



Hope and a Future *Ben & Ketita Johnson*

Blessings to You!

As a family, we have been feeling the combined joy and gravity of being set apart. We resonate with the idea that we aren't normal; we simply stand out. The color of our skin, the language we speak, our accented Spanish; it's obvious we aren't from around here. We are striving to assimilate into this new culture we live in. Even some of our attire has changed, not out of duty, but respect and desire to value what is valued here.

Along with the physical attempt to adapt and belong, there is a longing to be set apart for our King Jesus. We contemplate the physical examples of standing out, and ask the Father to reveal what it looks like to be set-apart for Him. Recently, a mentor reminded us how different Jesus is from us. His unconditional love, mercy, grace, patience, the list goes on and on, reminding us of how different He truly is from our fleshly selves. To live as His kids is to acknowledge the stark difference between Him and us, and then bask in the beauty that being Christ-like is possible because of His indwelling Spirit. What a gift! What a joy to carry His presence wherever we are, to raise our children with eyes fixed on Him, to trust that prayer, communion with Him, and fellowship with other believers will conform us more into His likeness.

I remember living in Nepal and being so moved by the sight of the small red dot or dark smudge on every person's forehead. This was a symbol, proclaiming to all that they had spent time worshipping their Hindu god. I remember the ache of knowing that each of them wore a symbol, proclaiming that they didn't know the One True God, and also the internal question of, do I look and act like someone who carries the Holy Spirit, someone who is set-apart?

Special Time Together

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Quality Time Together



Sometimes being set-apart is really uncomfortable. Sometimes we yearn to walk into a place full of people and not get stared at. Often the humiliation of not understanding the culture or language is uncomfortable. Though we may not like it, we know that discomfort is where growth happens. It's an invitation to embrace the tearing, the exposing, and the pain; welcoming us to self-assess, to grab hold of that which brings us to our knees, and allow Holy Spirit to change us, and make us even more set-apart. How set-apart are we willing to be?

Something I've found that seems to set people apart is their practice of gratitude. We were created to flourish, even in the suffocating and relentless culture. We are to shine like "lights in the world" (Philippians 2:15), surrendered vessels who, "take hold of that which is truly life" (1 Timothy 6:19). No matter the season we are in or the challenges we face, our reason to be grateful is that we belong to Him! Below is a set- apart, gratitude pledge I would like to share with you from the book, "Choosing Gratitude" by Nancy LeDemoss.

Thank you for your prayers and support! Thank you to those who blessed us extra by helping with transportation, donating belongings, hosting us, feeding us, arranging speaking opportunities, or committing to praying and supporting us financially. Furlough can be a stressful time, but we felt such an outpouring of love and support from the body of Christ, and we are so thankful for each of you!

Having been born into the kingdom of God, I do hereby acknowledge that God's purchase of my life included all the rights and control of that life for all eternity.

I do further acknowledge that He has not guaranteed me to be free from pain or to have success or prosperity. He has not guaranteed me perfect health. He has not guaranteed me perfect parents. He has not guaranteed me perfect children. He has not guaranteed me the absence of pressure, trials, misunderstandings, or persecution.

What he has promised me is eternal life. What He has promised me is abundant life. What He has promised me is love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, meekness and self-control. He has given me all of Himself in exchange for the rights to my life.

Therefore, I acknowledge this day the relinquishment of my rights and expectations, and humbly ask Him by His grace to replace these with a grateful spirit, for whatever in His wisdom He deems to allow for my life.

*Signed, me. Signed, you.
By Russel Kelfer*

We Are So Grateful!

It's truly amazing to think about the reality that we are here, serving the Honduran people because of your generosity! We never really seem to find a way to adequately thank you. We know that there is more joy in giving than in receiving, but as receivers, who can then can give, we are so grateful! Thank you so much for your willingness to cover us in prayer and financially partner with us and the mission of the Lord here.

Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas, and Happy New Year to your family from ours!

- The Johnsons

Support

Thank you for partnering with **Hope and a Future** to seek His Kingdom come and His will be done on earth as it is in Heaven! Thank you for your gifts and prayers.

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