



Easons in Ecuador

August 2019 Update

9 Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. 10 For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up. 11 Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone? 12 And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

There are few things in this world worse than being alone. Don't get us wrong – having some time alone can be great. For many of us, a little time apart to think, rest, listen to music, read a book, or simply enjoy the silence can be reenergizing. But to be truly alone – to feel like no one cares or understands, to have no one to

talk to, to know that no one has your back – is something no one ever wants to experience.

There's a reason that Jesus is Emmanuel – God with us. There's a reason that God's plan for taking His Gospel to the world is His Church – not mavericks or lone wolves, but a community, a family. He didn't make us to be alone. He made us to work together, to lift each other up when we fall, to support one another, to struggle alongside of one another. God constantly reminds us, not only of our need for Him, but also of our need for others to walk and work beside us. That has been a theme for us over the last few months.



Our Family

Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone? Ecclesiastes 4:11

We've had a busy summer with teams and interns (for whom we're thankful; more on that in a minute), and for now we're glad to have just a smidgen of time with only the four of us (plus an overly affectionate puppy) in our house. We've been able to spend a day at the beach and some "normal" nights at home doing nothing-out-of-the-ordinary. Emery recently finished his mid-year exams and did really well (he's such a studious little smarty pants). Speaking of pants, Selah is finally fully potty trained (let us tell you, that whole ordeal was a nightmare). We're thankful for this family that God has given us - for people to love and be loved by, for people that understand.



Getting ready to watch "El Rey Leon," or as you may call it "The Lion King." It was okay, but it's hard to improve on Will's favorite movie of all time.

Bonsai

A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart. Ecclesiastes 4:12b

To be honest, we've had some difficulties lately with Bonsai. We added 14 new children in December, and it took a while for the two groups to acclimate to one another. Things have gotten better in this department. We're also dealing with older kids now, not only because we added new families, but because the children we've worked with since the beginning are growing up. We're seeing all of the attitude, apathy, and adolescent angst (how about that alliteration?) that comes with the territory. Hormones are running amok. We're also seeing some of our older kids begin to be influenced negatively by what they see at school and (in some cases) at home.

Additionally, every member of our Bonsai team is dealing with some level of personal or familial conflict or stress at the moment, and people bring their baggage with them wherever they go. Oh, and Bonsai has some really grumpy neighbors that like to yell at us whenever we play outside. It's all led to a lot of stress for everyone.

On top of all of this, one of our students came forward last month to tell us she had been abused at home. She was scared, but we were able to walk with her through the process of reporting what had happened. It has been a very difficult time for her, but we thank God that she trusted us enough to tell us, and that the government has thus far done everything it should to protect her. How many other children are suffering the same thing and feel that they have no one to tell?

In spite of everything that has happened recently, we thank God for our Bonsai team. There's been difficulty, but none of us are struggling or suffering alone.



Teams and Interns

*Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor.
Ecclesiastes 4:9*

We've been, with some small breaks in between, either living with someone else or had someone else living with us for the last 20 months. Most of this has been as a result of housing interns. On one hand, we've had to be really careful to always wear pants all the time (that's the con). On the other hand, we've had some excellent help and been able to form great relationships with some great people over the last two years (that's the pro). We most recently said goodbye to Susanna Anderson and Lizzie Liuzzi (collectively known as Schlizzie), who lived and served with us over the summer. We also hosted Chloe Childerston (our longest-serving intern to date), Parker Overby, Joanna Williams (our first returning intern), Sarah Annis, Elaina Roher, Anna Lynch, and Becca Jones. All of them did an incredible job both with Bonsai and with our kids, some of them were fairly good at board and card games, and we had some great laughs and conversations together. Though they didn't live with us, we also hosted Link Year interns that were instrumental in helping us prepare and print our summer break resources for Bonsai two years in a

row. You guys are all the best.

We only hosted two short-term mission teams this summer, both of which were from Will's hometown, the thriving metropolis of Bloomingdale, Georgia (surely you've heard of it?). Both teams led VBS in the afternoons for Bonsai. The first team, First Baptist Bloomingdale, also helped us build and paint some cabinets, paint tables, and organize our supplies. The second group, South Newington Baptist (Will's home church), helped us finish the tables, did some deep cleaning at the church, and built some soccer goals. Funds raised by the teams are also allowing us to help the single mother of one of our new Bonsai families start a small restaurant business, which has been a dream of hers for years. We're grateful for the help that we're able to provide because of church partnerships; it's making a difference.



Top Left: Our family with Schlizzie, our most recent interns. Top Right: The team from FBC Bloomingdale. Bottom Left: Breakfast selfie with the South Newington team. Bottom right: Jungle selfie with Ashley G. from the South Newington group, because she somehow wasn't in the previous one.

On The Horizon

1) Will is scheduled to travel to the U.S. and (potentially) Canada from October 2 through November 2 to share about Bonsai and our plans to build a new ministry center (which you can read more about [here](#)). He still has space to visit two or three churches (between October 15 and October 24), so let us know if you're interested.

2) We're hoping to purchase land by the end of the year to begin construction of the ministry center. We have \$87,100 of the \$132,000 that we need for the purchase (just shy of 2/3). If you'd like to help, you can donate [here](#).



Prayer Needs

- 1) Pray for the difficulties we mentioned with our Bonsai children and team members, as well as our relationship with our church family and neighbors. Pray especially that our older kids would be drawn to Jesus in spite of all of the other influences around them. Pray for greater opportunities for our team to be in the homes of these children and to build deeper, significant relationships with their parents.
- 2) Pray for the child we mentioned who was a victim of abuse. The hearing for her abuser should be in the next few weeks; the date will be scheduled on this Thursday. Pray for justice and that God will continue to take care of her and her

siblings.

3) Pray for Will's trip to North America. Pray that God would provide the connections and the funds we need to continue to grow, and that He would take care of Amanda and the kids while Will's gone.

4) Continue to pray for rest and wisdom to manage our time well.

Thank you all so much for your love, prayers, and support. We're grateful that you have our backs and that we're not in this alone.

Love,
Will, Amanda, Emery, and Selah

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