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Summer 2017

Kyla, a brown-headed, dark-eyed fifteen year old, came to this summer's leadership camp the second week in July. She travelled to Kentucky from California by way of Texas, urged to attend by her older sister, Courtney, who had been a camper in her teenage years. Like many of the other new young campers this year on The Hill, Kyla, somewhat enthusiastic but nervous, anxiously questioned the seasoned campers about the work crews, teaching sessions, and camp food. As she looked cautiously around on that first Sunday afternoon she had no idea what God had in store for her. Her life would change forever within the next seventy-two hours.

By late Wednesday evening, nearly 10:30 pm, when her room counselor called a small group gathering she was exhausted from the long day and had been eager to take her turn in the shower. Instead, she threw herself on her bed in the dorm room, back to the wall, head buried in her knees which were pulled to her chest. She wasn't in the mood to discuss the evenings teaching. Her counselor, sensing something more was going on in Kyla than wanting to get cleaned up and in bed, ushered the other girls into another room for their bedtime discussion.

"Kyla, do you want to tell me what's going on?" her counselor, Deanna asked once they were alone.

"Nothing, I wanted to take a shower. I'm tired," she answered, daring Deanna to ask for more. Then, without waiting for Deanna's urging Kyla blurted out: "I just don't understand what the others mean when they say they're hearing from God."

"Father, please give me wisdom and direction," Deanna uttered under her breath, wondering how to answer such a big question from such a young heart. She picked up her Bible and sat down on the bed next to Kyla and quickly thumbed through the pages. She sensed Kyla was already hearing God's quiet voice offering his love and salvation. She turned to Romans 10 verse 9.

"If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you shall be saved," Deanna read.

Kyla listened intently, not saying a word. Deanna started to explain God's plan for all people to live as part of his family. A few minutes later, hoping God's word had cleared some of Kyla's muddled thoughts, she looked at Kyla and asked: "Do you believe the words contained in the Bible about Jesus as our means to Salvation?"

"I believe," Kyla uttered softly from her very tender and pliable heart. After praying together, Deanna explained what Kyla's new life in Christ would mean for her.

The next morning at breakfast, the newly transformed Kyla elatedly told friends and family of her Savior and life in Him. But the greatest evidence of Kyla's change was the smile in her eyes.



Kyla, along with Erinn, Sarah, and Maggie

We count it a privilege to work to provide a camp environment where students who have never entered into a place of salvation through Jesus can hear the gospel clearly. But we are equally passionate about presenting the truth for those young minds and hearts who desire to grow in their faith, understanding of God's heart, and ability to be equipped to defend the gospel. We strive for them to learn to be discerning listeners to The Holy Spirit.

During this year's camp Kyla and others had the opportunity to hear gifted teachers on subjects such as the reliability of Scripture and proof of the resurrection. They looked at how to study Scripture contextually and waded through the age-old debate of the purpose of evil and suffering. They heard of God's value of human life, their life. They were challenged to think through and present their thoughts on many of these topics. But permeating throughout all the topics presented to these bright and energetic kids, was always the message we view as vital to their spiritual growth: As saved individuals, we are completely new creations; our old nature with which we were born was crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20).

Because we have a brand new self, we have been made righteous and complete before God. And further good news is that because we have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we can have victory over the power of sin indwelling our flesh that can sometimes manifest itself in our daily behavior. It's so critical for all of us, but particularly so in these young lives, to know how much they



Senior Group from June Camp

are loved and treasured by Jesus. They don't have to walk around feeling as if they are a disappointment to God nor do they have to study the Bible, pray or defend the faith to gain his approval. Now they get to do all these valuable and beneficial things solely for the purpose of discovering the heart of this all loving powerful God with whom they will spend all eternity. Their faith is then matured, God is honored and pleased, and they are enabled and empowered to share some really good news as they navigate this earthly maze.

Upcoming Events

Romans Retreat—August 18-19, 2017, Patrick Johnson will again lead our study through the first eight chapters of Romans. This retreat begins at 7:00 pm Friday night and ends at approximately 4:00 pm Saturday afternoon. Whether you are new to the book of Romans or just need a review of the life changing principles within, you are sure to enjoy Patrick's insight and knowledge of the scriptures. Breakfast and lunch will be provided on Saturday.

Fall Retreat—October 20-22nd, we are very excited to host two long time friends and gifted teachers, Preston Gillham and Steve Pettit, as our speakers for the annual fall retreat. Things will get started at 7:00 pm on Friday night and end at approximately 10:00 am Sunday. Saturday morning breakfast will begin at 8:00 am, followed by a day and evening of inspiring teaching and fellowship. Lunch will be

served on The Hill followed by free time in the afternoon. Everyone will be on their own for supper. Sign up online at Lifeonthehill.org.

Winter College Retreat—January 5-7, 2018, our annual retreat for college students before heading back to school. Speakers will be announced very soon. Applications are available at Lifeonthehill.org.

Winter High School Retreat—January 12-14, 2018, our annual high school retreat for ages 13 to 18. Applications are available at Lifeonthehill.org.

All those who daily work on The Hill know the youth camps, retreats and college ministry would not be possible without you. We are thrilled you have supported us so faithfully throughout the years, while Bob was with us, and the three years since his home going. Your beautiful words of encouragement, consistent prayers, financial support and volunteerism have shown us God's steadfastness and love. We are grateful.

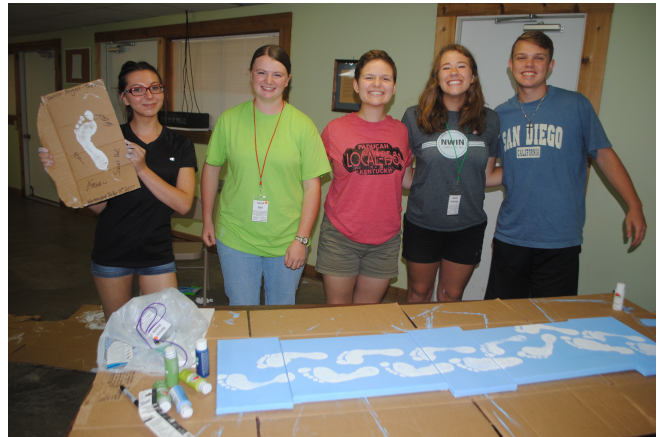
Kim

We thought you might enjoy this short excerpt from Bob's *Advancing in Romans* commentary to close out the Summer 2017 Newsletter.

...just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love (Ephesians 1:4)

Paul teaches that the New Testament believer is made "holy and blameless" at the point of justification. This truth, although rejected by some (maybe many), is not a major source of tension within Christ's body. The phrase, "just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world," is the cause of disharmony. Some people use these words in an attempt to prove that God chooses (elects) some persons to salvation before they are born—in fact, from eternity past by means of an eternal decree. Are they correct? Let's allow the full counsel of God's Word to provide the proper answer.

When we made the choice to accept Christ as Savior (while depraved), we were placed into Christ through the avenue of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13), into the Father's "chosen one" (Luke 9:35; Isaiah 42:1), and made "new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). This action by God on our behalf, subsequent to our exercising personal repentance and faith while depraved, is the only means through which we could enter into Christ's chosenness! Once in Christ, the Father's "chosen one" (Isaiah 42:1), we also received His kind of "life" (Colossians 3:4), eternal life, having no beginning and no end. Consequently, once we were placed into Christ and received eternal life, the Father saw us as having always been in Christ, even though our entry point into Christ was after we repented and believed while depraved. This sequence makes it possible for us to have



Senior Group from July Camp

been chosen “...in Him before the foundation of the world...,” even though we did not accept Him until almost two thousand years after the cross.

Thus, the phrase, “chose us in Him before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4a), does not communicate that God selected us to salvation before we were born—selected us to be placed into Christ from eternity past. It means, rather, that we were chosen once we were placed into Christ, into the Father’s “chosen one” (Isaiah 42:1), subsequent to our exercising personal repentance and faith while depraved. Because Christ possesses eternal life, life with no beginning or end, we received eternal life the moment we were placed in Him. Consequently, the Father sees us as having always been in Christ—even “...before the foundation of the world...” (Ephesians 1:4a)—although our entry point into Christ occurred when we repented and believed while depraved.

Jesus was chosen to office—the office of Messiah. He was not chosen to salvation. Accordingly, all New Testament believers, as a result of being placed into Christ (after repenting and believing while depraved), receive a special office, or “gift” (1Peter 4:10), so Christ’s body might function efficiently and effectively to the Father’s glory. To this office or “gift,” we were chosen once placed in Him—subsequent to repenting and believing while depraved. Note: *Our God’s Heart as it Relates to Foreknowledge - Predestination* and *God’s Heart as it Relates to Sovereignty - Free Will* address this subject in much greater depth.

Grace and peace!