

As I sat on the bus on the way to Denver, I decided to grab my journal and started to pray. I was excited about the whole experience and the conversations that were waiting for me, but I also knew that I couldn't love these people on my own. Prayer journaling has been a huge part of my walk and now I can look back and see what God has done. He is faithful. That morning I prayed:

“Jesus,
I'm on the bus headed to JFA. I know that you are taking me here for a reason. I'm nervous because of all the controversy over abortion and that fact that I'm on the not so popular side. I think I'm afraid that I'm just not going to know what to say. I know the pro-life position is truth. God, defend your truth through me today. I embrace that the truth can be offensive and I ask that you would prepare my heart and mind to encounter those whom you have prepared to meet with me. I do not see how I'm going to be able to talk to people about the exhibit. Street evangelism is not my thing. Please give me opportunities to get to know people and to love on them. I have no idea what to do or say, but I'm asking that you would use me because I'm willing to be a part of your plan. Use me in your story. Amen.”

I closed my journal and stepped off the bus onto the campus and onto the battle field. I knew it was going to be an all day fight. Relational evangelism has got to be one of the most exciting things for me. I was eager to know people and show them the injustice in abortion as well as their own value. The first guy I talked to was against abortion except in the case of rape. I immediately thought back to training and asked him “Is it okay to take the life of a child and to punish the child for the crimes of the father?” This is something he had never thought about before and it made sense to him. He was thankful for the conversation and it was a nice way to ease into the day.

Many people were walking by flicking us off and cussing at us. They were not even willing to stop and talk. I could see so much pain in their faces. The pro-choicers were out as well. They would not talk to us either. I don't think that helped their case very much. I had several civil and short conversations. Several people I talked to already had children. They seemed so young. Abortion must have been something that encountered along the way.

Later in the afternoon I was overwhelmed. There were so many lost and angry people around. How was I going to make a difference? Then I thought about the last part of the JFA slogan : “...one person at a time.” That was how I was going to do it; just one person at a time. Even if that meant I just heard about someone's day or I stood there for hours when I could have had ten short conversations, it was a part of the plan. I so desperately wanted to be used. My prayer after the day was over sums up the events of the day:

“God,
Today was the first day of JFA and it went so well. Walter is heavy on my heart. He debated for hours today. He was so very intelligent and I was intimidated to talk to him. Thank you for giving me the boldness to approach him. I praise you for giving me favor with him. All I know how to do is to get to know his story and love him. He is desperate need for love and a savior. Please please give me a chance to love on him tomorrow. May I be an agent of truth in Walter's life. Even tonight as he thinks about the day I ask that you would work in his heart. Provide for Aundrea as she needs a home to raise her kids in. She needs resources and so I ask that Focus will be able to provide her with those. Use her story to encourage people. Provide me with chances tomorrow to bind up the broken hearted and set the captives free. Here am I, Lord...send me.”

That night I went to sleep so excited about the next day. I wanted to go back and try my hand at debating. I had become more comfortable throughout the day and I knew a boldness would help so much the next day. I also knew Walter was coming back and I could feel that God was up to something. So, the next morning I woke up with great anticipation and hope.

Tuesday was a much more relaxed day. I met Dawn early in the morning. Dawn was quite insecure and bitter. The topic swayed from abortion quickly. She eventually told me that she didn't see the unborn as having value because she didn't have value. She has explained already that she hated religion, but I knew she needed to understand her worth. It was so enjoyable to sit there and speak truth to her without her knowing where it was coming from. I encouraged her and explained how I valued her even in a short conversation. God was breaking down her walls and I was thrilled to be a part of it. She had to leave for class, but she left feeling loved, something she rarely feels. I began to realize that the Lord was using me not only to promote the value of the unborn, but to promote the value of each person that I came in contact with that day. They were fearfully and wonderfully made as well.

Later on that morning I stood next to a girl who was yelling about the exhibit. She finally said that she was violently raped a year before and my heart broke. I knew why she was so angry. Those of us standing around did not get to sit much, but we were so kind to her and genuinely cared about her as a person. She needed someone to love her and before I even had the chance, she walked away. Why did it happen that way? Why didn't God let her stop and give us a chance to care about her? This required me to trust the Lord's sovereignty.

Just before lunch I spotted Walter. He was already talking to three of our guys and I was so thankful because I knew they would connect with him so well. I went over to say hey never knowing that I would end up spending hours talking with him. We were all ready for lunch and Walter was late for work. He decided to skip work and come eat with us. We gave him pizza and got him a drink. He was amazed at how hospitable we were. Our conversation went to intelligent design. I had been praying the whole day for this conversation. The guys were doing a great job with him, so I stepped out to go talk to more people. I had a few other conversations where my opinion was expressed and I explained why I believed that way I did, but most people were on their way to class. I saw so much hate on the free speech board and began to get discouraged. My heart was breaking for these unborn children and for the people who had no idea that they were also created in the image of God. I had to sit in the grass and pray for a while. I watched people's reactions and the hostility to the truth. I watched people sit on benches and pour their hearts out and I watched as people walk by in ignorance. All the while I was praying for God's eyes and his heart for the people in front of me. The day was coming to a close and I walked over to say goodbye to Walter. He hugged us and we got his phone number. We encouraged him and told him how much we enjoyed an opportunity to talk to him.

Participating in JFA was one of the major highlights of being at FFI this semester. I have been dying to reach out to people and use the information that I have been given in class. Building relationships is so enjoyable and I know that God has equipped me to love people and earn the right to be heard in their lives. I am thankful for the chance to serve along side this organization. It was such a great way to talk to people. You get on topics of worldview so fast and are able to proactively love them. I hope that I can help with future JFA outreach events as well as use the information I have learned to teach others at home.