



Cole and Sarah McCauley, missionaries in Guatemala

After I told this young man that if he wanted to live that way we couldn't continue to support him and what he's pursuing anymore, he said he didn't want to give it up. I told him that I still loved him and want to see him, but we could not provide for him to disobey and live in contradiction to what God has shown us is best. We talked some more... I got on the motorcycle and drove away. I did the only thing I know to do: I went to our Lord in prayer. "Well, that didn't go how I thought it would. It doesn't seem like this is best for him. This can't be your will Lord; I don't understand it. But Lord, I know you are good. I know you are sovereign. Never once since I started giving heed to your love for me, your warnings, and your teaching to guide me, not once have you forsaken me. Lord, I do not understand, but I will trust in you. He is in your hands. Father, please work in his heart and reveal to him what is best for his future. Please lay heavy on his heart what is good, right, and true. I pray that you would lead him and help him to make the right decision. God, I hope I went about it the right way, and I pray that I reflected your character and righteousness well. Father, if I did not please you, show me, and help me to honor you in this. What more should I do?" At that moment, it was clear. God was asking, "Is this exactly what you would have done with your own son?"

O boy, we've got beautiful story for you this month, but I'll get back to that in just a moment. It sure has been a busy start to the year! Sarah and her mother (Pam Cool), who accompanied her to Guatemala for three weeks to help with our kids, arrived a few days before the new year. What a blessing her mother was: she has such a servant's heart and was ready and willing to help in whatever way. We are thankful for her, praise God that she could come, and thank God for the love and care she has given us. Sarah's father (John Cool) was able to come down for the last week and see our home and Casa de Mi Padre for the first time. We were thankful we could all spend time together. John made pizza for all the kids at Casa de Mi Padre one night and many told me how delicious it was!



So back to my conversation with the young man in our transitional program... We believe that it is biblical and right that a young man and woman would not pursue marriage or anything meant for marriage (any type of relationship beyond friendship) before they are founded in life and ready, having resources to provide for each other and a family. (I always tell the

kids that when they do reach that place and they are ready, "Watch out, baby! Be praying, be looking, and ready to pursue or be pursued! When you're ready, I want to do all I can to help also. Borrow the car or come over; we'll make you a delicious dinner and help you woo them! But, only when you've reached that point. :)) We believe that to pursue or be fascinated and dwell on anything like that before you're ready can be dangerous for any young person. We believe that it is EVEN MORE DANGEROUS for our kids who do not have families to lean on to support them if they mess up and have a child before they are ready. Can we as a ministry care for our children as well as the children they might have? The reality is no, and it's not right in the eyes of God to neglect preventing the cycle of family dysfunction in our kids' lives. Just as the woman in the Song of Solomon warns her sisters and the women of Jerusalem, "*Promise me, O women of Jerusalem, not to awaken love until the time is right*" *Song of Solomon 8:4*, we warn our youth of the same thing. Why does she say this multiple times? Because love is like a consuming fire! A

A New Year...

All the kids are back at school, and things seem to be running smoothly. **Be praying for our children and this new year of their studies.** Pray that God would be preparing them for bright futures.

We decided this year to make a change in where we attend church and are very excited about all the possibilities for our children to grow alongside other children and youth who attend there. We love the heart and direction of this church: there is such a focus on solid biblical teachings, being disciples and making disciples, and classes for multiple age groups that focus on where the children are in life. They have a large and active youth group. The youth pastor desires to disciple some of our children. **Be praying that God would help us to unite with the body of Christ in our new church** and that we may be able to serve the church and show our children what it means to follow Christ, be a involved in your church, and love the lost. **Pray for the salvation of the children in our home who don't understand or value what Christ has done.** Pray for our staff as we love, teach, and discipline our children this year. Pray that our children would know how deeply they are loved by God and us, and trust all we lead them in!!!

Prayer need

We ask that you would be faithfully praying for Elias who came to us 4 months ago and was beaten up when he arrived. At a recent court hearing, the judge appointed him to go back to his family because the judge believed the beating was an uneducated, isolated incident. We really have no idea, and it was so hard to trust that this was best for Elias. He was terrified and begged me not to let him go, but we had no option because of the court order. We did our best to encourage him, point him to God, and set up ways to have follow up visits. I personally took him to his home so that we can visit and make sure he is ok. **Please pray for the hearts of his parents, that they would know Christ and love Elias well. Pray for Elias that he would trust in God and all that we have taught him.**

beautiful thing, contained and in its proper place and time, but a great danger when out of control. But, as many of you know, it is not easy to convince a young person of this. Because of that, we don't want to just shut them down, so we do our best to talk about the beauty, the holiness, and the security of marriage. We talk about how great it is to have someone you know will be there and love you forever, someone to share life with, and a faithful commitment. With the older kids, we talk about the beauty of God's design for marriage and sex and the security of entering into that only in the righteous way God planned. We talk about how it's natural for them to like boys or girls around them, and quite frankly how it's good to keep an eye out and keep a God honoring relationship if they are good people and love God. The challenge is how to feel that and not run away with it and not fall fully into all the feelings, desires, and fantasies that so many youths run into without restraint and end up so badly hurt by!

This particular conversation was brought about by some circumstances I truly believe God orchestrated because of His desire to protect this young man and the girl he was starting to pursue. The young man didn't like the conversation at first and felt he had done nothing wrong. When I asked him if Jesus had been beside them in all of their doings in the time they were dating, would he have been pleased and cheering on every action and thought, he had nothing to say. We had a long talk about what the Bible has shown us to be a right and blessed way to pursue a woman in the correct timing. I talked about my thankfulness for Sarah and my relationship: our love, the security we have in each other. I gave him a dramatized comparison of getting married as a planned and prepared couple and having children the same way and how they are some of the greatest joys and blessings in one's life, and then I contrasted that to the stress, pain, and confusion of deciding you HAVE to get married because you followed the culture's path of dating and what's acceptable and conceived a child, or even worse the pain, guilt, and horror of contemplating killing your unborn child because you're not ready. There is a stark difference between the blessing and protection in following and taking heed of the way God created marriage and taught us to pursue it and the way that the world says to pursue feelings of love and casual intimate relationships. Those so often end in heartbreak and great distraction. I continued to minister to this young man and pray. We also talked about how confident I am that he will make a great husband someday and that the woman he is pursuing is nice, but now is not the right time. I shared my great desire to see him married, happy, and doing well, but with so much of his focus on this now, it was not right and is against our wishes. As we neared the end, I told him how important he is to me and how much I enjoy getting to go through life with him. I gave my opinion to him and told him he could make his own decision, but I would not use the ministry funds to support him as he pursues something that could be dangerous for him and the young lady. This is one of our ministry rules. He told me that he understood and was so thankful for all we had done for him and that he has and still feels loved. However, this was something he did not want to give up. I shared with him that that made me sad. I told him this doesn't change my love for him. I still want to see him often and have him visit, but we would not support this.

This was when I started to drive away on the motorcycle. I

just couldn't understand. I poured out my heart out to God. Was I being too hard... I believe this is right... Then, I felt God say, "Is this exactly what you would have done with your own son?" I thought, "No. No, it's not. Partially it is. I would have said the same things and stood firm on what God has taught me. I would even draw the same firm line. With the young man I was talking to, I had shared my thoughts, done my best to respect him, reason with him, and give him a chance to make an educated decision. But honestly, if this were my own child, I would have passionately told him, "I believe this is wrong and is very dangerous for you." (This specific young man has his ups and his downs. When he is up, he is very up, and when he is down, he is very down. If his relationship were to hurt like any of my foolish relationships did in my youth, I'm not sure he could handle it on top of all his other hurt and pain from the past). I would share that thought with him. I would tell my son with conviction that he needed to drop this relationship (not necessarily the friendship, but the intimate relationship for sure). I would tell him that he needs to focus as hard as he can on maturing, finishing his studies, getting a profession so he could be a provider, and then when he is ready... go baby go, find that lady, pursue her honorably and take her as your own! But right now, he needs to focus on preparing himself for that.

As God ministered to me in that moment, He said, "Go back," and I knew He was on the move. As I sat down and talked to this young man and shared what was put on my heart, he started to share that after I left, he really started to think about the things we had talked about. He said he knew I was right that he wasn't ready, and now he wanted to do it the proper way. He asked if he could talk to her though; he did not want to just drop the relationship and never talk to her again. He wanted to explain why to her. I told him I thought he owed that to her and that it would be a mature thing to do. We talked about how he had led her into this premature intimacy and that he needed to share with her his thankfulness for her friendship but that they needed to put a pause on things and focus on preparing themselves. He asked if I would sit down with them and share the Biblical examples and some of my wisdom of these things. So, we did it, and it went very well. They both were very mature about it; I was proud of them. And more than that, I was praising God! What a good and caring Father!!! I am so thankful for God's Holy Spirit that lives within us and ministers to us. We don't serve a dead God; our God is living, and I love that when we seek Him, when we ask, when we listen, He responds. Imagine if God hadn't taught me to turn to Him in prayer over everything... I would have left that day and not turned back. This young man would have stubbornly continued. I know this boy. If I hadn't returned clarifying caringly and with conviction, he would have moved forward, having made his decision and regretting it. **Praise God for his promptings and Spirit!** I love getting to see God move in so many ways here at Casa de Mi Padre. **Keep praying that we would daily be in step with God and listen to all His leadings! Pray that this young man would be strengthened and encouraged in following what God has shown him. Pray that he would find great satisfaction in loving God and His Righteousness. Praise our glorious King!** Makes me wanna shout with joy!!!

In absolute Praise and Love,

The McCauley Family and the Kids of Casa