

What have you felt has been the main thing or main things that God has revealed to you during your time in Korea?

The main thing I learned in Korea was not what I expected to learn on a 2 months 'missions' trip, which was that the way to really love is through prayer. Whether it was for the children at Sangrok, the North Korean refugees I met, or for my brothers and sisters at home, I had thought that my actions and serving them could be a way to love them. And they were, but I learned how little and hopeless my action and service was without prayer. Really, what good - real good of the Romans 8:28 kind of good- could come without coming helpless before God and asking Him to please show these people mercy and grace? It was very humbling but in a way, especially as I continue to learn about this, it is freeing. God will work, not I. God will change and heal hearts, not I. I hope that as I meditate and learn about this more, that it will continue to free me to love the people I met in Korea.

Please share or list some of the joys of your time here.

-being able to provide physically for the kids...whether it was buying them snacks, giving them a hand to hold, a body to hug and kiss, it was just such a joy to do this. And sometimes it felt as if this was the most loving thing I could do at that very moment.

-hearing them learn the lines "Yes, Jesus loves me" and singing it. Also, seeing some of them really want to learn these English praise songs.

-the joys of getting to know a dorm mother.

-being with the kids all day...enough to the point where we had both gotten annoyed at each other, have seen the good and the bad, and still end the day together. I had the privilege was getting to know a specific room well and I slept there, ate with the kids, helped with laundry and cleaning, and basically lived there. It was a new perspective seeing the dorm mother interact with the kids, and the kids with one another. It also really helped me understand the dorm mother and her frustrations and difficulties, which is really really a privilege.

-hearing the kids sing their prayer song before eating every meal! Very precious.

-when the students would respond to me, answer a question, or be excited for class. What joy and grace!!!

Please share or list some of the difficulties of your time here.

-loneliness and feeling a lack of support was hard. Esther and Eunice were sisters so it was harder to get to know them individually and I spent a lot of alone time. I think I did partly bring this upon myself, both through pride and fear of vulnerability. It was hard to get to know them because they were sisters, had their own set of friends, and did everything together. I understand because I would have done the same with my sister. Having sisters on the team also threw off

the dynamics a bit because they got annoyed more easily at each other, they had a set way of communication and hierarchy of sort already, and they were in their comfort zone.

-Another hard part was having a lack of discipline. Without a consistent church and a group of brothers and sisters, it was easier to be lax. And in order to read my Bible and pray, I would eventually push off playing with the kids or hanging out with Eunice and Esther so it exacerbated the isolation I was feeling.

-A difficulty I didn't expect was the coldness of the staff and dorm mothers. I remember feeling hurt a lot during the first month because they weren't welcoming or didn't respond to me. Now I see more where they are coming from and I understand why they didn't. But it was still tough! Another slightly related difficulty was being able to understand them. For awhile I thought they were too tough and not 'loving' enough to the kids [i.e. nice or gentle], but after living with the kids 24/7, I could sense that I was also getting frustrated and tough and not 'loving' to the kids. It finally made me want to pray for them.

-It was a constant battle to not be swayed this way and that by the students' response to me. I had a harder group of students in one class, and they were just so unhappy to be there. They told me that it's not that they dislike me, persay, but they didn't like each other, and there were better things to do with their time. But, as I mentioned in the joy section, when they were working together or responding to me, the joy of that was so much greater.

How do you feel Jerusalem Ministry could better equip or prepare future summer volunteers?

I think two things could have helped. A better orientation to the specific orphanage would be very helpful. Not just a description of the kids, but a tailored introduction on how the orphanage runs, what are some unsaid/unwritten rules, what the eating rules are, or even a personal introduction to some of the staff. And I do realize that this will come more as Jerusalem Ministry establishes a better and deeper relationship with the orphanages, and as manpower increases. But I think it's important to remember living at the orphanage is very different than coming in once or twice a week to volunteer.

Another thing would be a better accountability or support system. I know we were supposed to have it within our team, but it was hard for me. I'm not sure whether I resisted efforts, but whether one's faith is strong or not, accountability is so crucial! This doesn't have to come always through John-Michael or another leader, but perhaps through volunteers already in the orphanage. Or perhaps even making it a requirement to have an accountability group at home could be good. And by requirement, I'm suggesting actually asking for names and emails, and maybe having the ministry send an email once stating the importance of their roles.

Please share any extra comments, advice, or reflections you have for the ministry.

-I would recommend not putting siblings or close friends together with a third person as a team. I think it puts the siblings in too much of a comfort zone, to the point where it could harder for the ministry, and the other person in less of a comfort zone. Eunice Lee agreed with me on this point as well.

-I really learned so much for this summer and I wish I had gotten to know the other volunteers better! Another thing I learned is the importance of short-term goals in a long-term vision. I didn't understand what Jerusalem Ministry was really doing, or why we weren't focusing on preaching the Gospel at the orphanages, but I think I understood more as I learned better the long-term vision. There are some ministries whose roles are to focus on just preaching, but there are other ministries whose roles are to focus on loving the people, as God commanded us to feed the poor and the hungry, and to love the orphans and widows. I don't know if that makes sense to other people, but that makes sense to me.