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— Mark Your Calendars —

Servathon

• May 6th

Crooked Creek Parent's Meeting

• May 10th

WylDLife Yard Sale

• May 13th

Southwind Parent's Meeting

• May 15th

Windy Gap Work Week

• May 17th-22nd

Southwind

• June 16th-21st

Crooked Creek

• July 20th-31st



From the Area Director...

I was reading a book the other day. I can't remember which one it was, but it posed some questions that have haunted me over the past few weeks. Basically, it asked where I find my identity. Where do I find my worth? What defines me? Those are great questions, so I decided to put some thought into how I'd answer these. Over the course of a couple weeks I had two great object lessons that really helped me in thinking through the matter of identity and worth. The first story is a little humorous. You see, Crystal and I were just gifted with a mini-van from my in-laws. To be honest, it's fantastic for us. We're super grateful. It is, however, a mini-van. It's not sleek like the new vans. This guy has 256,000 miles on it, and it looks about as much like a "mom-mobile" as possible. Anyway, we were a little worried about its reliability so I drove it for the first 3 weeks. As luck would have it, I had to be on USC campus three times on the very first day I drove it. I even had one of our leaders ignore me as I pulled up beside him to offer him a ride (he eventually got in). The thing is, though, I really didn't mind driving it. I had a lot of space for hauling around junk and the van really does drive pretty well given the number of miles it has. The truth is, I really just don't care that much anymore what kind of car I drive. This fact kinda shocks me because my car was so important to me in high school and college. During that time in my life, I definitely found a great deal of my worth and identity in the type of car I was driving. This object lesson really just helped to show me that some of the things we wrap our identity up in can ultimately be so unimportant and fleeting.

My second lesson came via a tattoo (no mom, I didn't get one). A friend of mine was wanting to get a tattoo and sought my opinion. I'm no expert on tattoos, but what she wanted was in Hebrew script. I studied Hebrew in seminary, so she thought I could help her out. The word she wanted is pronounced "dowd" or "dode." It is the word used in Song of Solomon to express what we would term "the one I love" or "beloved." The Greek parallel is the word the apostle John uses to refer to himself in his gospel (see John 13:23). I helped her out as best I could and adamantly encouraged her to seek out a second opinion (my Hebrew is more than just a little rusty). Later that day though, I started to think about the term "beloved." In particular, I started thinking about John's usage of "Christ's Beloved" almost as a type of surname. In all honesty, I've always thought his reference to himself in this way was a little pompous. It's like he was more loved by Jesus than anyone else. Maybe in actuality he was Jesus' best friend, but I think John's use of this term is more than a reference to that detail. I think what we see in his use of the term beloved is that, more than anything else, being Jesus' beloved is where he found his identity. It was so much a part of who he was that he used it almost like a last name.

As far as tattoos go, I think my friend got it right. She wants to be reminded of the fact that she's Christ's beloved. John certainly had it right too. He realized that there's nothing more lasting than Christ's love and there's nothing more worthy of finding our life's purpose in than the fact that we are loved by Christ (Romans 8:38-39). So, I learned a great deal from mini-vans, tattoos and the apostle John over the past few weeks. I'm left with two questions though that won't let me go. They're follow ups to the question I started with. I challenged my leaders with them, and I'd like to leave them with you as well. First, how different would your life look if you truly found your identity and worth solely in the fact that you are loved by Christ? Work, school and what people think of you wouldn't become unimportant; they'd just have far less of an impact on your identity, self worth or sense of purpose in life. Second, how different would our high school and middle school friends' lives be if they could comprehend this love and grasp their status as Christ's beloved? My prayer is that we'll come back from camp this summer with a few more students that do realize this love and who have a brand new identity in Christ – his beloved.

Sincerely,
Jason Blackwell

Welcome to the GAP

On a beautiful February afternoon, six buses left Columbia for an unforgettable weekend at Windy Gap. Four hundred kids and leaders enjoyed a weekend filled with laughter, excitement, a lot of snow and the truth of the Gospel. Throughout the weekend, leaders and kids took fun to the next level. They were seen jumping in the lake in the snow, climbing through the trees on the ropes course and even asking the hard questions about who Jesus was and how he can change our lives today. Windy Gap is a great time for kids to see that loving Jesus is not boring, but full of LIFE (John 10:10). After a weekend at Windy Gap, I am pretty sure it is clear that having a relationship with Christ is fun. Each year Columbia brings more and more kids to Windy Gap. It has been awesome to watch the tradition grow over the years and for more and more kids in the Columbia Area to hear the truth of Christ's love for them.



Crooked Creek Ranch July 20th - 31st

The Best Week of Your Life!!

There are a few spots left for our amazing trip out West to Colorado.
If you are interested in the trip, Call the Young Life Office
and we will give you all of the details!

Wyld and Crazy

As another year is about to close, I think back on WyldLife and where it has come and I am amazed. In March, we went to Windy Gap for a weekend filled with fun and the truth of the gospel. On Friday afternoon, two buses pulled out of Columbia filled with over a hundred kids and leaders. As we sat down for dinner, we were introduced to two ninjas who were going to train us to be ninjas over the weekend. They led us in many fun games and events throughout the weekend. Along with sliding down the water slide into the freezing cold lake, swinging through the trees on a giant swing, rolling around in the mud and zip lining through the air, we heard about a man named Jesus. Ben Lewis, the speaker for the weekend, shared the story of Christ with the kids and leaders. He used many great visual aides along with some songs that he had written to help us understand the depth of Jesus Christ's love for us. Throughout the weekend, kids had opportunities to talk with our leaders and the people in their cabin about what Ben had to share. Overall the weekend was so much fun and a huge success.

Every other Monday night throughout this semester Quail Lane has been rocking with games, skits, food and great club talks. We have explored many topics about life, love and how Jesus is a part of it all. Along with club, our leaders have been hanging out with kids and some of them have even started some small study groups.

We are excited about where the Lord is continuing to lead this ministry and about our summer trip. June 16 – 21st, WyldLife will head to Southwind for an action packed week. If you are interested in finding out more about this trip, call the Young Life office for all of the details.

