



March 2024 Newsletter

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“For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.” Gal. 5:1

Happy sort-of spring from our home to yours! I am not sure what the weather has been like in your part of the country, but here in Michigan we just went from close to 75 degrees one week, to now what feels like 11 degrees with snow on the way this week...boo! Definitely feeling the highs and the lows with the weather, but also feeling the highs and lows with our family, as we have cheered our oldest two sons on in their high school basketball season this month. Their team had an incredible season and made it all the way to the state semifinal game only to lose by 40 points. (Although it does make you feel a little better to know that the team who clobbered them went on to win the state championship the next day!) It felt like an emotional rollercoaster as they journeyed through the three weeks of playoffs, as there was the potential for their season to be over if they lost any of the six playoff games they played. The stakes felt high. Living real-time in our home with the anxiety to win the next big game was a timely reminder to me about the pressure these precious Michigan athletes we work with feel week in and week out. As Christians, we know that, in Christ, we have already been given everything sport promises, but fails to deliver — worth, love, hope, affirmation, identity, joy, purpose, perspective. How freeing it is to play with that in mind! And as we communicated that to our boys and watched them wrestle with those truths, it has made it all the more pressing to get this message out to the students. We so desperately want them to understand their incredible worth and value that comes from being people made in the image of God. And that this is given to them independent of their performance in their sport or in the classroom. Such good news to a generation wrestling with their identify! Thank you for being a part of bringing this good news to them!



Ryan, Haley, Rylee, Erin and Allie
Michigan lacrosse players who are seeking to walk with Jesus and
be used by Him to impact others!

If there were anything that was going to rock an athlete's identity, it would be a serious injury. And unfortunately serious injuries are what two of the athletes involved in our ministry have sustained this past month.

We told you about Rylee on the lacrosse team in our last letter, about how she was coming off a knee injury and was walking through it with a new-found perspective from God. Well, sadly a few weeks ago, during her first practice back from that injury, Rylee went down with an injury to her *other* knee and she tore just about every ligament possible.

Equally as sad is the injury Ryan, a senior on the men's lacrosse team, sustained this month. He was coming off of a torn ACL in his knee and unfortunately tore his other ACL soon after returning to practice.

We share these stories with you so that you can be in prayer for Rylee and Ryan. Please pray for them to grieve their injuries well, to cling to the hope that is theirs in Christ, and to walk by faith in a way that points others to Jesus.

A Seeking Heart

You may remember that in November we hosted an early Thanksgiving meal for Michigan international student athletes. To invite them, we literally sent out cold emails to the 70+ international students-athletes we found on the team rosters...and then prayed and trusted God with what He wanted to do in and through the event.

I tell you what, international students are *way* more polite and cordial than most American students! Those who emailed telling us they couldn't make it were super appreciative and very kind.

One of those kind emails we received was from Maddy, a freshman on the water polo team from Canada. Maddy wrote to tell me she couldn't come to the dinner, but wanted to hear more about our organization. So a few weeks later, we sat across from each other at the Panera in the student union on campus and I got to hear a little about her.

After learning a bit about her family, hometown and academic pursuits, I asked Maddy about her spiritual background. She told me that her family wasn't religious, but she was very interested in learning more about Christianity. When she heard that we had weekly small

groups led by student athletes that she could be involved in, she asked how and when she could get to one of them!

Now, a few months later, Maddy has been attending one of our discipleship groups and walks there with Jady, a strong believer on the cross country team, who is also a freshman. This month I met up with Maddy again and we were able to talk through the gospel and God's plan of salvation. I wish you could have been there to see the wonder in her eyes as she understood grace for the first time and to see her process and ask questions about Jesus and His sacrifice for us.

As we ended our time together, I left her with a gospel booklet so she could read more about what we had talked about. I texted her a few days later to hear her thoughts and she said, *"Things have been going great since we last met. I really enjoyed going to church on Sunday with Jady and a few other track girls. In the booklet, I really like the section that points out about receiving Christ through faith! In this part, they included a verse from the book of Ephesians, so I am planning on reading that chapter this week."*

How cute is she?? I feel like I am watching first-hand God at work in her life. And to think that we met her through a cold email in November reminds me that God can use our small acts of faith to accomplish His incredible purposes!



Me, Sydney & Maddy



This month at our large group gathering, we invited a local lawyer and Christian apologist to speak on the reliability of the resurrection. The students were super engaged and had great questions in the Q&A time afterwards. I love that our God has not left Himself without evidence!

Jackon & Jaydon's team was not the only team in the family that found success this season. Mia's team won the 7/8th grade conference championship!



Please pray...

...for Rylee and Ryan as they walk through their injuries. Pray for quick healing for their knees, and that they would sense God's nearness

...for Maddy as she ponders God's plan of salvation. Pray she would be drawn to Him and receive Christ by faith.

...for endurance for us during a very busy last month of the semester.

...for wisdom for our son Jackson as he chooses a college to attend next fall.

We appreciate you more than you know! May God greatly bless you and your family!

