

## Cahill Family Newsletter - 2016

Picture this: a group of able-bodied men in a boat. At least half of them experts at sea. They had orders and a destination. A storm appears out of nowhere, testing their skill and courage to the breaking point. When all is lost, those who best know how to handle things inform the master that they are going to die. The master awakes and immediately chides them for their evaluation of this desperate situation; “*Why are you fearful?*” Why? Why not? In the area of your expertise, you know when it’s worth trying harder and when to call it quits. “*Oh you of little faith!*” Little faith? We can’t fight nature and win – it’s out of our control. Besides, we were following instructions from the master – Jesus! We were directly under the will of God! Why are we encountering such difficulty?

Step away for a moment and come back to the beginning of the year with us. The calling of raising a bunch of little ones was getting to the consuming point. Outward productivity slowed as our efforts turned toward managing what we already had going. Amy, born and raised for homemaking and farm life, struggled to juggle home-school, housework, barn chores, yard work, and hosting guests. Thrown on top was a mental cloud that would descend and hover for a day or two at a time, sapping much needed cognitive energy. Add to this the conception of a new baby to drain physical energy (and the ensuing trust struggle with God to finish off emotional energy) and Amy was ready to say, “We’re sinking!” She prayed “Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.” This cry and an experiment of “this kind goes not out but by prayer and fasting” (Mark 9) resulted in an unexpected tip from a visiting missionary to take a look at hormones. A small amount of progesterone cream wiped out the mental cloud and reduced some of the pregnancy morning sickness. What a blessed relief!

Brian, a faithful man, juggled his work responsibilities while trying to relieve some of the strain on Amy. His every-other-Friday-off turned from housebuilding to childcare while Amy shopped for groceries and ran errands. Evenings were filled with dishes, diapers, clean up and bath time. As he ran some of the household operations, his manager instincts kicked in and he began to assess resources – namely, the kids. He patiently guided the oldest two in barn management, working out kinks as they arose. Ivy picked up the skill of milking while Lance’s treasure hunting instincts were put to use gathering eggs. Brian also called in a mentor couple to help with goal setting and life planning, attempting to build a common trajectory for our efforts. The seas were a bit rough, but we were still sailing.

A summer break from teaching let Amy buckle down and knock out a bunch of small house projects. The garden out front was vigorous and productive. For two months we lost livestock to

internal parasites and predators while the goats escaped almost daily. But Google, friends with experience, and some trial and error brought everything under control again. Amy started school during the hot days of August – studying the states we would drive through on our way to attend a brother’s wedding. With a goal to actively disciple the children, Amy made a switch from AWANA to a Bible study where Moms and kids work through the same material. Brian used Sunday mornings to go through a study on Creation, inventing activities to engage and drive home the lessons. Life looked good on the outside, but a storm was brewing within.



10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Caddo Lake adventure



Lance pulls weeds for \$\$



Skye loves baby goats



Barn predator eliminated



Ivy rivals Mom for book requests



Trip to North Carolina for wedding





**Starting school**

During a casual conversation with a friend, Brian was introduced to Frogslayer and offered a job. The opportunity to work in a Results Oriented Work Environment with a flexible schedule and work from home opportunities was both exciting and scary. Coincidentally, we were reading 'Necessary Endings,' an instructive book on when to end certain seasons and enter new ones. Not wanting to leave his current company in the lurch, Brian pulled early mornings, long days and even some weekends transitioning into Frogslayer while maintaining oversight and being on-call for Lynntech. As Brian cut back on the day-to-day household work, the details began to overwhelm Amy again. She struggled with guilt over failures both in capability and attitude.

Near the end of Brian's intense 6 weeks, Amy read an article and realized she had the markers of a low-grade depression, which was a tough blow. In discussing this with Brian and later talking with a mentor, a lot of stuffed-down feelings began to be communicated: the increasing demands of life; standards of perfection; hopelessness of maintaining load; even guilt over consuming so much of Brian's time rather than functioning as his help-meet. The clouds rolled in and the storm winds blew hard.

This fall has found us feeling our way through dark days and happy days. Since depression tends to sap motivation and bring feelings of isolation, Brian keeps Amy company in the mornings, and has established himself as coach, making sure she exercises, rests and eats well. Frustration still crops up when Amy struggles with compliance or Brian coaches too much; so it's not a perfect dance, but we're learning to work as a couple in a new way. We have wrestled with God in prayer, trying to discern when to ask in faith for healing, when to experiment with man's knowledge and our own effort, and when to accept with joy the path set before us. The struggle is not over, and sometimes we cry out the disciples' question of little faith, "Master, do you not care that we perish?" But even in these days we are encouraged by the knowledge that turning to God when there seems to be no hope, is in itself an act of faith.



**Noah's Ark in living room**

So what happened to the sailors on that storm-tossed sea? They did the only thing they could do when there was no hope, they turned to the one who had them there. The 'master' then wielded an awesome power that could only be summoned by a God who is in control of everything. As a result, the disciples found faith as they moved from fear for their life to the fear of God (Mark 4:35-41). Our following of Christ is not always perfect or even clear. Trials come from within as easily as from without. So when the waves of depression rise up and challenge our life, we will demonstrate faith by crying out, moving a little closer to the fear of God and trusting Him to calm the waves. We end this year in faith purposing to continue in God's Word *"that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."* Romans 15:4

## Merry Christmas and Hope for the New Year!

Brian, Amy, Lance, Ivy, Flora, Eden, Iris, Skye  
and Baby 'G' - due mid Dec!

For the kids' take on the year, see [www.cahills.us/blog](http://www.cahills.us/blog)



**Flora  
enjoyed  
American  
history  
classes**



**Eden with  
Louisiana  
king cake**



**Iris: a helpful resource**

