

Ye-Kyung's Reflections

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

There are two things that I'm realizing now as the biggest teachings. First is that only God can heal. Only through his love will the children who are broken and hurt experience true healing. However much I may devote my time, energy, words of affirmation, etc, the extent of my love is affection. Which brings me to the second point, that prayer is the most important part of making real changes happen. I cannot change hearts, only God can and the only thing I can do to is pray. I pray --> God heals --> Children are healed.

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

1. The openness of the children and staff at the home in accepting the two of us. From the first day, I felt so welcomed by the kids who wouldn't shy away from us. Also, the staff made an extra effort in greeting us daily, asking our opinion in scheduling/agenda, and even treating us out for food.
2. The night of bonding we had with our suite's dorm mom and the older girls who lived there. We got to play childhood games outside and played silly games before going to bed. One game we made up on the fly was that the girls would describe an object in Korean speaking really fast while Elisabeth would try to guess what the object was. Then we would swap. The look of utter confusion and ridiculous imitation (on their part) was hilarious! I felt like we were part of a family and all the girls let themselves loose.
3. Toward the middle of our two months stay, the older teenage boys started show interest (?) in our presence. We had been feeling a bit intimidated and distant from them because we didn't have much time to spend with them. A few would approach as talk to us and try some random English phrases on us. And whenever we go out or come in from somewhere, they would ask "Where are you going?" or "Where did you go?" Toward the end, I was able to make friends with a few of them and keep in contact via email. It's been wonderful to hear how they are doing every now and then.
4. The intimacy with God and the amount of spiritual growth while I was in Korea was incredible. Diving head off into the home and having to live a different lifestyle and needing to learn things fast really makes you cling onto God as never before. I knew that he had brought me to this home for this ministry for a reason and I wanted to use the given opportunity to the max. I wanted to love the kids the way He wanted me to love them and not knowing what that meant made me dependent on Him. And with that, God took me to another level of faith. Almost every prayer meeting, church service, quiet time and conversation with people was such blessed experience. And the amazing thing is that He is so much greater and there is so much more!

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

1. The inability to love fully all the time was a difficult realization I had to face. Often, I felt disappointed in myself because I hadn't fully committed my heart to them. For example, if I got mad at a kid for doing some trivial thing in English class, I felt as if I had failed in my mission. This kind of heart stemmed from thinking that I was going to make all the difference in the world to the kids. But once I realized that it was God who was going to bring healing and bring changes in me, I just gave up my failed attempts to Him, asking him to take care of it all.

2. I had a hard time getting intimate with my partner, Elisabeth, especially in the middle of our trip. Initially, I had arrived at the home having already imagined how our relationship was going to be. When I realized that it wasn't going to be like the way I expected I believe it was a lot more disappointing than I thought. Also, I felt a little burdened that we it seemed as though we were coming from a very different stand point and had different priority for our time at the home. I kept on wanting to do more with and for the kids while she wanted to pace herself and take smaller chunks at a time. At times I think I was taking a much bigger portion than I could handle but instead of admitting that I just became frustrated that she wasn't on the same page. I wanted to just ignore the situation but after having talked to godly sisters about it, I decided to that not bringing these issues up would be helping the enemy rather than building up His kingdom. After we talked about how we felt about things, I came to a better understanding of where she was coming from which humbled me and gave me more compassion. This was the most difficult thing during my time but, as usual, I learned the most from it.

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

I know that this summer did not go as planned in terms of staffing but in the coming summers I think it'll be helpful the volunteers could meet up with a JM staff more, especially in the first few weeks. I remember the first couple of days at the home was so overwhelming for the both of us having to figure out scheduling and expectations from the home and trying to start engaging with the kids that one day seemed like at least a week! Maybe a visit after the third or fourth day would be nice? Oh and the other things that would be helpful is the finances. Not having any of the support funds until the very end was difficult and a bit alarming at times.

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

This summer was the most life-changing period of my life. Spending two months at the home was so amazingly fun and uplifting. I really got to feel Jesus' love for the children at certain times when I was watching the kids play or talk. Most importantly, I experienced what it meant to be dependent on God everyday and how to renew my tank in Him on a daily basis. The kids are so precious, so worth praying the rest of my life for. I don't want my two months stay to be the end of my relationship with the home and the children there. I hope that this summer was a first of many stepping stones in serving the children. My one advice for the following volunteers is to pray as much as you possibly can. Go to all the prayer meetings, official or not, and pray constantly while you are with the kids in your heart. It's the greatest way to show your love.

Thank you Jerusalem Ministry for creating this kind of opportunity. Not only are you planting seeds in the hearts of the children but you have planted one in me as well!