

Cahill Family Newsletter 2021

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you. John 14:27

This last year could be described as one of peace. We have benefited greatly from the practice of putting margin into our lives through engaging in Sabbath rest and carefully choosing our “yes.” A number of years ago we drafted a Family Vision statement to help us filter decisions.

To experience the goodness of our creator in this life and the life to come, by applying his principles in our family and inviting others to partake with us. As I look back, I can see how this shaped our year. We enacted the vision in three focus areas:

Steady Growth - of the whole person.

Physically: The whole family joined a challenge to walk 100 miles during Spring. All but the young boys completed their miles and earned a t-shirt! We swam throughout the summer and put in plenty of hours shoveling horse manure and wood chips onto the garden. In the Fall, Amy signed up with an online PT plan to address muscle weakness that was causing constant back and neck pain. The pain is greatly reduced and now she is focusing on building strength to the point

where she can enjoy jogging again.

Mentally: Brian and Amy continue reading together, enjoying “How to Pray” (Pete Greig) and ‘Rebel with a Cause’ (Franklin Graham). Amy read The Purpose of Boys (Michael Gurion), fascinated to learn about the hard-wired differences between male and female brains and how to encourage male purpose. Amy let the kids have more time to enjoy the weather outdoors during spring, then joined her sister Lori to do a unit study on Africa during the hot summer. We joined a new co-op in the fall where we tried out the ‘Mystery of History’ curriculum, reviewed Astronomy and the oldest four have discovered a love of writing with the IEW methods. Ivy learned to type, while the others utilize voice to text for their rough drafts - which saves mom a LOT of time.



Best Man for brother Kevin's wedding



Ryder stacks firewood from 10 dead trees



Ice hockey on the frozen creek!



No power? Cook in the fireplace!



Amy enjoys Spring weather while painting the house



Brian utilizes 'Big Event' to dig a french drain to fix muddy pastures

Spiritually: We finished up the AWANA year in the Spring, glad for the scripture memory focus. At home Brian continued the 'Kinda Dangerous Family Devotions' on Sundays while Amy did a unit on characteristics to 'put on' according to Colosians 3:12-14. Amy grappled with Spiritual Warfare, feeling led to fasting and prayer for some friends held captive by the enemy. Her quiet time has felt a bit like lonely wandering the last few months and in praying over those feelings an



Anniversary getaway Colorado Bend

idea came to read the testimonies of other Christians. Her word for the New Year is "Surrounded" in the context of Hebrews 12:1 "seeing we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses...let us run...the race set before us."

Relationally: In a large family this is daily work! Each June we meet with the kids one-on-one to ask intentional questions about their feelings, struggles and desires. We then integrate that feedback into our family direction.

The older/younger sibling buddy system is challenging some to grow and highlighting the strengths of others. Brian and Amy try to catch a weekly date on Sunday evenings when the house next door is empty. They can have time alone but are still close by to help settle any problems. The kids learn cooperation, responsibility and negotiation - because if mom and dad have to come back, there will be no movie that evening!

Brian has really prioritized relationships and our marriage is in a lovely spot right now.

Authentic Fellowship - *living the same way in front of others as when alone.*

We really lived this one out with several long stints of hosting. Amy's sister's family enjoyed our fireplace for a few days during the Texas "great freeze." A brother's friend stayed with us for a month while attending a class at

Texas A&M. We also had a friend's child join us for about 6 weeks during the Summer while her mom was at work. Nieces and nephews are often found on premises and we are a popular hangout for the neighbors as well. We continue to meet with a homegroup fellowship and enjoy repeated visits with a group of College students from India.



Splitting, swarm catching, growing queens, hive robbing and pest control made quite a year!



Devotional Activities

Helping fill Christmas child boxes



Camping and biking at family conference

Archery lessons



Applying Principles - *experimenting with applying God's word to our lives.*

Much of what is written above is the application of this principle. However, Brian and Amy both spent a lot of time grappling through some specific principles this year. Over the months we kept bringing our interactions before the Lord, asking for wisdom.

For Amy, in the first half of the year she tried to be available to serve an unbeliever as only Jesus might. The Fall brought lessons on how the community of believers is like a family that not only supports, but also helps rub off some of your rough places. She got to experience the reality of iron sharpening iron, turning the other cheek and rejoicing with those who rejoice. Brian worked on being a voice for the underrepresented, fighting for justice in places where it might otherwise be ignored. Sometimes these struggles are quick, but others drag on for years requiring tenacity and commitment. We went through a course on puberty with the oldest three children, learning God's incredible plan for growing up and how to be sensitive to and even stand up for peers that are going through the same changes.



All the cousins made it to the Celestial City in the epic Pilgrim's Progress Camp Grammy!

We do a lot of hands on, but we also use books in our homeschool!



Created 'Tetzel' coin toss booth for Reformation fair

Lance (13) was excited to see his savings hit the \$500 mark! He continues to bravely face his reading challenge; first with a computer program that taught advanced phonics/spelling and then another with sight words to increase fluency. He honed his business skills at homeschool sales, practiced to be a spy and learned to use the lawn mower.

Ivy (12) had a year of growing - literally! She likes being the tallest kid and having feet bigger than Mom! She deepened her friendship with a neighbor; learning to share a google doc they together wrote a 36 page 'book' on "Rare and Legendary Dragons." Middle school science proved challenging but she excels at creative visual aids for her reports.



An edible cell. General Science can be yummy!

Flora (11) has enjoyed writing and is particularly clever at description. She is learning to work with her not always cooperative buddy - Ace. She enjoys cleaning and organizing and is quick to share her beautiful smile. When she isn't doing school or chores she is the one to start up a game.



Pallet Pueblo created by the Aunts and basket weaving from our Native American unit

Trip to NASA completed our Astronomy study



Eden (9) is excited to finally be tall enough to run the winter fires that heat our house. She has enjoyed writing and making new friends at co-op. As a buddy, she is super considerate, going out of her way to make Ryder a well cared-for member of our family.



Eden took violin lessons from Uncle Dan

We love living next door to Papa's pool!



Iris (8) has the confidence to tackle anything that comes her way. She enjoys math, can do a handstand, jumps in to help when there is a need and has a generous heart. She started piano this year, made new friends at co-op and exercised her faith by secretly praying for a doll - which she received!

Skye (6) is taking initiative on her chores and promoted to the crew of animal helpers at the barn. She started playing big kid games after carefully watching from the sidelines. She is silly, likes to dance and has started helping with Ace.



A natural at casting, Garrison finally caught his first fish when he tried grub worms as bait.

Garrison (5) really took to his astronomy classes and wanted to be an astronaut until he learned that they had to wear diapers. He taught himself to do a back roll on the trampoline, graduated from strider bike to pedals and is always having adventures with his cousins.



Ryder shares sincere perspective on life with whoever will listen.

Ryder (3) has graduated to big kid school both at home and co-op. He loves to work alongside Dad while wearing all the same 'gear.' His unique choice of words include 'shelter' (umbrella), 'bang' (gun) and light-lamper (toy lantern). His favorite food is chicken nuggets and 'tot-the-tatoes' (tater tots).

Ace (18 mo.) spent his year moving out of babyhood. He was weaned in April and potty trained in December! A total extrovert, he hates to be alone and loves when you cheer for him. He discovered doing a crazy dance would make people laugh and pulls this party trick out to entertain admirers.

As parents we are very blessed to see the fruit of many years of effort and training. As our children begin to cross the line of puberty, we look forward to a new era; one of young adults serving others as they gain skills for their launch into the world.



From crawling to riding toys, Ace did a lot of growing this year, but his big smile remained the same.

