Signs For Hope

GRACE

God's Riches At Christ's Expense

I want to try and highlight for you some of the many things God continues to reveal here at Signs for Hope. As always, I continue to be in awe of what God is doing all around you and me. I know, many times it might seem like He is not really the personal, intimate, relational God we read about in the Bible, but if we stop just momentarily and focus our attention on Him, not on our circumstances, His peace washes over us and His grace invades our thoughts. Brothers and sisters...that is worship! Let us commit to doing this on a daily basis.

Over the past 6 months, God has been solidifying a clearer picture of what the support system SFH will develop for families who have adopted Deaf children will encompass. This support system now incorporates four pillars, if you will. They are vital, I believe, to helping ensure families have the tools necessary to raise their Deaf children with the greatest ability to embrace the love Jesus has for each of them and the plans He has for them in the future. Not all of these pillars will be needed, to the same extent by all families, nevertheless they will be available for all in part or in whole.

SFH ASL-Friendly Biblical Parenting – Signs for Hope has longed for a structured Biblical foundation for undergirding families as they raise their Deaf children to know, love and follow Jesus wholeheartedly. The National Center for Biblical Parenting is the pillar for providing this foundation. Reaching the heart of a deaf child for lasting behavior change is the goal instead of just behavior modification motivated by rewards and punishments. This is how our God relates to us via His grace and mercy, not by motivating us through a system of rewards and punishments. Sadly, however this tends to be our perspective, often without even realizing it. Heart change is the ultimate goal granting a sustained, perpetual life change evidenced by a willingness to honor and obey our LORD from a grateful heart for all He has done and is doing on our behalf.

Dr. Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller, are committed to walking along-side SFH as we learn together how best to adapt their vast resources in Deaf-friendly ways to equip our families. I will be attending their presenter training, once again, the first weekend in October in Manassas, VA. Why am I attending this training again, you might ask? Once is never enough for me. It takes me multiple times of learning something to internalize it in such a way that it eventually becomes a natural response to the everyday. I so wish the NCBP had been around when we were raising our children, it is truly the most natural way of raising children in a home fully focused on Jesus encompassing His love and plan for His children, both parents and their children. Prayers for how best to proceed with this wonderful partnership are appreciated.

Trust-based Relational Interventions® - I have said before TBRI® and the NCBP dovetail each other so well. TBRI® includes the research and proofs of how "trauma" impacts the developing brain in utero and in those early years. And it provides great strategies for parents to learn how to connect with their trauma-brained children to help them eventually feel safe and begin the process of brain development renewal, culminating in connecting and self-regulation. Please pray for more ASL-fluent Christian folks to be TBRI® trained so they can help educate parents raising Deaf children in this way.

SFH Deaf Adoption Early Intervention Teams

- this pillar was identified earlier this year, as this great need was expressed in our Facebook group for families adopting Deaf children. By the way, this group has grown to well over 150 families across the US and in other countries. Many families connected to SFH do not have strong relationships with their local Deaf community or know much about raising children with deafness prior to bringing their deaf children home. Most states have Early Intervention (EI) programs (helping families raising deaf children learn all there is to know about deafness) of some kind available for families with young deaf children, under school-age, but most adopted children with deafness do not qualify as they tend to be older when adopted. The SKI-HI Early Intervention Curriculum, revealed to us in the spring, unites a Deaf Mentor team member, along-side the EI team member. This curriculum will provide strong resources and training for each family as they are mentored through each section one-on-one. Much of this one-on-one will be facilitated via the Internet. Please be praying for God to help us identify qualified Deaf mentors and their EI team members to begin to create teams to match with deaf adoptive families. Also ask God to touch the heart of someone to become the program facilitator for these teams, either by volunteering or raising their own support as a SFH missionary.

SFH ASL Basics – My time back in the classroom last spring coupled with another plea from multiple families in our SFH DeafAdopt Families Facebook group helped me realize the need to move forward with something I thought God had asked me to put aside when He called me to do this in 2008...teach ASL. Not only teach it, but develop a more natural way of teaching it without constantly linking it to English. Years ago, I searched for this approach for teaching ASL and could not find it, so I began to develop my own. Once I was back in the classroom I quickly realized, sadly, my two-year ASL interpreting students, some in their final semester, did not have a strong enough foundation in one of the most vital and basic aspects of ASL...handshapes. Again, I began my research for a curriculum for such. Nothing. Again. Please pray for God's clear guidance in developing this basic curriculum starting with the ASL handshapes and then moving to one handed then two-handed signs and then how best to make it available to families and others in need of learning it.

LIBERIA ...

Please join with us in asking God to open the way for Signs for Hope to physically go back to Liberia. Our last trip there ended March of 2014, 18 long months ago. Yes, God has continued to bless the cyber-relationships I have with both Deaf and hearing brothers and sisters in Liberia, but I am ready to get back to what God called us to do there in 2014, help develop a Deaf education plan that will benefit the Deaf teachers who have little to no training and improve the education of the Deaf across Liberia. Remember this SFH education plan encompasses needed academics, trade & life skills training, and biblical training. I am waiting for God to provide 2 or 3 additional team members for this initial reconnaissance trip back to assess the changes since Ebola struck. This trip will take approximately 16 – 17 days including all travel. I know this is a long trip, but I still believe this is what is needed and so far God has not changed my mind about this. School is back in session for this year and there is a new principal at the ACFI Deaf School. Please pray for God to work unhindered among the Deaf students and adults in Liberia and for Him to open the way for us to go back.

Vietnam…

My heart is still blessed by our "adventure trip" to Vietnam in June, each time God brings it to mind. Our partnership with Orphan Voice and others supporting the New Beginnings School for the Deaf is beyond words. Seeing with our own eyes what God is doing there was well worth the trip. We are asking Him to show us how we can continue to support this amazing work with the 9 deaf students ages 8 – 14 who had never been to school and did not have any official language training prior to November 2014. So thankful for the opportunity to also support these students' families for family preservation and teaching them Vietnamese Sign Language to communicate with their children, as well. Please pray with us for God to provide full financial support for this deaf school. Currently, the school is only receiving about 30% of their annual needed operating budget of approximately $15,000. Will you ask God to show you how He wants you to be involved in this amazing endeavor, please?

From my heart to yours …

Adoption is HARD! Anytime you hear the word ADOPTION, you should simultaneously think…suffering. With every adoption there is loss. With every adoption there is trauma. In order for your and my ADOPTION, by our heavenly Father, to be finalized…there was suffering. There was loss. There was trauma.

Adoption also brings…JOY! If you and I will remember, it was because of the JOY set before Jesus that He was willing and able to endure the earthly HARD to secure the ETERNAL. Adoption also brings…JOY!

Since God did not call Charles and me to adopt we do not experience the exact same things as the families who do. However, one thing I can tell you for sure, my LORD is constantly reminding me of my own "trauma-brain" when it comes to my challenges of "feeling safe" with Him every moment and in every circumstance. I cannot tell you how often my response to His unconditional love for me is getting stuck in fight, flight or freeze. My ingratitude toward Him is glaring when I am willfully disobedient. And when I become frenzied instead of full of faith, it is a slap to His face. My adoption process with my heavenly Father, in my mind, can easily be compared to the earthly adoption of trauma-brain child. The similarities God gives me in each of these processes are convicting, for sure.

Please pray for the deaf adopting families as they endure the earthly HARD to secure the ETERNAL for their children.

Will you join me in committing again to walk by faith and not by sight? Will you join me in striving to fully embrace God's perfect love, which casts out all fear? These are the things you and I and our deaf adopting families must exhibit for the children and the next generation to help train them in having a strong trust-based relationship with our heavenly Father for the benefit of all.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before Him He endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.
Hebrews 12:1-3.

You know I love you, but He loves you so much more!

Becky

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