

**JOURNALS** POSTED ON JANUARY 31, 2018

## Lesson from the Journey and the Garden...



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MEXICO

*... Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. **Matthew 6:28-30***

Dear friends,

In this technological age, I (Denise) keep on thinking it would be best to record a video instead of writing a newsletter. So, I started off by recording Juancito's thoughts on what being a missionary kid is like for him. And boy are we alike! You can see his video [here](#). **We hardly ever realized how important friends are until they are not around anymore. Some things can't just be replaced.** For me some of these things are: our friend's homemade cinnamon rolls, our other friend's "Tres Leches," celebrating baby Eric's first birthday. I have an endless list. The question in my mind is, "how does one praise God when one misses all that make a home a home?"

While trying to get our house in West Virginia ready to be sold, I discovered something called curbside appeal and that adding some pretty flowers to the landscape would make it more attractive to potential buyers. This meant a commitment to keeping these plants alive and looking pretty. I knew my mom had a green thumb, but I wasn't sure about mine. Yet I gave it a try and even planted a ginger plant. A few weeks after moving to Chiapas, I received a text message from a friend with a picture of my ginger plant! It survived! Perhaps this doesn't mean much for you, but for someone like me, who has dealt with insecurities and low self-esteem, this was a tangible way that showed me I could do something good! The time and effort I invested had a good outcome.

While "skyping" with a friend, she helped me to reflect on this experience and I realized the moments I spent in my garden gave me peace. Besides enjoying the sun, nurturing and protecting life gave me a sense of joy and purpose. This led me to start a little garden in our new home in San Cristobal.

As I work on my garden, I listen to praise music and take great pleasure in my time with God and his creation. I still want to add much more to the garden but I'm going "poco a poco" - little by little. A



friend once told me, “by looking at my garden you can tell how stressed I’ve been.” Now, I get what she meant. I’ve even started a compost bin! My new hobby brings me joy and



helps with my self-care!

This past weekend a picture of my yard before my “gardening urge” struck my mind. In this picture, I could see that my yard looked nice, but it had no fruit. It had good soil to sow but it hadn’t been done. In some parts the grass was nonexistent or looking very sad. It needed to be nurtured and cared for. That’s how I felt about my sisters from the communities we visited last weekend. **It seemed to me they’re simply existing. They look pretty but I know they could do much more if they discover**

**the value they have before God’s eyes. I sense God leading me to sow His Word in their lives, to care for them and nurtured their lives with love and compassion.**

During our meeting with a group of Tseltal pastors and leaders in the town of Chilon, Juan and I were sharing about our hopes and dreams for our first term of service in Mexico. And as I shared how the women in our churches need to realize their value so that they can share that with other women in their communities, a young man said, “that’s what we need; someone who will teach our women Biblical truths.” He mentioned that women groups in their area had diminished because they don’t have someone with the tools to teach biblical truths to the women.

Little by little the Lord is opening my eyes to the needs of the women in the Tsotsil and Tseltal communities. It's been a few rough days for me. San Cristobal has been cold and rainy and we have no central heating. This was starting to wear me down and even made me question if I really needed to be here. Needless to say, my Abba Father spoke loud and clear (one more time) during our last visit to the communities.

**Once again, I ask for your prayers so that the words that come out of my mouth may be given by our Heavenly Father, to love and nurture His children, to guide and mentor them, and to help them recognize that their value comes from what Christ has done and not from society, or norms that we place on each other. I ask you to pray for our physical, mental and spiritual health.**

**Ko la'val (Thank you) for your prayers and financial partnership which enables us to respond to God's call and the leading of the Holy Spirit to make disciples in Chiapas.**

With love and gratitude,

Denise & Juan

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