

Life Without a Bucket List

I can confidently say that I don't live with a long list of things I want to do, see, or complete before I'm done in this place. I carried a dream for years of having a farm. I was in love with all things Wendell Berry. I could picture it, the life of routine created by the land and its rhythms. But beyond that, I've never longed for having a list and checking things off.

I'm happy with my old cars, my simple wardrobe, my lack of fancy things and vacations. Don't get me wrong, I do love a good concert, but I also love an organic dance party in my kitchen. I love great food, but I also love a hot dog over the fire pit in my backyard. I love a hike in the mountains, but I also love a walk around the block with my people.

Last week, when I heard I may have another long road to travel on this journey, I turned to Jason and cried. I told him how day after day this place is losing its grip on me. Driving down the street, this place sometimes feels so slutty, so wanting my money without a care for my heart. Billboards blare at me what to buy, what to think, how to vote. But the tie that binds me here is relationships. Sickness makes those bonds more real, more important. It's people who grip my heart.

Suffering has a way of exposing our theology, certainly our practical theology, where what we believe about God collides with where we live. My heart always hurts a little when someone hears my story and begins to question God's goodness. I have found that suffering makes my faith more childlike, more simple.

Our ideas of God are not necessarily made bigger or more grandiose through suffering, but they are simplified as we wade through the unknown of what comes next. Last week, in

that unknown, I was smooching on Lake and the thought hit me that I won't be around to help him navigate his first heartbreak. I was in a public place and I nearly lost my footing because of the fear that gripped me in that moment.

I looked up and saw my growing girls and was almost suffocated by the thought of who will help them during the awkward years of puberty. Shouldn't it be me? That's the way it's supposed to be, right? Can't I stay and be here for them when they need me?

The truth is none of us know the length of our lives. So we pray for daily bread and say thank you when it comes. For today, I have a little boy who will cross the room to give me a hug.

I have a baby girl who gives me ten kisses when I ask for five. I have a preteen who still holds my hand in public, in front of her friends even. I have a second born who loves to tell me every tiny detail of her day.

I have a guy who makes coffee just like I like it. A bucket list? No, I don't need one. I'm so rich. It's relationships that matter. And for me, paying attention to the precious gift of today is the only thing on my list.

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