

From: Veronica Thompson <veronica.thompson@ywammontana.org>
Sent: Wednesday, September 12, 2012 4:43 PM
Subject: Next step

Since my last email was lengthy, I chose to send a separate update in order to explain, in detail, what I've felt God leading me to.

Youth with a Mission (YWAM) offers a 9-month program called the School of Biblical Studies (SBS) - an intensive course where students look at all 66 books of the Bible one at a time using an inductive study approach. This includes learning the historical background, authorship, and mindset of the original readers for each book in order to interpret the text more accurately. By the end of the 9 months, each person will have read through the Bible 5 times. This is also YWAM's longest and most intensive bible-study course, with 40 schools worldwide.

I've wanted to attend this school since I heard about it 5 years ago, but I felt like God told me, "not yet." Since then, I've gained experience as a missionary and a better sense of what God is leading me toward. For the last several months I've felt that God has been telling me that now is the time to attend the SBS and to do it in Montana. Montana is known throughout YWAM for running one of the best SBS programs.

There are several reasons I feel like God is leading me to attend this school now. First, I believe I needed to go through the experiences I did over the last 4-5 years in order to receive all that God wants to show me now through studying His Word for the next 9 months. I've felt from the beginning, and only more so now, that God has called me to bring Biblical teaching to Christians in remote locations who don't have access to the resources we do, let alone Bibles. In order to do that, I need to know the Bible well. My time overseas has already shown me that there is a real struggle in many cultures to reconcile the God of the Old Testament with the God of the New Testament, and even to value personal Bible study. This SBS course will give me a micro and macro picture of the consistency of God between the OT and NT and be able to better explain an overview of the Bible to others.

Secondly, I feel God is leading me to attend this school is because this is the main program in YWAM that is solely Bible focused. YWAM leans heavily to the visionary side of things, which is a real strength in pioneering, but we have to be careful to stay rooted in God's Word. I think God is calling me toward coordinating strategic short-term missions to meet needs in other countries in a way that brings the right people at the right time to move God's vision forward in that location. I need to understand YWAM's main Bible training school better to be able to see how it functions and can be used to meet specific needs if I, for example, decide to send teachers or help pioneer a new school.

Lastly, I feel God would like me to attend the SBS because He's called me to long-term missions and everything I do must be based on a solid understanding of His Word. I can get knowledge and understanding by reading my Bible daily, but this course will be a focused opportunity to learn and become conversant with the historical background, the original readers and just to allow God to speak through His Word. Any graduates I've

spoken to about this school tell how much it changed their lives and that it's one of the best things they've ever done.

Although this school will be very time consuming due to the amount of studying required along with 3 classes a week, I still plan to work at local outreach. I will have time to create more opportunities for staff and students to find ways to bring Christ to our community and, of course, I will keep you all updated on how God continues to work in this way. I won't, however, be able to travel overseas until after the SBS finishes at the end of June.

I am nervous, but I'm really looking forward to this next season of really immersing myself in God's Word and allowing Him to speak through it. I'm also looking forward to being a part of what God wants to do to help our staff and students become more involved in our "Jerusalem", or local area. Of course, being a missions-sending base, the main focus is abroad, but I believe God wants us to have a greater impact among our neighbors and town at the same time; our area is particularly depressed and in need of the light of Christ.

The SBS starts this coming Monday, the 17th, and graduation is on June 27th. Please pray that God accomplishes all that He wants to in and through me during this school. My main desire is to obey Him and if He is telling me that this is what He has for me now, then I want to obey whether or not I know exactly what purposes it will serve. Also, please pray for God to give me His strategy and timing on how to reach out more in our local community/area. There are many good ideas, but God knows the best approaches and can grant us favor.

Feel free to email me if you have any questions! And please share any prayer requests you have because I would really like to be able to pray more specifically for each of you.

For His Glory,
Veronica