies on the 4:8 principle derived from Philippians 4:8, meeting with the church leadership, virtual game nights with the college group, and getting to know my new team. There is a lot of ways that we are limited but we are working in the background and preparing for tomorrow. I have been so deeply encouraged by how God has been guiding us here. My purpose has always been fulfilled by working hard and working for God. We have discussions about faith and the bible that get me fired up, I'm turning pages and speaking on historical and cultural context, quoting scripture and creating applications to the world of today and I feel good. I am only able to do this because I was allowed to study at AIM in Lubbock, allowed by my supporters who kept me there and the prayer warriors who asked for strength. And the best part is that I know nothing compared to what I have yet to learn, I'm young and inexperienced and lack the answers to so many questions, which means I only have one direction to go, up.

Below: My team (left to right) Kaylee Bridges, Rachel Maddux, Peach Holt, Olivia Gualding, (bottom) Daniel Lopez.

Right: My team again, this time with me

We had Sunday Devos together and snapped a picture.

On the right: one of the chip bags that expanded on the trip up the mountain. We heard what sounded like popping in the box and thought they had exploded, it was the sound of the plastic rubbing together. On the ride back down we watched them lose the pressure and return to normal. We really did buy a bag of air... (drum sounds) buh dum tsh. I also found a Dorito flavor in a gas station that was some kind of electric pickle, my tongue felt like it was cut. I had to drink water to feel better, electric was right.



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