



# Rebecca's Reflections



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## Give Thanks In All Circumstances

*“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances...”*

The above exhortations (1 Thess. 5:16-18a) are easier said than done, but as St. Paul continues in this passage, *“this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you”* (1 Thess. 5:18b). God is good, even in the midst of difficult circumstances. This is a truth that should make a difference in how we respond to times of struggle, both in our lives and in the lives of others. Although we often remember to pray during difficult times, many of us never think to rejoice in His goodness or give thanks for His glory.

Sometimes it is particularly difficult for me to rejoice and give thanks after a long day of outreach when, conversation after conversation, I witness the brokenness of our culture revealed through hardened, wounded, apathetic, or angry hearts. It's easy for me to lose hope when I see what these students are going through. I now see that they are part of God's plan to help me pray unceasingly, but also to help me rejoice and give thanks even when, on the surface, their circumstances may look bleak or hopeless.

This past January, in order to be more intentional about praying for those I encounter, I purchased a little green book to record the names of each of the students whom God leads into my path. Through this prayer and additional reflection on scripture, I realize that Jesus Christ has already won the battle against sin. This battle *“is not against flesh and blood, but with the principalities, with the powers, with the world rulers of this present darkness, with the evil spirits in the heavens”* (Ephesians 6:12). However, God is allowing us the privilege of participating in that battle. For me, this participation often takes form while I engage students on campus as well as afterward, when I continue to pray for them.

Praise the Lord that He is using us to give students an opportunity to encounter the truth! Thank the Lord that He loves us despite our brokenness and sinfulness! Thank the Lord that He loves these students so much that He desires their eternal happiness in Heaven! Thank the Lord that He allows us to be part of His life-saving work!



Arizona State University served as JFA's first outreach location this past February. In the picture above, an ASU student (left) and I (right) discuss Panel 2 of the kiosk. This panel asks, "When are we human?" Each circle marks a different stage in the development of a human being, from fertilization to the elderly adult stage.



Below are listed several of the names from that little green book I mentioned earlier, as well as a glimpse into the struggles that have been a part of each of their journeys.

- **“Beth”** signed our poll saying “Yes” abortion should remain legal. At the beginning of our one-hour conversation she stated, “If a child would likely grow up in an environment where he didn’t feel valued, it would be better to abort him.” I asked, “Beth, if you had a friend who didn’t feel valuable and was considering suicide because of it, what would you say to your friend?” Just before bursting into tears she passionately responded, “I would tell her, ‘But you are valuable! You might not feel it but there is so much good that can come in your future. You just can’t see it right now.’” Through her tears, Beth shared that just days before, one of her friends had attempted suicide. Beth was the friend who called the cops to intervene.
- **“Amy”** angrily revealed she has had five abortions. Another JFA staff member was able to talk with her after she shared this.
- **“Marc”** lost a child to abortion when he was seventeen. This devastated him. I learned he was so personally affected because he had survived an abortion at the beginning of his life. In his own words, “I am a failed abortion.” Even though his girlfriend knew his own personal story related to abortion, she chose to abort his child. He offered to care for his child even if the mother didn’t want anything to do with the baby. After she chose abortion, he felt rejected. He also felt defeated by the fact that he was not able to protect his child. He told me that, in order to never feel these painful emotions again, he now identifies as homosexual.
- In high school **“Dominic”** was discerning the priesthood. He now not only questions whether or not abortion is right or wrong, he questions the existence of God. He hopes God exists but, in his own words, “I just don’t know anymore.”
- **“Brian,”** upon our encounter, confidently stated he was “pro-life.” I asked, “Brian, what does that mean for you? Do you think abortion should be illegal?” He responded, “No, we can’t force our beliefs on others. I’m pro-life because I’m a Christian, but legally enforcing my stance on abortion would push my religion on people who don’t believe the same as me.”



These people’s circumstances don’t seem hopeful to our human eyes. However, as I read through that little green book, I remember other significant details from each interaction. As I recall those details and attempt to view these conversations in light of the fact that God has already won the battle against sin, I do have hope. In future newsletters, I plan to share more with you about the conversations with Beth, Amy, Marc, Dominic, and Brian so you can see a little bit of how God seems to be at work. Until then, please join me in praying for each of them. And don’t forget to...

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*Rebecca J. Jaschke*