

JOURNALS POSTED ON JUNE 16, 2019

Look Up!



BRIAN & LYNETTE SMITH



SUPPORT PLEDGED



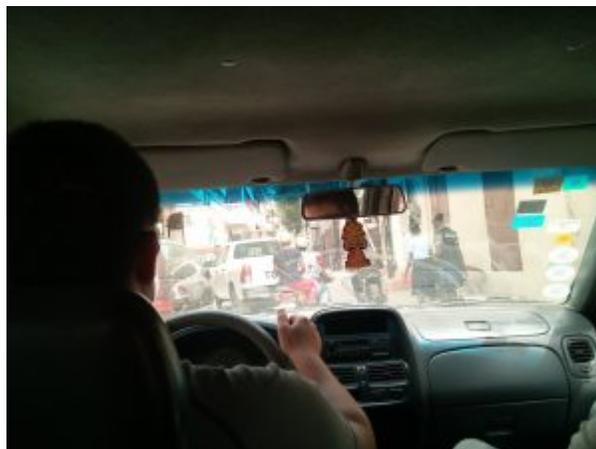
"...Don't shuffle along, eyes to the ground, absorbed with the things right in front of you. Look up, and be alert to what is going on around Christ—that's where the action is. See things from his perspective."

-Colossians 3:2 The Message translation

We've made it through our first almost five weeks in Haiti! With many new things to adjust to: the heat; the beautiful but intense sun; the energy it takes to do the simplest task, then you feel the need for a long nap; the challenge of not understanding the language; the keen awareness that you are the minority; the slyness of mosquitos; and well, basically EVERYTHING is new and different! One of the major things you notice as a 'new to Haiti' person is the traffic. The numbers of vehicles, the people everywhere, the volume of the street sounds...the chaos, or is it?

As an outsider you can't see it. You can't see past the craziness and your foreign-self screams loudly all that it senses that it is lacking. But once you are here a while, maybe a long while, or for me this was my second time to set foot on the island, and I began notice it in a few days. I began to notice the pattern, the rules that do exist, the attitudes, the uniqueness, the separation of what is important and what is not. I LOOKED UP and I began to notice the beauty that was in this seemingly chaotic mess of movement. I started to notice the hard work that occurs everyday all day, that has occurred for years and generations; the colors of the goods that are sold along every street on both sides; the smiles of the people greeting each other as they move to their next destination; the words on the buildings and advertisements (Yes, I can even understand some of them!)...but it was when I LOOKED UP that I saw it.

When I LOOKED UP beyond the chaos and the things of the world, I could see! I could see the importance, the relationships, the grace, the flow, and the beauty of our new city. The simple idea that everyone has things to do and places to go, but there was no need to put one in front of the other. My agenda wasn't more important than the one of the tap-tap driver, or the motorcycle full of people, or the cart pulled by only one man, or the delivery truck, or the woman carrying her items to sell upon her head while her arms are full as well. We all just go with the flow, we look into one another's eyes to understand who will cross in front of my bumper, we all give grace that we will all get to where we need to go safely if we all just take our time and honk from behind to let you know that I am close beside you.



It is always busy. There are always many vehicles, many more motorcycles, and even more people.

Yes, there is trash on the ground, but did you notice the colors used on the design of the tap-tap, the creativeness of the sign for that business, the shine of the freshly polished shoes, or the delicious smell of the street food? Yes, there is dust and mud from the drying of the slide arriving in the road from last night's refreshing and life giving rain or the green of the tropical plants scattered all around far as the eye can see? Yes, there is poverty, but did you notice the colorful school uniforms from the children who are getting an education to break the cycles, did you see the bright whiteness of their joyful smiles? Yes, the roads are bumpy and ridden with potholes and missing pavement, but did you notice the flowers among the barbed wire, or did you see the majesty of the mountains all around?



Haiti known as 'land of mountains'. One after another majestic and tall. They are breathtaking.

Feeling that nothing ever changes, that there is so many negative events happening, that too many people have nothing but slander and gossip to talk about, that you are just existing and lacking a purpose? LOOK UP!! Look at what is around you! Look up and see the people around you! Look up to realize the way that God uniquely created you! Look up to understand the place where you are! Don't focus on the downward glance of the worldly stuff. Don't fill your moments with motions that get you nowhere. Don't forget that the very one who created the earth, the stars, the animals, and everything around you, is the very One who designed and molded you! Look up and see His face! Look up and see the gaze of a masterful artist that longs for you to understand how much He absolutely and unconditionally loves you! Look up like a nursing infant looks into its mother's eyes and relaxes in the trust and provision that she provides without question or doubt. Just LOOK UP!!

If I gain nothing from these five weeks of being in Haiti (which I could list forever an incomplete compilation of experiences and lessons), may I choose to appreciate the great gift of a new perspective and fresh eyes of understanding of just how wonderful, loving, and grace giving our Heavenly Lord is.

Our God loves each of you so So SO very much!!! Beyond what you could ever know. I know that you know this factual promise, but being here it is something that you get just a bigger and better understanding of His love and provision for you. Friends, I long for each of you to not just know this truth, but to feel it with every morsel of your incredible and unique being!

Our God is so big and His family so amazing.

I know that it is a challenge to sense this in the everyday of our crazy hectic and mundane of our 'normal' lives...but having things slowed down here has given a refreshed eyes. Please, I beg of you, to take a few moments to just breath in His goodness, love, and grace for you. RELAX in His love and grace...He's got you. (No check lists, no studying, no trying to measure up or earn what you think He or anyone else wants of you...while some of these practices can be good, He truly and sincerely does not require ANY of it from you. He created you to be with Him, He loves you so much He died for you, and He already knows you as much as He wants you to know Him.)

*I felt compelled to share this a few weeks ago with some of our close friends, because I was overwhelmed with these words and desperate for them each to know just how incredibly loved they are. I hope you are able to know and grasp just how loved you are but the triune God ❤️

Psalm 121:1, Isaiah 51:6, Luke 21:28, also uses the words and reminds us to LOOK UP to see the mountains and not worry in The Voice translation.

-Lynette