

Lily Jang

It got increasingly harder and harder, each day that went by, to remember each moment of time spent in Peru. It was such a special experience, a privilege that I couldn't believe was given to me. But my experience became less tangible and I began to wonder if I'd ever remember it as it should be. Where will these memories sit on my shelf of passed events? How will I recall them? Will it be just a "good time" of knowing God more intimately for three weeks? A time when I was reminded of God's timeless work; His hands working always, never ceasing? Or as time goes on, will these memories begin to fade into the abyss of past tenses, things that happened, and eventually become distant and obscure?

I frequently think about Peru, trying to relive the moments, trying to remember what I learned, how I felt while I was there. I think about the kids, the people; the aged man who refused to let his aged knees get in the way of jumping and worshiping the God that he loves; the grace of God evident in the lives of church members as they serve, as they pray and cry out to God with tears, asking Him to work in their lives. I think about God answering prayers, healing the sick, opening eyes to see Him, bringing conviction in the hearts of sinners, and saving those who earnestly cry out for Him. I remember the countless times I've smiled and said "No entiendo" or "I don't understand"—stifled communication, but still witnessing the power of the Spirit uniting me with my Peruvian brothers and sisters in Christ and all the more worshiping in the spirit of unity. I ALSO remember the time I've spent in the bathroom, for one reason or another, and the bonding that happened among those who had to do the same. And so, I recall the frivolous fun that I had with my teammates, the laughter, the crying that came from laughter, the jokes, and still, the sharing, the vulnerability, the body worships and skits, and the joy of witnessing the hand of God work, together.

I struggled to hold on, to remember, to never forget, but with each passing day, inevitably, time all the more distanced me from this experience, and I know that no matter how hard I could continue to try, it would just end up the same. In the end, it is now but a memory, and I've come to accept that; it will be forgotten at times and then remembered, as a memory should be. I will one day remember it with fondness, but not with nostalgic longing. I soon came to realize that the point of going on missions is not to come back and remember the good ole days, relive the good times, in and of itself. Rather, to remember is to be beckoned to do, to act, to live, to pray, to have a faith that produces works, to love, to glorify and worship Him, and to join in on the work that God is already doing. Missions, for me, was a time when God was glorified, when I witnessed God moving and God manifest Himself – seeing that He is a God that He says He is: Faithful, Love, Sovereign, King of kings, LORD, Saviour. When you encounter this God, how can you stand still?

And so to remember is to be reminded that I can wake up in the morning and serve my family, to be patient and hold my tongue when I get frustrated because God changed hearts while we were in Peru. It reminds me to pray in faith, because God not only listened to but also answered our prayers. It reminds me to try and love my little brother, my mom and my dad, and my older brother and care for them because more than being my family, they are God's children and God loves and cares for His children so much more than I do. It reminds me that I should not be content in what God has already done in Peru but that I should be hopeful, ready and watchful, excited to see the hands of God continue to move, believing that there are more, even greater things that are yet to come: our God is Awesome and it only makes sense that He can do Awesome things.