

H A B A R I L E O



SIGNS: distractions or reminders?

Two to three inches of rain daily on average, landslides, cracks in the earth, rising volcanos, 4.3 earth quakes, lightning strikes. This is what's been happening in our area over the past month. The rains have come, and come and come. The result of which is over saturated soil sitting on the side of a rather steep hill which eventually lets loose taking out trees, vegetation and roads, so far. Several rather sizable cracks in the valley floor have opened up due to tectonic plate movements which resulted from a 4.3 earth quake epicentered only a few kilometers from here. If you read some of the local news you'd think the place was in pandemonium and people are fleeing for their lives. Some of the apocalyptic stories they are telling are if nothing else, quite entertaining. It seems right now as the saying goes when it rains it pours.

There are times in our lives when it feels quite similar. It feels as though things are crashing down around us. Crumbling, falling, failing. And we are just bracing ourselves for the next disaster. I'm in one of those times right now. Our current support rate is at its lowest point ever. We are currently experiencing what the mission calls a "support deficit." Our appliances which we bought nearly 11 years ago are failing one by one. The car we bought only a few years ago (all be it a 1996) seems to have new leaks, creaks and frequently produces spare parts

on the ground underneath. The financial expectations of maintaining the ministry to which we have been called seem to be constant and the ever present needs of those in the community around us and the numbers of those requesting assistance from us seems to increase with each day.

Like I said it seems as though things are falling apart and failing every day. So what's one to do? We live in a broken, failing world. Each and every day we are getting nearer and nearer to the end of what this life and world can take. We long for, we even groan at times for the day when our failing will end. When the Lord will return, when all will be set right and all things will be made new. But what about now? What do we do in the mean time?

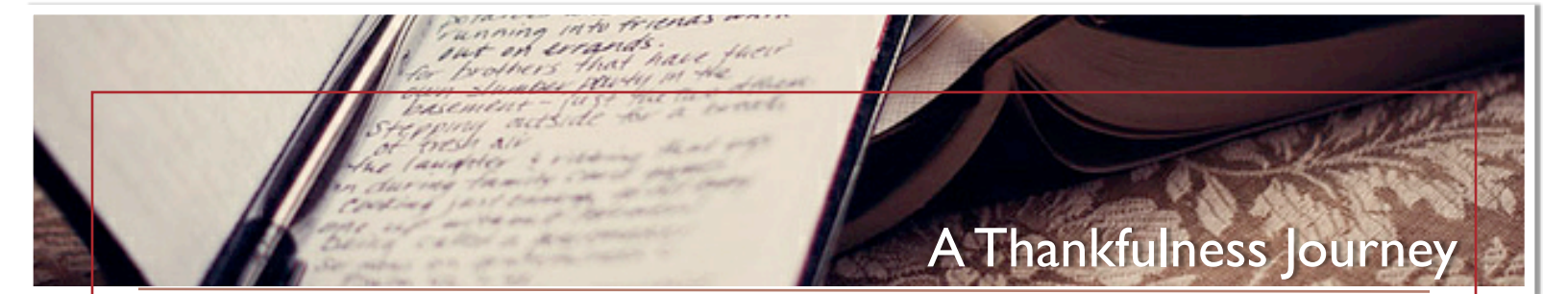
I wish I had the answer but looking up from the bottom of this half-empty glass is often times exactly where we need to be. It's easy to feel safe, secure, confident, when things are going well. In fact its at those times we feel our least needy. It's with pride that we carry ourselves and conduct our daily affairs because we are confident in what we can do on our own. But strip all that away and the needs begin to surface. The needs of others begin to knock at our door. The feeling of helplessness creeps in and overwhelms. Where do we turn?

"You know, don't you, that I'm the One who emptied your pantries and cleaned out your cupboards, Who left you hungry and standing in bread lines? But you never got hungry for me. You continued to ignore me."

"Yes, and I'm the One who stopped the rains three months short of harvest. I'd make it rain on one village but not on another. I'd make it rain on one field but not on another—and that one would dry up. People would stagger from village to village crazed for water and never quenching their thirst. But you never got thirsty for me."

You ignored me." AMOS 4:6-8

Sometimes those things come into our lives to distract us from what's really important. To keep us from putting first things first. Other times those things come into our lives to remind us of what's really important. Help us to put first things first. Either way it doesn't really matter. What matters is putting first things first. With all that's been happening around us it seems distraction have been hitting from all sides. With all the needs in our community we've been reminded that each day is a gift and a blessing. Our prayer is that we can keep focused on what God has called us to do as parents, teachers, administrators, missionaries in the midst of trails, and distractions.



A Thankfulness Journey

I like to post pictures and updates on Facebook occasionally. Of course, I always pick something worth capturing. The other day, a friend of mine commented on a facebook photo and said, "What a grand life!" I had to chuckle, thinking how unglamorous my life really is. In fact, many days my life feels rather dull or ordinary. But it made me pause to think. I guess we do have a lot of adventures out here that may seem grand. But I don't always stop to think about it.

Besides feeling dull and ordinary, my life can also feel overwhelming, frustrating, disappointing sometimes. In those days, I can hardly see anything glamorous or grand.

Recently, our staff chaplain challenged all the women on campus to keep a "Thousand Gifts Journal," inspired by the book One Thousand Gifts by Ann Voskamp. I haven't had the pleasure of reading it yet, but hope to soon. I, along with a bunch of other women, took on the challenge.

The challenge was to look for gifts in each day and to write them down. Some days were easier than others. I could easily look around me and see many things to be thankful for. Other days were harder. My life felt cluttered, messy, and hard. On those days, I had to look really hard for something good to write down. But they were still there - glimmers of beauty amidst the mess. A call from a friend. A sweet word from my child at bedtime. A beautiful sunset.

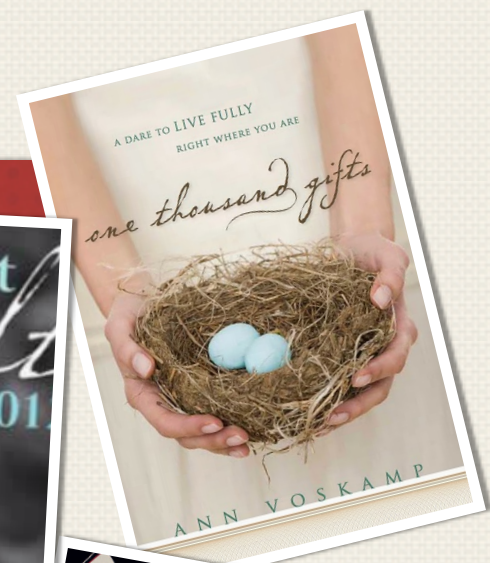
This journal has been developing in me a spirit of thankfulness. It doesn't come naturally. In fact, I think because of our fallen nature, complaining is our natural

response. But once I started, I began to see the little gifts each day had to offer.

And once I started, the word "thankful" jumped out to me in my quiet time each morning. Do you realize how much the Bible exhorts us to be thankful? Many times, once you start noticing. Just like there are many things around us to be thankful for. We just have to start noticing.

I THESSALONIANS 5:16-18

BE JOYFUL ALWAYS, PRAY
CONTINUALLY, GIVE
THANKS IN ALL
CIRCUMSTANCES FOR THIS
IS GOD'S WILL FOR YOU IN
CHRIST JESUS.



Family Updates

JEFF

The past five months our IT Manager has been on furlough in the US. So as an interim fix I was back in the IT world. In that time we took on an extensive project to convert our archaic telephone system into a VoIP system. We brought a team out from the states to help us with the migration. Right in the middle of their time here one of our main buildings (hosting some of our critical servers) was hit by lightning. Only one server took a sever hit but the electric surge took out nearly half of our network backbone switches. In less than one second over \$10,000 in damage. Not really the kind of task I had in mind when I agreed to interim IT Manager, but God was good and we were able to get things temporarily running quite quickly. Its been about a month and a half and we're almost back to full capacity.

JOYELLEN

I have been enjoying teaching Advanced Cooking class this year. Each term I have had 12 students, eager to learn how to cook (and eat!) wonderful culinary creations. I am also teaching Ian's preschool class (along with the other moms - we take turns.) Since it is my last time to teach preschool I am trying to enjoy each moment.

Last term I coached the grades 7-9 Girls Field Hockey team. I had a wonderful team of girls who learned a lot and had wonderful attitudes on and off the field.

I am also teaching 10th grade girls' Sunday School again this year. We just returned from our annual retreat, where we focus on not only dating and purity, but letting Jesus be our one true love.



MEGAN

Recently took a sewing class offered by one of the high school girls. She made a pillow, a pencil case and a draw-string bag. Quite the seamstress. She still loves reading and quickly devours a good book. Most recently the "Bloodhounds Inc." series.



LYNDSEY

Is a bright young student. Recently I asked her what she wanted to be when she grew up. The list I got back was quite extensive with lots of options. In the mean time she loves being daddy's helper when he's welding or working on the car. She's fast with the 16mm socket.



IAN

Is in preschool and loving it. He loves learning about animals. While picnicking in the valley he reminded all of us to clean up our trash as he learned in class that animals will eat the plastic and DIE! He's recently taken up golf. He says he likes it "morether" than soccer. We'll keep working on that one.

CHECK OUT OUR BLOG



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Prayer and Praises

- Pray for our family as we transition back to the US this summer for one year.
- Pray for housing for our family next year in Michigan.
- Pray for good closure as we finish this school year.
- Pray for us as we raise financial support next year to reflect our new support target.
- Praise for Joyellen's grandfather, George Baker, who entered Heaven's gates on May 1, 2012, after 93 years of faithful service here on earth. He left behind a godly legacy.
- Praise that Jeff's mom has successfully finished chemo treatments (and pray for continued healing as she undergoes a stem cell procedure this summer).
- Praise for the Lord's faithfulness to us these past 4 years.