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REFLECTIONS by Scott Rosenow

I am going to write this time about a concept that has become near and dear to me, and one that has helped me in quite a number of areas. This concept has been dealt with in a number of settings by quite a few writers and has been called a number of different things. I call it, "Start With the Glasses."

When Kathy and I had only four children, and when they were still pretty young, I developed (or discovered) a concept with broad implications and applications. It came about while cleaning up the kitchen. Because Kathy was a stay-at-home mom who worked like a slave all day long, and because I spent most of every day sitting behind a desk or working on a computer, I took on the task of cleaning up the kitchen after the evening meals most days of the week. Because we had four young children, and because Kathy was and is an excellent cook with true Southern roots, there was often a considerable mess waiting for me once everyone finished eating. Now, I am a procrastinator by nature—and I mean I'm a professional-level procrastinator, not some amateur who simply puts off till tomorrow what could be done today. I have been known to put off even thinking about putting things off, and I think I once came very close to putting off tomorrow altogether. One of the things that tends to promote procrastination, both in me specifically and in all procrastinators generally, is the feeling of being overwhelmed by a pending task, to the point of not even knowing where to begin. In such cases, it is usually easier to avoid the task than to try to figure out how to begin it. This was often my reaction when facing that daunting kitchen full of dirty dishes. Where to begin? How to begin? What to do? More than once, I was tempted to run away and wait until someone else came along to clean up that mess. (Of course, that "someone else" would have to have been Kathy, since my oldest child was probably seven or eight at best.)

In wrestling with this dilemma, day after day, I finally came up with a plan for tackling the task. Now, I didn't sit down with a calculator or legal pad and come up with a formal plan. I just remember one day realizing that I had unwittingly come up with something that worked for me, arch-procrastinator that I am. As I would stand there staring at the mountain of dishes—or at what I thought then was a mountain of dishes; funny how adding ten kids to the picture can change one's perspective—I would pick out all of the glasses, every glass and cup there was in that vast mess. I would rinse each one thoroughly and then place it neatly in the top rack of the dishwasher. That sort of seemed to be enough to get me going each time. After I got all of the glasses done, I would then move on to something else, like all of the plates, or all of the silverware, or whatever. It just seemed like starting with the glasses was enough to get me over that mental block and get me going. Once I got that out of the way, I was able to move on and get the job done. I have come to refer to this approach as "starting with the glasses."

Since then, there have been many, many occasions in which the task before me seemed so great as to threaten to undo me, and in which I had no idea how to begin. I realized that I found myself saying, "Just start with the glasses." I would pick out some aspect of the overall project, one aspect that I felt I could manage, and I would work on that first. For example, when starting a new adoption, the paperwork required to get a dossier put together is intimidating, to say the least. (This is not a completely accurate example, since it is Kathy in our family who does most of the work to put a dossier together; I have my pieces to do, but she is the one who does the bulk of the compiling and assembling and organizing. But even she, sometimes, is a bit overwhelmed by the

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THE BARKDOLL FAMILY by Elizabeth Mock



Though seemingly innocent, the Burger King marketing tagline, “Have it your way,” reveals a deeper tendency within not only American culture, but also mankind. Within American media, the idea is reinforced that we are in control of our own lives and destinies. Not only are we able to “have it our way,” but we are entitled to such control. At the heart of this desire to fashion our world in whatever manner we deem best is the motivation that caused the fall of humanity: we want to be God. In God’s infinite mercy, however, we are not in control. This reality is something antithetical to our human and fallen nature. We crave control and stability. As Christians, however, this is not what we are promised. We are promised stability in Christ and His character, but never in our circumstances. We are called to surrender.

Daniel and Sara Barkdoll are a sobering and encouraging example of such surrender and its cost. Daniel (or Dan, as he is commonly known) and Sara have been married for seventeen years and have six children: Bethany (15), Abigail (12), Josiah (9), Benjamin (6), Jeremiah (2), and their adopted son from Honduras, Daniel (6). Dan is a family practice physician with Partners in Health in Lawrenceburg,

Indiana. Sara is a “stay-at-home mom”—which Sara maintains is a misnomer—and home-schools their kids. Unlike many families within The Shepherd’s Crook fold, thoughts of adoption did not stalk them over several years, preparing them for God’s plan. Sara recalls the first time God presented the idea of adoption, when “we received an e-mail sent to several people from a friend in Cincinnati, telling about Daniel and how he

needed a family to adopt him so that he could come to the U.S. and receive the medical care he needed so that he would survive into adulthood. We were moved by Daniel’s situation and began to talk and pray as a family about what to do. We had never considered adopting a child; the thought had literally never crossed our minds, but God began to move on our hearts that this is what we were to do.”

Like so many Shepherds’ Crook stories, God worked through the biological children within the family to make His plan clear. “Our daughter, Abigail, who was nine at the time, felt that the Lord had given her some Scriptures that confirmed this was the direction we were to take. We prayed more and agreed together that we would proceed with the adoption of Daniel.” And also like so many Shepherds’ Crook stories, Daniel’s adoption took nearly three years, and every step of the journey reinforced the truth that, contrary to American assumptions, we are not in control—God is.

Throughout their adoption of Daniel, the Barkdolls endured the typical periods of waiting, but they were also confronted over and over again with seemingly unconquerable obstacles. Yet through every one of these events, they held fast to God’s

promises. One such event occurred “in the summer of 2006, when the new administrator of the Honduran government’s child welfare agency decided to stop all international adoptions. This, obviously, was extremely upsetting, and we experienced both great anger and feelings of complete helplessness. But through this time, and all of the other waiting, the great blessing was that God taught us so much about relying on Him and trusting Him, even when the chance of ever bringing Daniel home seemed practically hopeless. Yet, all along, we felt that we were never supposed to give up hope, but were to continue to fight to get Daniel in whatever way we could. When we were able to surrender our will to God’s, yet have faith and persevere in the adoption process, this is when God brought His supernatural peace and strength and also often when circumstances would change and the hurdle that seemed too large to overcome would be crossed.”

Though this situation seemed hopeless and beyond anyone’s control, God showed very clearly and tangibly that He was and still is in control. Sara cites, as an example, “...when we found out that through providential arrangements, a woman who was the director of a children’s health foundation in Honduras and knew of Daniel’s situation ‘happened upon’ the President of the Honduran Congress, whom she had met in previous situations. She was able to share with this government authority about the fact that because the director of the child welfare agency had stopped international adoptions, there was a child, our Daniel, who very well may not live to adulthood. Apparently, the President of Congress became infuriated and was able to influence the child welfare director to allow all

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WHAT WAS LOST – “I will seek **what was lost** and bring back what was driven away.”

The following children have come home since our last issue:

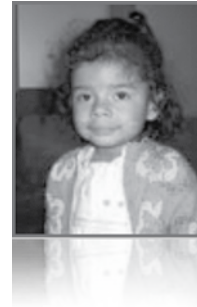
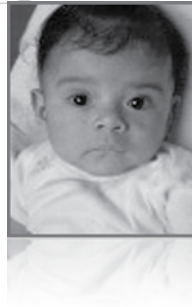
DANIEL



Before: In a Honduran foster home.

After: In his Lawrenceburg, IN home.

DULCE



Before: In a Guatemalan foster home.

After: In her Woodinville, WA home.

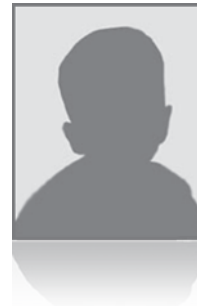
JAYDEN



Before: In a Guatemalan foster home.

After: In his Arlington, TX home.

SETH



Before: In a Chinese orphanage.

After: In his Wilmington, DE home (no picture).

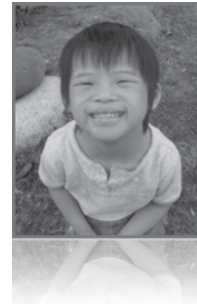
SOPHIA



Before: In a Chinese orphanage.

After: In her Dover, DE home.

TAMAR



Before: In a Vietnamese orphanage.

After: In her Richland, WA home.

magnitude of the task before her, and she occasionally needs a bit of help getting started.) At these times, I would say to myself, or to Kathy, “just start with the glasses.” We know we can’t do the whole dossier at once, but we can begin with a phone call. Call the doctor’s office and make appointments to get the physicals done. Or call the home study agency and arrange for the social worker to come out and get started. Just start with the glasses. After that step is done, go on to the next one. Don’t try to do all of the steps at once, don’t try to finish the job at its inception. Just start with the glasses.

An ancient proverb says something like, “A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” That is roughly the same as, “start with the glasses.” The proverb is meant to encourage one to take that first step; after the first step is taken, the journey is underway and the second step is, usually, a bit easier. And after the second step, the third is often easier still. Just like when I was cleaning up the kitchen all those years ago, when I found that starting with the glasses made it easier to move on to the plates, and after the plates is was then easier to move on to the silverware; and before long, the job was pretty well done. I’m not saying that I didn’t sometimes have to scrub the pots, sometimes even with steel wool and elbow grease, but that it was easier to get to that point just by starting with the glasses. And somehow, once the job got started, I found more motivation to finish it. Until I began the job, the job itself was not only too large to tackle, but it was usually too nebulous or intangible to motivate me much to get it done. But once those glasses were done, the motivation to continue became very strong. And the completion of each successive portion of the task made the desire to finish the overall project stronger than it had been previously.

At this point I have to inject a word of caution: once you start with the glasses, be sure to move on to the next sub-task. The next sub-task, by way of clarification, shouldn’t have anything to do with the football game on TV. Yes, it’s confession time. More than once, after starting with the glasses, I would find myself distracted by whatever was on TV at the time, whether it was a Packers football game or “Jeopardy.” And the kicker is, after you’ve started with the glasses and then gotten distracted, it’s much more difficult to get back to the project. You don’t have the glasses to start with the second time you tackle the task, and for whatever reason, that seems to make it more difficult. How can you “start with the glasses” when you’ve already finished with the glasses? Oh yes, you want to make sure that, having started with the glasses, you keep going, lest you find yourself in worse shape than before. And as true as this is in something like cleaning up the kitchen, it is vastly more so in the case of a really important task, such as preparing an adoption dossier. Once you have decided that God is calling you to pursue this adoption, do not allow yourself to be distracted by other things. Finish the task God has set before you, to the very best of your ability.

And so, my challenge to each of you, particularly those of you who may be faced with the intimidating task of putting together an adoption dossier, is to learn to start with the glasses. Pick out an aspect of the project that you know you can handle, and do that first. Once that sub-task is done, move on to the next one. Don’t try to do the whole project at the outset; don’t even try to figure out how you’re going to do the whole project at the outset; just start with the glasses. Now, lest I be misunderstood, I’m not saying we shouldn’t plan out the large projects we have to finish. There are many such projects that would become chaotic without adequate pre-planning. But even in planning out these large projects, it is usually best to start with the glasses. Plan so as to begin with a manageable sub-task, and then plan out the succeeding tasks from there.


Of course, the aspect of the “start with the glasses” analogy that’s missing is our dependence on God. “Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it.” (Ps. 127:1, NKJV) When setting out to accomplish something important, begin with prayer. Perhaps you need help even deciding which aspect of this thing constitutes “the glasses”; pray that God would show you where to begin. Pray that He would bless your efforts. And then pray to thank Him for causing all things, including this task you’re involved in, “to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” (Rom. 8:28, NASB)

And finally remember, “whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” (Col 3:17, NKJV)

Thank you, Father. Amen.

E-MAIL UPDATES

Did you know that in addition to these thrice-yearly newsletters, we also send out updates via email about once a week or so? These updates include important and timely information about children in urgent need of families or medical care, new projects within TSC, TSC families’ travel news, and many other pieces of information. If you aren’t already on this list and would like to be added, please notify us at ***e-mail-add@theshepherdscrook.org***, or you can just write us at ***info@theshepherdscrook.org*** and ask us to add you to our Regular Email Update List. Please be sure to clearly indicate the email address you want us to use.



OUT FROM THE NATIONS

“I will bring them **out from the nations** and into their own land.”

The following adoptions have been started since our last issue:



DECLAN

Waiting: In China.

Coming home: To Westminster, CO.



ERIN

Waiting: In China.

Coming home: To Cincinnati, OH.



JAMES

Waiting: In Guatemala.

Coming home: To Land O' Lakes, FL.



JONATHON

Waiting: In Guatemala.

Coming home: To Troy, OH.



MIA

Waiting: In China.

Coming home: To Phoenix, AZ.



NAZPARI

Waiting: In Azerbaijan.

Coming home: To Keystone Heights, FL.



NOAH

Waiting: In Vietnam.

Coming home: To Poplarville, MS.



SAWYER

Waiting: In China.

Coming home: To Leesburg, OH.



SERIK

Waiting: In Kazakhstan.

Coming home: To Keystone Heights, FL.

BANQUET UNDERWRITERS

TSC is in critical need of underwriters for our banquet this year. \$10,000-15,000 will cover all of the costs for the meal, the facility, and the printing and mailing costs. Please pray fervently with us about this need – that God will move hearts to provide this need.



News Item PRAYER NEEDS

Please join us in thanksgiving for the following Praise Items:

1. Thanks to faithful supporters, foster care expenses have now been provided for Ali in Romania for the next year. Thank you so much for your prayers, and we thank those of you who have so generously given for this need.
2. We are also praising God that the money needed to provide TSC's part of our current Ma Jia Le surgery trip to Shanghai was raised in time for us to provide food for the surgery team and to provide surgery for little Gracie. Thank you all for your response to this need.
3. We also are happy to report that we have been able to provide foster care for another year for Daniel in Beijing, China. It is a great praise that this child can stay with these loving people who are caring for him so beautifully.
4. TSC reached a point of crisis financially in early April when it became clear that there was enough money to pay April salaries for our Director and for our Communications Director, but no more after that. We contacted a small group of prayer warriors and they immediately joined us in petitioning Heaven for the needed funds to continue. Within twenty-four hours, we received a phone call from a family who had recently sold some stock and had been praying about how to use part of it to further work in God's Kingdom. When someone passed on TSC's urgent need, they knew this was the answer to their prayer. Their donation has enabled us to continue paying our two paid employees for another two to three months. We are very grateful for God's faithful answer to our cries for help.

Please continue to pray for the following needs for The Shepherd's Crook Ministries and notify us at info@theshepherdsbrook.org if you would like to help with any of these needs financially:

1. All TSC kids and the families who will come forward to adopt them.
2. Funding for the operating expenses of the ministry, including salaries for the Director and for Daryl Fulp, our Communications Director. Our monthly income is currently not enough to cover these expenses. As we stated above in our praise items, we just received a donation to provide for this need for another two to three months, but we greatly need more committed monthly sponsors and we urgently need underwriting for our banquet next month. Read more about this on page 5.
3. Additional monthly funding to permit us to hire an administrative assistant. This continues to be a very pressing need and the urgency of this need grows with each passing month as our workload continues to grow.
4. That we will once again be in a position to award financial grants to our adoptive families, as we have been privileged to do in the past. This, too, requires money, on top of everything else we need.
5. Office facilities: this is a bit indefinite, but we ideally would like to have office facilities connected to the Rosenow house—with office space for four or five staff members. It would be really cool if we had a large piece of land on which to put this house/office complex, with additional space for TSC's various uses. (This would be a joint Rosenow family/TSC answer to prayer!) This is one of those "open-ended" dreams, in which we want to dream as big as we can so as not to limit God in any way to "the ministry."

international adoptions in process to be completed.” God continued providentially to provide for the Barkdolls and Daniel.

In January of this year, the Barkdolls finally received their travel papers to complete Daniel’s adoption. The whole family flew to Honduras on January 1 and was planning on returning home on January 13. “However, one of the hardest hits came when we found out, on Tuesday evening of the second week we were there, that our attorney had not ever completed the steps with the U.S. embassy that were necessary for our adoption. Essentially, an orphan investigation, required as part of the process, was never even begun, let alone finished... Daniel had been released to us by the Honduran government earlier that day, so according to them he was officially our son.” The problem now was the U.S. government. Because U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (or USCIS, a division of the Department of Homeland Security) did not consider Daniel to have been legally abandoned, they would not clear him for a visa to enter the U.S. He could not leave Honduras with his new family, but he no longer had a place in Honduras. Dan and three of the kids returned to the U.S. on the 13th as planned, while Sara, Bethany, Jeremiah, and of course, Daniel stayed in Honduras. Working closely with the assigned USCIS orphan investigator, Sara learned that “we would have two options. The first was for us to live in Honduras for two years with Daniel, and then he would be eligible for the visa. The second was for us to apply for humanitarian parole for Daniel, which she said was given in rare instances for people with severe medical needs.” But Sara was warned that more than likely, Daniel would not receive orphan status.

“She [the USCIS investigator] still did not have an answer for me by Friday, and the following Tuesday (January 30) I called and spoke with the head of the Department of Homeland Security in Honduras, who informed me that he personally was reviewing the case that day and that they would have a decision by the end of the day as to Daniel’s orphan status. He told me that there was a key step that had been left out in order for Daniel to be considered ‘abandoned,’ but that he was considering all of the evidence and said there was still a chance that they would consider Daniel ‘abandoned’ and therefore an ‘orphan.’” Again, God providentially intervened and by the end of the day Sara learned that Daniel was going to receive orphan status. After three years and seemingly insurmountable odds, Daniel came home on February 5, 2007.

Many of the circumstances and events of Daniel’s adoption were unchangeable and completely out of the Barkdolls’ control. In those times, they threw themselves on God’s mercy and called out to other Christians to intercede on this small child’s behalf. Our God is a faithful God, and all that seemed impossible was accomplished. The Barkdoll family not only persevered through the three years of Daniel’s adoption, but of living in Honduras for over a month, while the family was separated. They were faced with the choice of abandoning their son or moving to Honduras for two years. And they responded to these events that were wildly out of their control with perseverance and a profound sense of God’s peace and protection.

In a country where we want everything “our way,” the Barkdolls stepped outside of their own wants, desires, and comforts and went where God led. They surrendered to God’s will and faced choices that would astonish most. We are called as Christians to do no less. We are not called to control. We are called to follow.

THE SHEPHERD’S CROOK CELEBRATION BANQUET 2 0 0 7

It’s time again for The Shepherd’s Crook Annual Celebration Banquet. Please consider joining us for this amazing evening filled with blessings, tears, and laughter.

The RSVP deadline is June 15, so visit our website for details on how to register.

June 30 | 6-10pm | Receptions in Fairfield



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THE Shepherd's Crook
MINISTRIES



We would love to hear your
IDEAS OR SUGGESTIONS
for our newsletter.



E-mail our Editor at
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