Finding the Joy

A devotional for IVMs written by upperclassmen
Student Organization Abbreviations

If you are like all the rest of us and find yourself confused by all of the abbreviations for the different clubs, then this is the cheat sheet for you 😊

- **SCAVMA~** Student Chapter of the American Veterinary Medical Association
- **AHVMA~** Holistic Vets
- **AVSAB~** Animal Behavior
- **CVF ~** Christian Veterinary Fellowship
- **SCAABP (“BP”)~** Bovine Practitioners
- **SCAAEP (“EP”)~** Equine Practitioners
- **SCAAFP~** Feline Practitioners
- **SCACVIM~** Internal Med
- **SCACVP~** Vet Pathologists
- **SFT~** Theriogenology/Repro Club
- **SVECCS~** Emergency & Critical Care
- **SRP~** Small Ruminant Practitioners
- **VBMA~** Veterinary Business Management Association
- **ZEW~** Zoo, Exotics & Wildlife
Prayer for the
Class of 2015

Father, we lift up the Class of 2015 to you as they take the first step of the next four years of their lives. We ask you to walk beside them and guide them in your Way, to teach them how to abide in you always. Refresh them when they are weary, encourage them when they grow disheartened, and above all else help them to live full, abundant lives that will be a reflection of you. Father, guard their hearts and their minds against attacks from the Enemy. May they be always full of your truth, love, joy, peace, kindness, patience and humility. Give them the strength to be selfless and to “consider others better than themselves” so that they will be a class that supports and encourages one another. Help them to live with eternity stamped on their eyes as they “set their hearts on things above”, proclaiming the name of Jesus to those around them. Help them to each day be bold and purposeful, to live with urgency!
About CVF

Christian Veterinary Fellowship is founded as a means for those associated with the College of Veterinary Medicine at Texas A&M University to encourage one another in their faith in Christ. It offers a support system for students who are connected by their common beliefs. CVF also provides a link between veterinarians in the community and students and faculty who share the same basis for ethical practice of veterinary medicine. Our vision is:

- **To encourage students to grow in their relationship with Christ**
- **To offer fellowship with other students who share the Christian faith**
- **To provide a Christian witness at the college**
- **To offer students information on the opportunities available for Christian service in veterinary medicine**

2011-2012 Officer Team

**President:** Preston Stone, 3VM  
**Vice President:** Stephanie Grissom, 3VM  
**Treasurer:** Stephanie Buntain, 3VM  
**Secretary:** Melissa Appel, 2VM  
**Fundraising Coordinator:** Melinda Wood, 3VM  
**Missions Coordinator:** Melanie Hensley, 2VM  
**4VM Rep:** Cindy Carter  
**3VM Rep:** Beau Schilling  
**2VM Rep:** Michelle Tucker  

**Advisors:** Dr. Dan Posey, Dr. Clay Ashley, Dr. Kevin Washburn
Finding the Joy
By Stephanie Grissom, Class of 2013

“The LORD is my strength and shield. I trust him with all my heart. He helps me, and my heart is filled with joy...” Psalm 28:7

I remember sitting in Room 201 during orientation, happy & excited to be there but a little dazed by the overwhelming amount of information that had just been presented to me. Despite being bombarded by an avalanche of instructions & information, something that really stuck with me was a piece of advice that seemed to be the recurring theme of orientation: “Find the joy”. Everyone seemed to have different ideas of where you might be able to find this joy but one thing was for certain, we were all going to need it to get through the next four years. I soon realized that the only true, lasting joy was that which came from our Heavenly Father, nothing else would do. There may be ways to temporarily forget your worries, but nothing that will give you the strength to carry on & that will lift your burdens. As the heavy burdens of vet school settles in, lean heavily on Him & allow Him to show you what scripture means when it says “The joy of the Lord is your strength” (Nehemiah 8:10). At times everything will seem to be going terribly, from a bad grade to exhaustion... Satan will do all that he can do to discourage you, to say to you that you don’t belong here; that you are not smart enough or strong enough; he will get you to compare yourself to others; the lies will go on & will grow into an ugly monster in your heart & mind if you let them. You will be faced with the choice to listen to the lies & to settle into a dark place, or you can choose to let God renew your strength & to fill your heart “with all joy & peace as you trust in Him” (Romans 15:13). Don’t let the Enemy steal your joy! Joy is a fruit of the Spirit & it allows others to know that you are His. When the world around you is dark & heavy, let your joy shine through & be a beacon of hope to others of the life that can be found in Christ.

Precious Lord, let us turn our hearts & our eyes to you as you fill us with goodness & truth. Guard our hearts against the lies surrounding us. May our joy be evident to all!

Stephanie, 3VM, is from Seminole, TX. She hopes to serve the Lord through veterinary medicine as a mixed animal practitioner & her heart is to share the Gospel with those who don’t yet know the love of their Savior. She serves as SCAAEP President, CVF Vice President and is a member of SCAABP, SRP, and Internal Med. (skgrissom@cvm.tamu.edu)
"Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village, and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord’s feet, listening to His word. But Martha was distracted by all her preparations; and she came up to Him and said, ‘Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me.’ But the Lord said to her, ‘Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about many things, but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.’ " Luke 10:38-42

We have a list a mile long of places to be and things to do, both for school and outside of school, that can fill all our time and attention from the first moment of being awake to falling asleep at night. All of them are proper things to spend time on, just as Martha’s serving of the Lord was a commendable use of her God-given time and energy. But He would never have her or any of us miss out on knowing Him for the sake of getting things done. “Only one thing is necessary.” Time with Him, getting to know Him, sitting at His feet and enjoying the blessing of being close to Him is what He desires for us, and He wouldn’t have us miss it for anything. He knows the life He called you to, exactly how stretched thin and tired you are, and wants more than anything to give you rest for your soul. The same gentle words He spoke to Martha are meant for us as well, including during this brief time in vet school. Don’t let the busyness pull you away from the only necessary thing. Keep your eye on the true prize. We’re to do everything we do like we’re doing it for the Lord, but He never will say to us, “You could be doing something more productive. Why are you wasting time sitting with Me?” It’s not always easy to do, and there were times when I let myself get wound so tight and run so ragged that I didn’t even want to spend time with the Lord. But there has never been an instance when I’ve spent time with my Savior who loves me and looked back on it with regret. We get to wake up every morning and spend the day with Him, learn about medicine, and love people. Abide in Him; He’s made a promise to you to give you the joy, peace, and strength you need to make it through this time in your life, and come out of it still running the race well. When He made these promises, He hadn’t forgotten to account for vet school. He fills you up to the fullest measure, shaken down and spilling over. If you choose the good part, it won’t be taken from you.

“"I was born in Georgia, and when I was four my dad (who is a vet) took a job with USDA in Oregon, where we have lived ever since. In a turn of events I never would have predicted, we’re now in the process of moving back to Texas, my parents’ home state. I grew up with Quarter Horses and I worked on a dairy for three years, which I loved. I would also love to spend time doing some veterinary work and sharing the gospel in Africa some day.”

Melanie has a beautiful heart for those around her and for those overseas who have never heard the name of Jesus. She is a member of SFT, BP, EP and will be serving as the CVF Missions Coordinator this year. If you feel called to serve the Lord through veterinary missions don’t hesitate to contact Melanie at MTHensley@cvm.tamu.edu
“Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled” Hebrews 12:12-15

I was tired. I was bitter. I was struggling to muster the maturity to try to study. Vet school is a challenge, but not in the way I imagined. I was expected to know lots of detail about a long list of things for each of my 24 or so hours of courses per semester without the satisfaction of knowing why I should learn these things. I was severely frustrated. I wanted to run. I doubted my career choice. I doubted my purpose in life…I was defeated. Fortunately, I was still in the Potter’s hands. He continues to spiritually mature me through this time of trial. My comfort comes in knowing that God placed me on this path for a reason: His purpose. I’m not in vet school to thrive academically, I’m here to learn a trade and to use it to impact this world for Him. Despite the rhetoric, vet school is somewhat like the real world. There are people who are here to help you, and there are people who are not. I try to get to know all of my classmates and professors. I want to develop friendships and witness to my friends and associates, both students and faculty, who take time to share their passion for excellence and for helping others. That is what we are called to do: to encourage and build one another up in the spirit of our Christ. It’s contagious (though some have stubborn immunity).

“Jesus, thank you for putting me where I am today. I know that You have gone before me and continue to prepare Your chosen path for me. Awaken and give me courage to speak and sew seed for Your kingdom today. In faith, I will do my best to learn all I can so that I can humbly serve and honor You in my veterinary career.”

Beau, 29, is from George West, TX. He grew up on a family farm and ranch, so indoor pets are new to him. Beau did research before coming to vet medicine. He is the 3VM rep for CVF and an officer in SRP and SCAVIM. He married Bethany Solomon after she completed vet school here in 2010. They now have Gracie (golden doodle) and Barnabas (thinks-he’s-golden cat). He commuted into school from the Bastrop area all of last year. Beau and “B” will live in BCS for the duration of his vet school. They look forward to being Dr. Beau and Dr. B. If you’d like to hear more from Beau’s real and honest perspective, e-mail him at BRSchilling@cvm.tamu.edu.
**Week 3**  **"Leaders of Light"**  
*by Jamie Herrmann, Class of 2014*

“For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, love, and self-discipline.” 2 Timothy 1:7

There are so many times that people sit back and blend in with the everyday crowd. It is easy to be the neutral party and just “get by.” This is not the attitude that God instilled in us as His children, though. We were made to be leaders, those that others looked to when times were tough. As Christians, we are indeed followers but we are followers of Jesus Christ, the one and only true savior. This is such a powerful fact and the reason why we should be leaders here on Earth. As leaders, we are examples to others and must discard any timidity or doubt and exhibit an attitude of power with our ideas and actions, love towards others (whether friend or foe) and self-discipline in our everyday life. Although there may be times we may think we are fighting a losing battle, we can never truly lose if we are using the characteristics that God has instilled in us and keep our focus on Christ while always looking to the cross.

"Dear Lord, please give me the strength to use the gifts and blessings you have bestowed upon me. Please help me be a leader, throwing away any timid thoughts or actions and showing a spirit of power, love and self-discipline to the world."

Jamie Herrmann, 2VM, is a member of International Veterinary Student Association, Veterinary Business Management Association, and Christian Veterinary Fellowship. He enjoys fishing, weight-lifting, coaching baseball, hanging out with friends, family, and girlfriend. If you have any questions for Jamie be sure to e-mail him at JWHerrmann@cvm.tamu.edu.
“For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” Galatians 2:19-20

The milking parlor was a clay brick building that looked to have been built during China’s last dynasty. It had no electricity and no heat to warm the inside on this cold, blustery day in China’s northern Inner Mongolia region. There were two women sitting on either side of the dark, cold barn busily pulling at the cows’ udders in order to fill their metal milk buckets. The only light was supplied by the entry way which had no door, and a few small windows.

The harsh cold and wind of the encroaching Gobi desert had weathered the women’s features so it was difficult to tell their age. They could have been 14 or 40. As each woman filled her bucket, she would lift it and walk over to another room to pour the contents into a larger, chilled collection vat. She then would return to the next cow and start the procedure again.

What made this scene so striking is that we had just left this dairy’s modern heated milking barn that sat unused. The modern barn contained a portable milking unit that also was unused. A shiny, stainless steel yogurt making machine sat in the corner lacking a small part that would allow it to work. They didn’t know where to get the needed part or when it would be repaired. In this big, new, comfortable barn only a small storeroom was being used to house some calf fee.

China’s Inner Mongolia region is one of China’s main milk producing regions. The Chinese government has noted that countries who drink milk “rule the world” so they encourage local governments to allocate money and resources to improve dairies and milk production. So buildings are built and equipment is bought but, in some cases, like this dairy, it sits unused.

Why does this happen? In some cases, the people are ignorant of the benefits of the new way of doing things. In other cases, the people fear learning the new technology and the new procedures. Many times, people are just comfortable to continue in an old way and too stubborn to change. In any case, they continue in the old way without realizing the benefits of the new way.

Jesus came, sent by God, to bring something new. He brought a new way; a way to reconcile sinful man to God the Creator through God’s own grace. All of man’s attempts to know God through religion, through sacrifices, through rituals continually fell short. As if to prove to man that they did not have the ability to do good, God chose a people unto Himself, the Jewish nation. They had the inside scoop as the chosen people – the Promise of Abraham, the rich history, the amazing miracles of Moses, the prophets who heard directly from God, yet they couldn’t obey God. If ever there was a people who could reach God through their own religious
efforts and show others how to do it, it was Israel. But all they could do was fall into the same old religious habits which had failed the world over.

Substituting religiosity for knowing God has been and continues to be a trap to all people. Here in China, with its long history of Confucius and Buddhism and its current history of Communism, when it comes to talking about God with the Chinese, the people’s only points of reference center around religious practice. So, in most cases, I must begin talking about the difference between practicing religion and knowing God through Christ. In man’s futile attempt to reach God through following religious rules, man is actually bound by the rules instead of knowing the freedom of Christ. Jesus said, “I have come to set you free so that you may be free indeed.” The thinking Jew listening to Jesus asked, “Free from what? I’m not a slave.” Jesus’ simple answer was “Free from sin.” However, as we read through the New Testament, we find that the freedom is also from striving in vain to please God through religious rules. Paul in his letter to the Galatians spends the entire letter asking the Galatians why they are falling back into the works based religion from which Jesus’ death and resurrection had freed them.

Since Jesus’ death and resurrection, we can see numerous examples of how man continues to fall back into this old trap that binds. I’ve already mentioned the very early example of the Galatian church. This struggle has continued through the history of Christianity as people identify themselves more with the particular church denomination than with Jesus the Savior. In doing this the church organization, the church programs, and facilities become more important than doing the things Jesus asked us to do, like loving others, praying for the sick, sharing the real good news of reconciliation, and knowing God.

‘I encourage you to put off religion and make knowing God through the gift of life He gave your priority today!’

Dr. Clay Ashley is the Director of the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences’ Veterinary Medical Research Park. He and his family served as a long-term Christian Veterinary Mission Fieldworkers for 3 years in Ulaanbaatar, Outer Mongolia where he was a guest lecturer at the Mongolian Agriculture University’s Veterinary school as well as worked closely with Mongolian veterinarians and CVM short-term shuttles developing a mixed animal veterinary training center. After their time in Mongolia, Dr. Ashley and his family moved to China where they spent 5 years as CVM fieldworkers. In China, they lived in Guizhou province where worked with other missionaries to start a beef cattle company as well as working at Qian Nian provincial veterinary college as a guest lecturer. His heart for the nations and desire to proclaim Christ is evident in all that he does.
“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.”

Romans 8:1-2

First year, I struggled most with coming face-to-face with so many of my imperfections. In a sea of emotional, mental, physical and spiritual obstacles it’s so easy to focus on what we feel like we’ve failed at. It may not be a failing grade on an exam as much as failing to pursue your relationship with God as He wants you to, failing to love your classmates as you ought, failing to make the grades you’re used to, or even just failing to keep track of the little things such as cleaning your house or showing up to class on time. Recently, I’ve been struck at how natural it is to feel guilty, to feel hopeless in these situations and it was a regular part of my daily routine to fall short in all of these areas. The thing is, even if I did fall short according to God, there’s no room for condemnation. If I meet with Him and find myself not measuring up to His standards, there should always be repentance but never guilt. The difference is the presence of hope. With repentance, Christ comes in and covers us and this is our hope. Without Him there is no hope, only Satan pointing his accusing finger and shackling us to our sin with the lie that there is no hope. I have seen a number of my friends carrying their guilt around and they are worn down trying to lift a burden that is immovable by human effort. Don’t let guilt sap you of your energy—go to God, confess and repent and then no longer allow Satan to have that hold on your life. I find that when I truly adhere to this principle: I am free.

“In your own words, claim this verse over your life, and keep claiming it every time you are tempted to feel guilty about an area of your life where you feel you’ve fallen short.”

Michelle Tucker, 2VM, is all the way from Lexington, KY. She will be serving as the CVF 2VM Rep for her classmates. If you’d like to talk to Michelle about this devotional or hear her story of how the Lord brought her all the way to Texas, email her at MTucker@cvm.tamu.edu
“In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps.”
Proverbs 16:9

While I fully comprehend and understand that you have taken many steps to get to this place, and you have placed a lot of value in this experience, allow me to let you in on a concept that, for me, has made it much more enjoyable and less stressful. It’s not a new thought by any means, and you will hear it from several people other than me. Ready? Ok - here it goes (repeat after me): **My life will not be defined by the fact that I am in vet school.** Don’t you feel better already? Let’s take it a step further so you can really feel at ease. My life will not be defined by the fact that I am in vet school, because this fact is dependent on God’s plans for me and I am here for a divine reason. Wow! So, at this point, you probably have one of two thoughts. On one hand, you may already know this truth. If this is the case, I urge you to try and do your best to keep this at the forefront of your mindset. Don’t struggle everyday with what you can not do, but focus on doing everything to the highest of your capabilities. Do not be ashamed of failure or falling short because it’s in the hardest times that you learn the most about yourself and your faith. Never think that you are less important or influential than anyone else around you. Not all vet students are created equal, and I mean that in the best of ways. Everyone has their own strengths and weaknesses; focus on the strengths God has instilled in you and, more so, help others whose weaknesses are those in which you excel. The “golden rule” can get you far in this place, and you’ll be a better person for it. Do all that you can do, and God will provide the rest. For those of you who do not know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, I can only offer my experience. I was a prideful perfectionist through high school and undergrad. I now deal with issues such as depression and anxiety because of it. However, it was in my most difficult times that I turned to God. Putting my life in God’s hands and understanding that He is my source of strength and power has made me feel much more at peace with myself and the world around me. I plead with you to explore what God may have in store for you - you might be very surprised to hear His answer. There are many people, including myself, who would love to talk with you about our testimonies, go to church with you, or just chat about life if you need to. Don’t hesitate to reach out; if salvation is at stake, you have no need to feel embarrassed! Regardless of where you stand on this topic, find comfort that you are not in a unique situation, you will succeed and you have an entire network of support around you. Remember, no matter what your plans are now they can always change tomorrow and these next four years are just a baby step to everything you are going to accomplish. Good luck and God Bless!!

"Lord, I ask for guidance and assistance in making every day about what I can do for you rather than what I can do for myself. I surrender to the fact that your plans for me are greater than anything I could ever plan on my own. I thank you for the grace to live life on my own terms but under Your will."

Melinda Wood, 3VM, is from Corpus Christi, TX. She is involved in many organizations as the Treasurer-Class of 2013, CVF Fundraising Coordinator and as a member of SCAAEAP, SCAABP, SCACVIM, VBMA, and ZEW. She has also been helping to organize a Disaster Response student organization,. She attends Brazos Fellowship in College Station.
“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus”. Philippians 4:6-7

What in your life do you worry about? School? Family? Money? Everyone has things in their life that they worry about. The verses above have proven to be a tremendous encouragement to me even before I started vet school, and I know they will be for long after. “Be anxious for nothing…” – NOTHING. Easier said than done, right? If you stop reading there, it sounds as though it’s your responsibility to get your worries in check. However, if you keep reading you see that’s not the case. We are not meant to bear our burdens alone. We are to present them to God with thanksgiving. And what happens? He responds by giving us His peace. A peace that “surpasses all comprehension.” It may not be for us to understand, but it is there for us to receive. God’s peace will, not might but will, guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus. When I find myself getting stressed out or worried about tests or projects or finding time to see my family or anything else that seems to pile up, the truth of these words has brought me back to where I should be – relying on the only One that can handle it all and is in control of it all. Take a minute and write down the things that you tend to worry about in your life. Now, spend some time in prayer asking God to take each of these worries away, laying them at His feet.

“I pray that you will receive the peace that God has for you, and that these verses will encourage you far beyond your days in vet school”

Stephanie, 3VM, is from Lewisville, TX. At the vet school, she’s involved with Internal Med, ZEW, IVSA and will be serving as Treasurer for CVF. She was part of the team that went to Honduras last Christmas and is very active at Grace Bible Church. Email her at SBuntain@cvm.tamu.edu.
“Now all glory to God who is able, through His mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to Him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.” - Ephesians 3:20-21

Cindy Carter, 4VM, served last year as our CVF President and is also a former CVF Missions Coordinator. If you have any questions for Cindy email her at clcarter@cvm.tamu.edu.
“But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.”

Philippians 3:7-11

He listens and He touches. He comforts and He disciplines. He dwells within us and He intercedes. He protects us, He guides us, He provides our every need. He is the vine and He gives us light. He has spoken to us in his word and He keeps us from temptations that we cannot bear. He is deeply involved. God is not apathetic. He does not abstain, He does not abrogate his responsibilities to fulfill his promises. He is faithful to the end. He is a father to the fatherless. He defends the weak and the needy. He is righteous and He does what is right. He sends rain on the just and the unjust. You cannot accuse God of coping out. He doesn’t bail. He doesn’t flee. He never retreats and He never abandons the battle. He is deeply involved. He takes the evil king to task and He judges the wicked. He opposes the proud but He gives grace to the humble. He hears the cries of His people. He listens to them and He answers our prayers. His providential hand has been felt by those who have come before us and will be felt by those who come after us. He brings peace in the midst of trials. He opens the prison doors. He sets the captives free. He is present in the fox hole and He knows when a sparrow falls. He is the ever present, the ever near, the everlasting Father. He has not abandoned us and He will not forsake us. He is involvement. If you want to follow Him, you must engage in the battle. Our highest calling is to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death and therefore being transformed into world changers. -Adapted from Del Tackett, The Truth Project

“I thank you for loving me. While I was in rebellion, you came to die for me. I pray that my understanding of Your nature would increase today, that I would walk closely with You and that the love you pour into me would overflow to all those around me. I pray that they would see You, for who You really are, when they look at my life.”

Dr. Jay Griffin is from Georgetown, TX and has been a follower of Christ since 2001. He is a member of the Texas A&M Class of 2000 and graduated from veterinary school in 2004. Dr. Griffin serves at the vet school as a Veterinary Radiologist. He and his wife, Sarah, are very involved with CVF and are expecting their first child this fall!
Week 10 "Which Soil Are You?"
BY KATIE MAPLES, CLASS OF 2013

“...but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the Word, making it unfruitful...” Mark 4:1-20

I have come to realize over this past year that I have wasted a considerable amount of time being the 3rd type of soil. The type of soil that was crowded out by the cares of exams, friends, clubs and homework to the point where Jesus had hit the back burner in my life. I heard this parable and knew that this is not what God intended for my life. I knew that I would never grow in Christ without God at the center of my life. I spent much of my 1st year in vet school so involved with homework and school that I was miserable and stressed beyond belief. I was leaning on myself and not on the Lord. I would spend my Sundays catching up on sleep and studying when I should have been in church. Finally it just became too much and I knew that the one person I could go to had always been there waiting for me. I started out slow trying to get involved in CVF and make friends who could be examples to me of a Christ-like heart. I then began attending a church regularly and even got involved in a Bible study. That led to getting involved in a Sunday school class and even going to Honduras over Christmas break. Through all of these things God has taught me so much and the seeds He has been planting all along are now falling on fertile soil. Strong roots are now being laid and a great harvest being produced for the Lord. Thinking back to my state of mind as a 1st year, I would have thought I would never have had time for all these things but now I know how silly that sounds. I know that by making time (even when you don’t think you have it) for the Lord is one of the best things you can do. I am still a work in progress and I am looking forward to all the growth the Lord is planning for me in the coming years.

I pray that each of y'all see where you fit in this parable. Is your heart the cold soil where Satan is picking away the seeds from the lord, or are you the careless heart where you do not cultivate and grow strong roots in the Lord, or maybe your heart was like mine and you let all the other cares in the world crowd out the seeds from the Lord. By knowing what kind of heart I had I was able to allow the Lord to change my heart into the kind that has strong roots and makes fruit for the Lord. I pray that one day we will all have the Christ-like heart that has strong roots and is producing a great harvest for the Lord.

My name is Katie Maples and I am a 3rd year vet student tracking mixed (for now anyways) I am the oldest of 3 girls and grew up in Sugar Land TX. My family is amazing has been a great encouragement to me in my faith growing up. I currently attend Grace Bible Church along with many other 3rd years. I know how hard it is to get plugged into a church and I would not be where I am today without the Christ like friends that have invited to Grace. I would love for you to join us if you need to get plugged in. I know first year is hard and please know that the Lord is there for you and that we will also be there for you as experts in how to survive 1st year. Call or e-mail me with anything thing you need: 713-480-6743. Kmmaples@cvm.tamu.edu
“You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:6-8

My grandfather grew up along the Yegua Creek in East Texas. As a youth, one of his pastimes was fishing along the river’s banks. On one such fishing occasion, he happened upon a lone calf stuck in the muddy banks. The calf had ventured away from the herd and neared the water for a drink, only to find itself suddenly trapped by the deceptive pull of the mud. As my grandfather watched, the calf continued to struggle against the mud, feebly attempting to free itself. My grandfather found a rope and attempted to help, but the stubborn calf initially turned away from assistance. The harder the animal struggled, the deeper into its predicament it sank. Finally, when it became obvious to the calf that it could not save itself, it gave up and allowed my grandfather to guide it to safety.

In much the same way, we as Christians are faced daily with our sins and the struggles that have sentenced us to death under the Law. Although we foolishly try to work through our troubles alone, we only dig ourselves deeper into believing the lies of the devil, telling us that we can save ourselves. Sooner or later, we realize that our efforts apart from Christ are worthless. Only when we turn to Him—the author and perfector of our faith and the source of our salvation—are we freed from the power of death and the devil. And it is with His help and ever-present caring hand that we are brought to the loving embrace of our Savior and Redeemer into the blessed gift of everlasting Life.

“Heavenly Father: Thank you for sending your Son into this sinful world to fulfill the Law in ways that I simply cannot. Please help me to see your guiding hand in my life, to realize that I cannot make this journey alone, and to listen to your voice as I work to do your Will. In Your Son’s name I pray, Amen.”

Melissa Appel is a 2nd year vet student from Helotes, Texas. She wants to practice mixed animal medicine somewhere in rural Texas, and is currently involved in the student chapters of Christian Veterinary Fellowship, Society of Theriogenology, Bovine Practitioners and the Vet School Open House.
“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.” Colossians 3:15-16

Peace. It is such a far off word for you right now as you trudge through your first year of vet school. But, somewhere, tucked deep inside of you, there is an abundant well of peace waiting to be tapped. That well of peace is the peace that Christ provides to those who rely on Him. As you navigate through your first year, through things like anatomy lab, or histology or physiology, it may seem so daunting and make you feel like you are going to lose it any second. Just take a deep breath or two and meditate on the verse. Know that there is a powerful Spirit inside of you that can supply you with all the peace in the world. Whether it is stressing over your next big test, or disappointment from your last one, know that in Him there is a bottomless well of peace. Be confident in that and rely on Him to get you through, as that’s the only way that I was able to make it! Lastly, be thankful. Look around you. Take a look at where you are and the people around you. You are here, in vet school at this tremendous institution that is Texas A&M. You have been so blessed, so remember to be thankful and give all of the praise and glory to Him, our Father in Heaven.

Peace be with you.

Written by Preston Stone, 3VM. Preston will be serving as our CVF President this year, so please be keeping him in your prayers as he leads us! Preston was a member of the CVF Honduras Team this past Christmas. His contact info is pbstone@cvm.tamu.edu. Please feel free to contact him if you have any questions regarding the above devotional or any matter in general.
Week 13 “How We Choose To Live Our Faith”
BY DAN POSEY, DVM

“For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.” 2 Timothy 1:7

We are all on the road of life looking for the places to live out our faith. We look to Jesus as our example of how to walk in faith. By his example we learn that He did everything in this world with intention. There was no wandering from place to place; he knew exactly where he was going and the challenges that He would face. In our days to come we will all face challenges; some will be known, others will come out of nowhere. We should live boldly in our faith and face these challenges without timidity. “For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and self-discipline”. We should be outward beacons of faithful people that face this world with the confidence that we serve the only true God, who loved us so much that He gave us life through the death of His Son. We were given a Spirit of power which is manifested through the power of love and self-discipline. Challenges are coming our way and you will successfully conquer by choosing not to be intimidated but to recognize that you have the ability to overcome all things through Christ.

“O heavenly Father, thank You for the challenges that we will face this next year. Every challenge helps us choose to walk in faith, which brings us closer to You.”

Dr. Posey is Director of Special programs and serves as an associate professor at the vet school. He is a faculty advisor for CVF and is actively involved in many areas of the college. He is a great mentor and encourager. Be sure to take the time to get to know Dr. Posey, he is truly a joy to know!
“Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God…” 1 Peter 4:1-11

As you have attended college over the past few years you may have partied a little too much on occasion and hung around with the wrong crowd. I encourage you to consider this year as a new beginning. Surround yourself with the body of Christ, find a good church home and good Christian friends so that you may be encouraged to walk faithfully. Strive to be an example of God’s love to those that are around you. Be gracious, merciful and kind in everything you do. Remember God's love for you and the sacrifice that was paid, through the blood of Jesus, for your sins. Every day is a new challenge. Remember that God will only give you what you can handle.

“I pray that God will give you wisdom and knowledge throughout your studies and will give you judgement and discernment in all your decisions. I pray that you will be witness of God's love and testimony to the life changing power of the Holy Spirit”

I am a 3rd year Large Animal Internal Medicine resident here at Texas A&M. I am originally from Florida and have been here in College Station for just over 2 years with my wife, our newborn daughter, horses, dogs and cat. Our church family here in College Station has really been our home away from home. God has provided us with such great friends. This verse has been a source of encouragement throughout the years as I have made some tough decisions.
Week 15  “Approved by Christ”  
By Dustin McElwee, DVM  

“Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in life, in love, in faith and in purity.”  
1 Timothy 4:12  

When I think back to my veterinary school days they are a blur of study and activity to me now only four short years after graduation. I spent four years cramming in all sorts of facts, figures, and anatomical charts into my brain so that I could regurgitate and replicate that material on an exam of some type. Now it seems that I have spent the last four years since graduation unraveling and sorting out all of this information into a usable database from which I can correctly diagnose and treat disease and pestilence of all types.  

I have seen my walk with Christ take the same turns over the years. Some periods are spent cramming and working on our own lives while other periods are spent trying to make sense of it all and figure out what our part is in God’s kingdom and the grand scheme of life. In the last four years God has placed me in many positions that I can clearly see how my life’s experience in previous situations have very clearly prepared me to take on roles and responsibilities that I have now assumed. Chronological age does not automatically make a person wise and Godly in character and you may be better prepared and mature in Christ than persons twice your age. God does command us to honor and esteem those older than us properly but don’t be afraid to step up and step out to tasks that God directs you to do. God will not call you to a task without equipping us properly. It is in our weaknesses that he is shown to be strong and we open our lives up to receive God’s blessing by stepping out in obedience to Him. I would like to encourage each and every one of you reading this to not be afraid to speak up and be used by God in your family, community, church, veterinary classes or wherever you find yourselves. God uses us in the small things and the large things in life if we will only turn loose and let Him.  

“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the Word of Truth.” 2 Timothy 2:15  

Dr. Dustin McElwee, a former CVF president, serves as a mixed animal practitioner at Brock Veterinary Clinic in Lamesa, TX.
"I bless the Lord who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. I keep the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also rests secure. For you do not give me up to Sheol, or let your faithful one see the pit."

Psalm 16:7-10

This new portion of your life that you have embarked upon will be amazingly fulfilling and in the same moments, all-consuming of your mind, energy and heart. At times it may seem that your spiritual life is dry and habitual-devoid of the energy to have an active relationship with anyone, even God the Most High! Remain near to Him with a faithful heart because He’s promised that our dry seasons won’t last forever. Best of all, He loves you and will preserve your relationship with Him as long as you ask with a sincere heart.

“Lord, help us to hold on to your great and precious promise that you will restore & renew us as we walk through this dry and weary land. May your Spirit rain down on us & give us the strength to press on”

Nicole, 3VM, is currently serving as SFT President and is active in several organizations including CVF and EP. She hails all the way from Illinois but fits right into Aggieland. If you’d like to hear more from Nicole, email her at neferguson@cvm.tamu.edu.
“HIS DIVINE POWER HAS GIVEN US EVERYTHING WE NEED FOR LIFE AND GODLINESS THROUGH OUR KNOWLEDGE OF HIM WHO CALLED US BY HIS OWN GLORY AND GOODNESS. THROUGH THESE HE HAS GIVEN US HIS VERY GREAT AND PRECIOUS PROMISES, SO THAT THROUGH THEM YOU MAY PARTICIPATE IN THE DIVINE NATURE AND ESCAPE THE CORRUPTION IN THE WORLD CAUSED BY EVIL DESIRES.

FOR THIS VERY REASON, MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ADD TO YOUR FAITH goodness; AND TO GOODNESS, KNOWLEDGE; AND TO KNOWLEDGE, self-control; AND TO SELF-CONTROL, perseverance; AND TO PERSEVERANCE, godliness; AND TO GODLINESS, brotherly kindness; AND TO BROTHERLY KINDNESS, love.

FOR IF YOU POSSESS THESE QUALITIES IN INCREASING MEASURE, THEY WILL KEEP YOU FROM BEING INEFFECTIVE AND UNPRODUCTIVE IN YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. BUT IF ANYONE DOES NOT HAVE THEM, HE IS NEARSIGHTED AND BLIND, AND HAS FORGOTTEN THAT HE HAS BEEN CLEANSED FROM HIS PAST SINS.

THEREFORE, MY BROTHERS, BE ALL THE MORE EAGER TO MAKE YOUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE. FOR IF YOU DO THESE THINGS, YOU WILL NEVER FALL, AND YOU WILL RECEIVE A RICH WELCOME INTO THE ETERNAL KINGDOM OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST.”

2 PETER 1:3-11
“Father, thank you for your Son Jesus, who loved us so much that He forfeit glory and came to Earth humbly in human form. Jesus, thank you for laying down your life, taking on the punishment of death that we had earned just so we could live. We rejoice that our God is mighty to save and that not even death could stop you, that you are alive in our hearts today for those of us who believe! Let that same power that conquered the grave move through us as we live a life that will bring you glory and shine your light in this dark and dying world.”