

Athletes in Action

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July 2016

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“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.”

Colossians 3:23-24

Happy summer! Isn't this time of year the best?? Warm evenings and cool mornings. Slower pace of life and weekends away with family. Ice cream cones and fireworks. We are enjoying this all the more since Colby has returned from his many travels during the month of June! You may remember us mentioning in our last letter that he would be away last month at two of our AIA Ultimate Training Camps, ministering to student athletes there. It was a fantastic experience for him, and a faith-building venture for us on the home front without daddy for almost a month :) The Lord was so faithful to me and the kids, though, providing help from friends and family, as well as sweet times together. But, I can definitely see why God's design was to have two parents managing the home and children! I was still able to squeeze in some time with students while he was away...helping a sweet freshman navigate friendships with her non-Christian classmates, talking with one of our student leaders about a potential engagement to her boyfriend, and training the bible study women I have been leading to share their faith with others are a few of the fun things the Lord allowed me to be a part of. It truly is a joy and privilege to be able to come alongside these students in this pivotal time in their lives, loving them and pointing them to Jesus. Thank you so much for the role you play in making that happen!

Making an Impact

To the right you can see our son Jairus standing next to a cardboard cutout of one of our faithful basketball players, Madison. Madison came to know the Lord and His amazing grace for her a little over a year ago, and was a part of our leadership bible study this year.

This past May she donned her cap and gown and graduated from Michigan and is currently involved in a master's program here to earn her teaching certificate. Here's a text we received from her a last month...*"I have some awesome news!!! I shared with the people in my Master's class that I'm super into my Christian faith and wanna do bible studies and go to church, so if anyone's interested to hit me up. I got like 3 girls that asked me to start one together and I'm so geeked! I'm going to need some help though, and need some like worksheet guides and stuff if possible."*

Of course we said a resounding YES to helping her get the bible study started, and those 3 interested girls have grown to now 8 women meeting every week to study the book of Mark...yay!

I can't tell you enough how encouraged my heart has been to watch Madison flourish in her faith, not only growing on a personal level, but making an impact for eternity in her next stage of life. That's what it's all about — training these precious students to be lifelong laborers for our awesome God!



The Ultimate Training Camp

Last month Colby was privileged to be a part of two of the four AIA Ultimate Training Camps we do around the nation. The UTC is a high intensity sports camp for college & pro athletes. While there, athletes take on the issue of how to blend faith and sport together on the field of competition. Five Biblical Principles about faith and competition are taught, and then the athletes are able to test those truths in a 20-hour sports marathon known as The S.P.E.C.I.A.L. The goal is to help every athlete understand how the gospel impacts their sport and life.

While Colby was there staffing the camps, Kali, one of our Michigan cross country runners, went as a camper. Being a new believer and being thrown into a pretty intense environment, I asked Kali to write a few words about her experience. What I got was an incredible essay from her about the work God did in her heart. I thought I would share it with you in it's entirety because her words were so captivating...

"As a neuroscience major and track athlete I am very much someone who needs to be shown the proof in order to trust. I must see the evidence in the experimental results to trust what I am being taught and I must see results in my performance to trust my coaches training plan. UTC completely flipped this mentality that has been a burden to my faith; it showed me that to truly experience God's grace and strength you must trust FIRST.

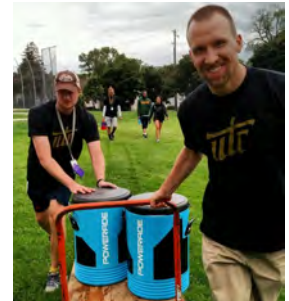
Throughout the beginning of my weekend I was pushed during our lab time to play for Him and to use sport as a way to worship and thank God for the gifts He gave us. This in of itself was a game changer. But the first time I completely experienced the power of God in sport was when we were asked to do a wall sit for as long as we could during the SPECIAL. Already worn down as I began the wall sit I started to revert back to old habits of comparing myself to others, thinking "Just don't be the first one to fall". Then as my legs began to tremble I remembered that God was my Audience of One; I was doing this to thank Him and grow closer to Him. I trusted deeper in His ability to hold me up and then the most beautiful thing happened; my team and I began to sing Chris Tomlin's "Our God" and in this moment of pure worship some of the pain was lifted and it was evident that it was His strength that was holding us up and not our own. I was overcome with joy even as my legs finally gave out; we had trusted and He had shown His strength

As I lay down that night for my couple of hours of sleep I no longer had to think about the injuries that I had been worrying about the couple of weeks prior; I knew that all I had to do was turn it all over to God and he would get me through the competition (and through anything in life for that matter). Then at the end of the competition the next day, as I ran up the hill, board behind my back, and the story of Jesus' crucifixion fresh in my mind I trusted deeper, loved greater, and ran faster knowing that any pain I experienced was only a fraction of what Jesus experienced on the Cross.

In the end, I finally found the answer to a question that I had been asking since high school; what is the point of sport? Sport is here for us to use and invest the abilities that God has given us and to thank Him for those talents; He becomes our ultimate and never-ending motivation. We learn to trust deeper and push ourselves beyond our humanly limits and amidst the pain we become closer to Jesus who experienced the ultimate pain for the ultimate good. In the end, sport or whatever passion that we have becomes our way to worship and love the Lord. Sport reminds us, even in our lowest moments, that God is good all the time."



Left: Erin, Taleen and Kali...all part of the summer track bible study. Right: Colby bringing much needed water to the UTC athletes. Below: We were able to get away with family Up North in Michigan this month!



Please pray...

...for the outreach Madison is having with her classmates. Pray that this group of women would grow in their faith and be able to reach out to their non-believing friends.

...for Kali and the other student athletes who attended the UTCs. Pray they would be shielded from the Enemy's attacks and be able to continue to grow in worshiping God through their competition.

...for wisdom and discipline for Colby as he finishes a seminary class this month.

...for a refreshing time for our family as we visit my hometown in MN later this month.



This letter would not be complete without thanking YOU, our faithful supporters. May God bless you richly in the giving of your prayers and finances!