

Thank you so much for your faithful support this month. We truly appreciate you, and the Lord will use your giving for the kingdom as we place it in His hands with faith. Here's where we are in....

### **In Circumstances:**

More than anything, this month was a month of waiting/ sometimes disappointments, but in the end, praise the Lord; He as always was and is and will be faithful and comes through. For Rocio, she was filling out many job applications for about a month and a half. She was receiving "not selected" responses. We were wondering why things seemed so hard for a while; however, something I read in Tozer's writing in the book, "The Crucified Life," hit home to where we were. "But God wants to take all authority out of our hands and get us to the place where we have no authority left at all. As long as you are in command, as long as you say, "Now listen, God, I'll tell you how to do this," you will only be a mediocre Christian, dull of hearing, attending camp meetings, churches, and having all the means of grace at your disposal, but still getting nowhere." In the context of the book, Tozer is speaking of those who go deeper go into "the crucified life" and that there are just too many believers that decided to stay on the shore rather than going deeper with Christ because of the cost. This statement was real convicting for me; because when Rocio and I were struggling with how to make life work (as far as bills, rent, income, etc.) and were crying out to God for help and it took a little longer than we expected, it seemed easy/tempting in our prayers to tell God what to do. It is a statement that really describes total surrender to God. You, oh Sovereign God, are in control, I trust in you, you know better than I, the timing, the outcomes, even the trials and suffering, all my life, I put in your hands and ask that Your will be done. If that means staying where I am, glory to God; if that means making change, glory to God. If that means giving something up, glory to God; if that means enduring trials, glory to God- because he will bring about the best in each of us and choosing Him first and above all else is worth it. Whatever it means, may God's will, and not mine be done. May we not hold on too tightly to anything other than God himself, because he has prepared things that no eye has seen or no ear has heard, or no mind can imagine for those who love him. Ultimately we got to the point of being able to say, Lord, we don't need a new job as much as we need you, so you do what's best!"

It can be hard to find God's will sometimes, but really not that hard, because most of the time it is right in front us in "the present," and we are too occupied thinking about the future or struggling with God to change our situation. A good start to finding out God's will is surrendering to it and not fighting it but asking God, "where are you in the midst of all this?" or how can you or are you using my current circumstances to help mold me to be more like you?"

### **In Fundraising:**

By God's grace and goodness, we have \$50,890.00 in pledges and one-time gifts as of October. In the Partners account is \$21,951.00 (part of the \$50,890.00). Thanks to the Lord that puts us at 50% of the launching goal. We are still in the process of application for more churches; however, we have received messages of progress, praise the Lord. We have been seeking, knocking, and asking, and trusting that the Lord will help us to continue to find, open, and receive. We truly trust in the Lord to get us to where He wants us, in His perfect timing, and His way.

### **Spiritually:**

This month also was a month of self-evaluation. I was trying to decide in my heart whether to start a ministry again here or not. I was freed but at the same time had to discern in my heart, if I start a ministry, will this be to make God's name great or will it be to make my name great? I had read a devotional from Charles Stanley in "Jesus, our Perfect hope" that gave an explanation of Acts 4:12, "There is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

"There is power in Jesus name, in Acts we see by His name, people were saved, the lame walked, the sick were healed, disciples preached with boldness, and wonder were performed for His glory. Even the council

of Jewish leaders recognized the power of it, commanding the disciples "not to speak the name of Jesus," they still spoke anyway, embraced His lordship, and carried out his mission. And Christ blessed them for it" (Stanley 229). If we bear His name and make his name great, there will be fruit, but if we are looking to make "our" name great, it is obvious there won't be as much fruit. There is power in Jesus' name as we bear it; there is no power in ours (think of Acts 19:11-20, who attempted to cast out demons in Paul's name and the demons overpowered them, and they fled the house running naked and wounded.) The positive thing was that in my heart evaluation, the final answer was to make God's name great, so I could proceed in stepping forward! Anyway, that's an excellent question; if you are struggling with making decisions, which one would most glorify God?

This month, what indeed encouraged me was reading through some of Rick Warren's "The Purpose Driven Life." And basically, it encourages us to make it a lifelong goal to please God, find what pleases God, and do it (Eph. 5:10). But in one of his chapters, number 9, the title is "What Makes God Smile," many things encouraged me, as Warren uses Noah as an example.

When you trust God completely, he smiles. "By faith, Noah built a ship in the middle of dry land. He warned about something he couldn't see and acted on what he was told...As a result, Noah became intimate with God." When you obey God, he smiles- "Noah did everything exactly as God commanded him"- and the ark's construction had many details God gave.

God smiles when we thank and praise Him, and God is even smiling when or delights in every detail of our lives. We may think God is just pleased with us when we are doing spiritual activities, but he's even smiling on us when we are doing the dishes or taking care of the kids. He watches over us as a father over his kids, and He gets excited in every little step we take forward as a mom does her kid, as a dad does when his boy plays and learns. We bring joy to God! We can bring glory to God!

Anyhow, I noticed for a long period of time I hadn't really thought of God smiling at me, more my mind was toward – a God that was wanting me to be perfect and disappointed when I stumbled (God's unconditional love broke the fear of legalism as it says perfect love casts out all fear. But I felt God smiling over me a couple of times this month! One was when I went up for prayer in a church service; when I was playing with my kids and taking care of my two boys, I could just see God smiling on me, on all three of us. And to make God smile is more important to you and me than getting anyone else's attention or praise- because His relationship with us is eternal!

Zephaniah 3:17, "The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love, he will no longer rebuke you but will rejoice over you with singing."

Do you see God smiling over you or disappointed with you? He's smiling!!!

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