

# EMILY CONGDON

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## TWO YEARS

Two years. My first trip to Haiti was two years ago this month. Over the last two years, I have traveled on six teams, played with kids, sweated through every layer of clothing, ugly cried in front of strangers, and had multiple sunburns--including second degree burns on my fingers! Through these trips to Haiti, God has engaged me in unexpected ways.

I imagined that leading teams to Haiti would challenge me in regards to leadership, planning for contingencies, and facilitating discussions at night for devotions. However, the lessons that God is teaching me are much more personal and hard hitting than I expected. My Father knows my failings and the areas where I need work.

"When there is nothing else to be joyful about, rejoice in the Lord. Be joyful in your salvation." This quote from a sweet Haitian sister in Christ truly captures the first lesson God has taught me. In the midst of political upheaval and economic insecurity, destitution and malnutrition, Haitians are grateful. Not reluctantly thankful as I usually am, but joyously thankful.

True gratitude expresses thanks for the persistent pursuing love of our God. True gratitude focuses on our spiritual blessings even in times of physical suffering, emotional distress, and spiritual doubt.

Traveling to Haiti, has opened my eyes not only to my lack of gratitude but also to my constant need for control. In the States, I can to a certain extent control my daily schedule, my food, and even my sleep. The months prior to a trip, I plan out every detail for a team and attempt to control every aspect of the trip. I am in control. I am able. I can do most of it on my own. My prayers are often only about the issues that are outside of my perceived control.

Even with all of my planning, plans go awry. Events feel like they spiral out of my control. Supplies are missing. Trucks breakdown. In Haiti, my prayers become desperate. Needy. Helpless. Serving in Haiti forces me to realize that I am not able. God is able. He is able and is always in control. 2 Cor. 9:8 states that, "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at



all times, you may abound in every good work." While I serve in Haiti, I have to ask God for grace. What reassurance to know that when I trust and believe in God, He provides!

I am so much more aware of my need and complete inability to do life without God when I am in Haiti. In Topeka, all of my "needs" and most of my wants are met with little thought or prayer. I am resolving to view every situation as if I were in Haiti. Only my Father can provide my true needs.

## THE CONGDONS

This is one of my favorite pictures of my little family. We love date nights that end with

walks in the park. The picture also perfectly captures our life right now; slightly crazy, out of focus, and filled with laughter.

Craig is still working hard teaching part-time at Cair Paravel and pastoring at Grace Bible Church which makes for a hectic schedule. Somehow, he still manages to run our house when I am traveling including the weeks before and after when I am essentially a zombie. Petra thinks she is a human and deserves to lounge on top of Craig and me even if she is 70 lbs. I am so blessed to call this my family.



# PRAYER — REQUESTS

- I would appreciate your prayers as I continue learning my position, gaining experience and wisdom. Leading teams is a constant source of humility and growth.
- I am still in need of financial support. At times, this can be stressful and frustrating. Please pray that I focus the time and resources needed into reaching full support and trust God to provide.
- Prayers that I continue to practice living a joyously grateful life.
- As I plan and prepare for the teams this year, I need to continually acknowledge that God is in control and I am able only through Him.
- That the Haiti Lifeline leadership team continues to pursue God's guidance and His plan for us in Haiti.
- Prayers that Craig and I are able to find time for each other as well as ways to rest and rejuvenate.
- Those traveling on our 2016 teams will be safe and encounter God and His people in Haiti in a real way.

