

Dickens

Digest

Feb/March 2021

I Sound Like My Father

I can remember my father saying things like, "It builds character." Or, "Patience is a virtue." Or perhaps one of my favorites, "If I want your opinion, I'll give it to you." I have found myself on many occasions repeating those phrases to my own children and it reminds me of what Paul said, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ," (1 Cor. 11:1) The word translated "follower" is literally an imitator or mimic. Recently, someone told Lucas, the young man who has recently been chosen by the church here to be my assistant, that he was beginning to sound and act like me. Although a young preacher should never copy his mentor, it is natural, like a father and son, to imitate or mimic certain things. It truly is a great responsibility to lead. This past year has been trying for everyone, but God has blessed here in the work and we are excited about what the future holds. We have several Bible studies happening at the same time. We were holding regular church services until very recently when the "second wave" of Covid began to affect Brazil which has brought new "lockdowns" and restricted our church services. Our people were excited about returning and inviting visitors.

These visitors are prospects which lead to evangelistic opportunities and Bible studies. Recently, we made an evangelistic visit which led to a Bible study, and Noel Smothers got to lead two ladies to Christ. Pray for Elielza and Nazaré in their new faith. One of the most exciting things that we have seen was the decision by the church to approve Lucas as my assistant. Questions were asked regarding the possibility of him one day becoming the pastor at the church here in Belo Jardim. Please pray for God's working in this. The goal has always been to have an indigenous church here. Also pray for his family as his wife Suénia and their three children begin to experience the challenges of ministry. Joel Smothers improves weekly with Portuguese and has begun opening our Sunday School time each week. We praise the Lord for their coming to work with us. Recently, we were made aware of another city with a group of people who need assistance in organizing a congregation. We may soon be helping a sister church in that endeavor. The goal remains to see churches planted and men trained for the ministry so that many souls can be saved.

Prayer Requests

- ◆ Protection from Covid19
- ◆ Evangelism, discipleship in changing dynamics
- ◆ Smothers Family Language Training
- ◆ Church families/couples
- ◆ Lucas and family
- ◆ Increased Covid cases in Brazil



In Other News

As can be seen in this photo taken around Christmas, "everyone" is getting older. Cynthia may be the only one who doesn't show the signs. Thankfully, she has learned what things she can eat and her general health has improved dramatically recently. She still needs to have jaw surgery done so please be in prayer that we can get this done as soon as possible. Morgan is in his third full semester of Bible college and has begun working for the local battery manufacturer. He continues teaching the children on Saturday evenings and has begun helping a national pastor assisting with the church in a neighboring city. Aydan is Morgan's assistant with the kiddos and our "setup" and "takedown" man for church services. He is also entering his senior year of high school. Daniella has taken up piano. Abigail just turned 15 and she and Daniella are becoming quite the cooks which helps Cynthia tremendously. Having teens with servants hearts is a huge help. What a blessing to have such great kids!



Teenz Korner - I'm 18 and the tallest! - Aydan Dickens

I'm always surprised when I look in a mirror or see a picture of myself beside someone who was always taller than me; or, at the very least, as tall as me. As all children do, I've grown significantly. Now five feet eleven and one half inches, I'm taller than everyone else in my family and most of my friends, too. The woman in the picture beside me is Tia Hódes, Pr. James's wife. She always squeezed us and tickled us but has found that somewhat difficult to do to me recently. Every time she visits us, she tells me to sit down so the size difference is not quite as noticeable. My favorite part about being the tallest person in my family is that I'm taller than my older brother.

I'm eighteen, and I should be starting my senior year pretty soon. I am looking into making and selling pallet wood stuff. Starting with small trinkets, I intend to get to the point where I am making furniture. Maybe I'll be a carpenter when I grow up. I don't consider myself an adult, and I won't until I'm thirty-three (read *The Lord of the Rings* if you want to know why).

In Her Words - Cynthia Dickens



A while back, a dear lady to whom we minister expressed dejectedly (about some difficulties in her life), "It's just really stealing my peace." I responded with encouraging words about not allowing anything or anyone to steal her peace, as the Lord is the only One who can give us true peace. Although I understand and know well the human tendency to worry, it is still true that, when we forfeit our peace to that worry, we are essentially telling God that He couldn't possibly handle that which we're facing with the same aptitude that our own frantic, stop-gap solutions could. But how do I hang on to and rest in the peace that the Lord so graciously offers to and is FOR me? The following is not exhaustive nor is it anything new, but rather, a few things that the Lord has taught (is teaching) me about keeping my peace ...

- 1 To fill my mind with God's Word (The Bible in audio format is one of my greatest tools, and in our digital age, it's never been easier to access and utilize!)
- 2 To RUN to the Lord in prayer over everything – absolutely EVERYTHING (Nothing is too big or too small to both take to and leave at God's throne, and I'll never catch God at "a bad time.")
- 3 To listen more than I talk, and at the same time ...
- 4 To not neglect talking - to the right people, in the right way, at the right time
- 5 To exercise humility in every relationship, every conversation, every interaction, and *gulp* every attitude
- 6 To avoid, where possible, things outside of my ministry (my "ministry" being husband, family, church, work) that make me tense or put me on edge (The Lord didn't promise me no stress, but He is not pleased when I choose it for myself.)
- 7 To relax even in the busyness of ministry and every-day life, sometimes only for a few moments, and not allow Satan to make me discontented because I have little time alone with my family or solely for "me"
- 8 To not permit others' pity, for what they see as hardships in my life, to make me pity myself
- 9 To be calmly and firmly SURE of God's leading (by fellowship with Him, and by godly counsel from authority) so that others' approval or disapproval neither sways nor discomfits me
- 10 To remember to care the right way – the way that pleases God (I think I could write a whole article on this point alone and how the Lord is working on me about this, but I won't ... at least, not now.)

Really, there are so many things I could include here – much more than ten! And the explanation/practical application of each thing could certainly be more in-depth. But those are some of the things the Lord is continuing to teach me, and maybe you'll find some strength or encouragement by letting Him remind you of them in your day-to-day life, as well. True peace – HIS peace – passes all understanding and, when seen in your life by others, will be a silent witness, as well as frequently, an opportunity to witness not-so-silently so that others, too, may come to know the Prince of Peace.

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