

Terri McFarland



September 2018 Newsletter

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What Do You Know?

Too soon old, too late smart, is a favorite saying of my friend George. When I first heard it, I laughed along with everyone else. Now two decades later, the realization of its truthfulness is settling in.

In my high school classroom, I remember attempting to illustrate the enormity of information in our world and our relationship with it all. Students were told to imagine the markerboard in the front of the room could represent everything possible that can be known about anything.

I then drew a small dot off to the side and said, “That’s how much I know.” Snickers rippled across the room. Until I drew an even smaller dot near to the first one and said, “And that’s how much you know.”

In May, I traveled with **Under The Fig Tree** to Egypt, Jordan and Israel. And recently I returned from a two-week study in **Asia Minor** (*modern day Turkey*) where I tried to gain a better understand of the Newer Testament. Specifically, the books from John to Revelation. Within days, my dot had shrunk. The daughter of a pastor, I thought I knew the Bible. Our family played a Ten Commandments board game, Bible trivia, and would memorize verses. I could even answer questions from The American Bible Challenge game show.

But, the reality of what the historical, geographical, and cultural context reveals throughout the Text, makes me feel I am opening the Bible for the first time. A believer for most of my life, *how do I know so little?*

I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

John 15:15

When we don’t know what we don’t know, we end up thinking that we know. I have become increasingly aware I should talk less and let those who *really* know (*not just think they do*) impart their wisdom. Jesus does not know the day or the hour the Father is planning for His



Wadi Rum, Jordan

Praise Report:

- Phenomenal trips!
- **FCA** is growing in NWI
- My marriage is being restored!



Hierapolis & Pergamum

return (Mark 13), and throughout His life, Jesus increased in wisdom and favor with God and man (Luke 2:52). It is ok if I don't know.

Gratefully, the Lord has placed mentors in my life who are patiently teaching me how to ask questions of the Text. As a result, the Bible is coming alive in ways that enrich my spirit with a deeper understanding of the One Who loves us more than we know.

An excellent resource to discover how to dig deeper into the Text is written by *Brad Gray* and is found at walkingthetext.com. There you can sign-up to receive his FREE *ebook*, **The #1 Mistake Most Everyone Makes Reading The Bible**. It is a quick read that has helped me better understand and teach others, how to study the Bible.

Not knowing inspires me now...it means God has more to reveal!

Abide



Some of the most memorable experiences in the lands of the Bible occur when a teaching unfolds before your eyes. As we were hiking toward the acropolis of Sardis, we entered a vineyard and the lesson of John 15 began. Our leader, Brad Gray, described the vine (*Jesus*), the branches (*us*), the incredible fruit, and the need for the Gardener (*God, the Father*).

The grapes in the vineyard were gorgeous and only grew that way because they were attached to the vine. **It was the connectedness of the branch that gave life to the fruit.** The vine (*Jesus*) does not bear the fruit, it is the skinny little branch (*us*) that does. However, if left alone and detached, the branch would produce nothing.

Sometimes the vinedresser lifts the vine to keep it from expending needless energy putting down roots in random places or picking up a fungus. And at other times life-depleting branches and leaves must be cut away to let the sunlight in. As the sun reaches the fruit and the branch remains connected to the vine, the fruit the Lord designed for us to bear becomes more luscious than we could imagine.

Our group of 35, stood among the rows of beautiful green grapes ready for harvest. We probably weren't supposed to eat them, but I plucked a single grape off a bunch and was amazed at the sweetness! I have never tasted a grape like that before.

About thirty minutes in, we saw the vinedresser approaching knife in hand. *How he would react to a bunch of foreigners in the middle of his vineyard?* To our surprise, he took his knife and began to cut off clusters of grapes to give a large bunch to each of us. He joyfully lavished on us the unexpected. This is just like our God. **While we savor our one grape, the Lord desires to give us so much more.**

...apart from me you can do nothing.

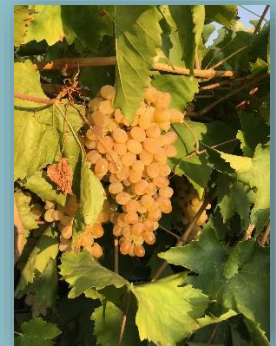
John 15:5



Studying at the Ephesus library



The gracious Vinedresser



FCA Home Team Dinner



Friends...one of life's greatest joys!

Ministry & Family Update

We enjoyed the opportunity to serve in a variety of ways this summer and to embrace new friends along the way. Our annual summer concert at **Tri-Ponds Family Camp** was a blessing, and our **FCA Basketball Camp** in Gary used sport to share the love of Jesus with the community. We are trusting the Lord as we begin a new FCA Coaches Bible study in Northwest Indiana.

Our **Women's Bible study** will be starting back up again soon, and this fall we will be studying I, II, III John. I am thrilled to see what the Lord will reveal as we dive into the Text.

The triplets, **Austin, Olivia** and **Graham** begin their junior year at Calvin College this fall. Lovingly, the Lord continues to grow and guide.

My heart has been deeply touched by the many of you who reached out after our Spring newsletter. Your prayers for our family and your encouragement to Keith and me has been life-giving. It has enabled us to resist the urge to listen to the voices of our culture that just tell us to do what makes us happy. **We are fighting for our marriage and for the glory of God** and are grateful for those who have willingly come along side us with the same vision.

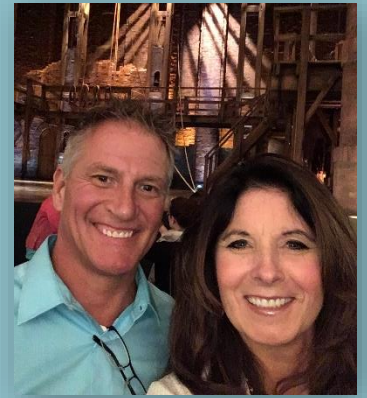
We have hope as we continue to pursue restoration. The battle is fierce, and some have stepped away as a result. Satan is digging in his heels – but as one pastor's wife told me – God must love us a lot to see Him so passionately fight for the healing of our hearts and marriage. *It is not our battle to win, it is our glory to reflect Him just by the stand.*

The road is long but the Master of restoration will do his work with hearts willing to enter painful places. Thanks for praying – don't stop!

Trusting Jesus,



Terri McFarland Umlauf



A birthday celebration in Chicago 



Sunset over the Aegean Sea

Please Pray for:

- God's **restoration** of all things
- Our new **FCA Coaches Study**
- Hearts receptive to **Jesus**

For contact info, event details & audio teaching files, visit:

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