Standing on Hope

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say Rejoice...I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”
(Philippians 4:4 and 13)

I am praising the Lord for an exciting and wonderful Real Life Real Impact retreat at the University of Minnesota recently. It was so incredible to get to be a part of what God did that winter weekend in Minneapolis. 73 professionals and students joined together for a weekend of fellowship, refreshment, and sharing in Christ’s love. Leading up to the event, I asked many people to pray for passable weather. Can you imagine the possibilities for inclement weather in Minnesota in February? We had people traveling in from many surrounding states and thankfully there were no snowstorms.

As I walked into the atrium area of our RLRI venue, McNeal Hall, I got to witness just how hard our host school students had been working. The UMN vet students decorated the registration and eating areas beautifully with school colored table cloths and balloons. They purchased Valentine’s décor for table centerpieces and even made each attendee a welcome card with attached M&M’s. I immediately felt loved, encouraged, and excited for the weekend to begin. I know that our weary travelers felt the same way when they arrived. It can be difficult to plan a get-together when you live over 900 miles away from the event location. Working with such a dedicated team of students was a huge blessing.

Our group from four different veterinary schools and eight different states spent a day and a half worshipping Jesus and learning about how we can serve others through our profession and face the challenges of veterinary medicine. I know God touched and worked on many hearts. Here are a few of the student comments about what God taught them during this weekend:

- I am qualified and have a support system in vet med. Putting God and relationships first will bring me joy.
- I got a fresh look at what it means that Jesus paid my debt.
- God meets you where you are. You just have to show up and He is ALWAYS there!
I started my letter by including Philippians 4:13 because when I left Knoxville for Minneapolis, I ended up putting in a 22 hour day traveling and preparing for the weekend. When I went to bed Thursday night, I thought to myself: “How am I going to handle hosting this weekend as I am already so tired?” One of the main reasons my energy was extra zapped was due to a little piece of news I received a few weeks before RLRI. Yes! That’s right! Jaime and I have a surprise baby blessing coming in early September. But God gave me the strength not only to survive but to thrive and experience His goodness throughout the whole weekend. I received some very wise advice from a veterinarian this past year. He told me that we should “plan less and pray more.” With each event, conference, and even each day, I am seeing the truth of that statement more and more.

In my weekly Bible Study Fellowship notes, I read this statement, “God gives believers enough time, energy, wisdom, grace and spiritual power to do everything He intends them to do each day.” What a true and encouraging statement! It is not just true for me but true for you as well. As we move into the beauty and renewal of springtime, be lifted by God’s strength that He gives us to accomplish each task He has set before us. We don’t have to do it on our own and thank the Lord for that! I appreciate your prayers and support as we move forward with all the life changes that 2020 has in store. God Bless you all brothers and sisters.

Jeremiah is Excited to Be a Big Brother Again!

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