

Episode 6-19: Missions-Focused Life

Resources:

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Faith Bible Seminary

Transcript:

Jocelyn: I don't just need to feel better. I need the truth. And ultimately that will make me better.

Janet: I just want to make it as totally simple as possible for ladies to see that the Bible is really applicable to their everyday life.

Jocelyn: When they understand theology, the application flows out of it quickly with joy.

Janet: It is a journey, but even the journey itself is joyful when I'm doing it, holding the hand of my savior and trusting him all along the way. This is the joyful journey podcast, a podcast to inspire and equip women to passionately pursue beautiful biblical truth on their journey as women of God. When you choose truth, you're choosing joy.

Janet: Okay, listeners, welcome back. This is Janet here once again with my trusty co-host, Noelle.

Noelle: Hello, everyone.

Janet: And Noelle is gonna lead us on a subject near and dear to her heart.

Noelle: It is, yes. So today, the subject of the episode is living a missions-focused life.

Janet: That totally sounds like it's for other people, not us.

Noelle: Yep. So when you think about missions, what do you usually think of, Janet? Or what assumptions do you think most people would have when they hear the word missions?

Janet: I think moving to a third world country where it'll be very remote. I'll never see anyone again, I probably don't have internet access, I certainly don't have air conditioning. My children will never see any family they ever know, and there will be no modern conveniences.

Noelle: You're exactly right.



Janet: Okay, end of episode.

Noelle: And that is what everyone needs to do. No, so for me, even just talking about my childhood and youth as a missionary kid, an MK, I grew up in Santiago, Chile. It means saying, no, I didn't grow up in a jungle or ride an elephant to school.

Janet: Which, bummer. That would've been cool to ride an elephant to school, can we just say.

Noelle: Yeah. I grew up in a city of seven million people.

Janet: Wow.

Noelle: And-

Janet: Not even a remote jungle.

Noelle: No. Now, obviously it does not mean that's all of missions, but it's just.

Janet: That's right.

Noelle: Funny because people.

Janet: That we only think this.

Noelle: We have assumptions.

Janet: Yep.

Noelle: But honestly, that's not even what this episode is about. Beyond that, I want to submit to you today that missions doesn't even have to mean living as a, quote-unquote, missionary in the traditional sense of the word.

Janet: That's intriguing. Do tell.

Noelle: All righty. So I would say the question shouldn't be, am I called to missions? 'Cause a lotta times people say that, am I called to missions?

Janet: Yes.



Noelle: Am I called to be a missionary? Which is not, that's not a bad question. I would say a better question is, though, how is God calling me to participate in missions?

Janet: 'Cause our callings are different. Some people are called to go overseas. And not everybody is, but you're saying it's not only the people going overseas that are in missions, we all need to be participating in it.

Noelle: Yes.

Janet: In some way.

Noelle: Exactly. Okay. So I wanna look today at some practical examples of how people could live a missions-focused life, and I wanna encourage all of the listeners to do this both within the context of your local church and then also as an individual or as a family.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: I am not trying to do this outside of the church, but you certainly could do it in additional ways.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: Outside of the church.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: If that makes sense. So the first way that we probably talk about or think about often, semi-regularly, but we actually rarely do maybe some churches do, but I've heard that this is becoming less and less common is supporting missionaries financially. I was talking with a missionary family the other day, and they were just saying, yeah, it's hard to even get a church or a family to support us financially anymore.

Janet: Wow.

Noelle: Which is interesting because I think that was a strong movement back in the '90s or early 2000s. But anyway.

Janet: It's so fascinating, like in church, we're all about one thing, then we're all about another. We don't seem to be able to be full orbled.



Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: 'Cause missions are still a need. We don't get to just change our mind, and then they still don't have needs. Yeah.

Noelle: So I'd really encourage everyone listening to think about two things. So first of all, how is their local church that they attend support missionaries financially? Because I think that's something really beautiful that a church can do.

Janet: Yep.

Noelle: And so find out more information about it. Maybe their church is already doing it, and they just don't know.

Janet: That's right.

Noelle: Or maybe they're not, and they can be part of a team of people that- That helps ... helps the church start thinking about that. And then also, I would say, please think about how are you supporting missionaries.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: So.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: Yeah. Tricky. This is very tricky, 'cause we're talking about money, but.

Janet: It is. But it's real.

Noelle: Let's talk about it anyway. So Janet, tell me, what would you encourage, if one or both of those things aren't true? So either if their local church isn't supporting missionaries or a person isn't supporting missionaries, like, how should we think about that?

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: Let's start going through that.



Janet: I think just on a basic level, as I'm thinking about that, okay, we're called to evangelize. It's one of the reasons we're still here. Okay, we know that. I know that God cares about the world. And if I'm supposed to be growing to look more like Him, I have to care about the world somehow, okay? I can give even if my church isn't there yet. I can look for ways to help my church grow in this area instead of judging my church, 'cause it totally could be that it's like nobody's willing to help make that happen. If the Lord has opened my eyes to the value of that, I could be part of that. I listen to Money Matters a lot.

Noelle: Okay.

Janet: It was Crown Financial Ministry, and now I think it's called Money Matters, I think. Now it's Faithfi, I think. I don't know. It's changed names, but biblical, I've appreciated it. And one, I don't remember who said it, but that giving is a great way to keep money from getting a hold on you.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: It's not, don't make any, don't have any, it's, don't keep it. That's a way to be free.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: If you don't wanna be enslaved to it, don't keep it.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: And it was Howard Dayton who was part of that. I loved this. He said, giving is not God's way of raising money, 'cause that's what we think.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: It's God's way of raising people into the likeness of His Son.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: Is by giving me the privilege of doing that. So it is important. Brent and I talked early on, when we got married, the temptation is when you first get married, you don't have a lot.

Noelle: Yeah.



Janet: You don't make a lot. And we want to give, but we certainly couldn't give as much. We didn't have very much. As the Lord allows careers to develop and we make more, the temptation is your lifestyle goes up with it. And so what we talked about was, where are we gonna intentionally cap our lifestyle so that we have more to give?

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: But it has to be intentional or I've recognized if you're not intentional, it just goes other places.

Noelle: Absolutely.

Janet: And that's been so fun is every year to go, how do we increase the percent that we give, again?

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: Who can we, how can, and to know, my husband's president of a seminary. Many of these students go on to go to other places. How fun it is to get to be part of their ministries.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: And yes, we pray for them, but that we get to give. Brent said, sometimes I feel like the Apostle Paul when I wanna just go take a trip and go visit all the things.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: All the people. And it's like, it's just so fun, but it's very important.

Noelle: Yeah. Let's talk about Paul for a second then. So, in Philippians 4:15 through 18, he talks about financial gifts, and he talks about them several other places too.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: But Philippians 4:15 through 18 says, moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel when I set out for Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only. For even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. Not that I desire your gifts, what I desire is that more be credited to your account. I have received full payment and have



more than enough. I am amply supplied. Now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts that you sent, they are a fragrant offering an acceptable sacrifice pleasing to God. That's pretty cool.

Janet: Oh, so cool.

Noelle: What do you think about that passage?

Janet: One of the things that stands out to me, I don't know if this is what you were thinking, but it stood out to me, he's not embarrassed about the fact that people give him money. I think sometimes I'm embarrassed to ask, and I get that if it's because I wanna go get a Lamborghini or whatever, I guess that would be embarrassing to ask everybody else to pay for that. But the fact that he sees the benefit to their soul and their heart that they could be a part of it when he talks about it's credited to them, it's a fragrant offering. He sees that it's good for them as well. And I just think about what an encouragement it was to his soul.

Noelle: Absolutely.

Janet: I'm sure, that they were doing this. Not only was it meeting his needs, and I'm sure that was an encouragement but that somebody was partnering with him in that way, it encouraged him, and he knows it will bless them, so he's not embarrassed about it. He can just talk about it and be thankful for it.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: And he's not trying to be slimy and manipulate. He's just being honest. And I love that because we're all weird about money.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: And he just is honest about it.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: And sees the blessing in it.

Noelle: Absolutely, yeah. And I was also thinking as I was preparing for this episode about Joanna and Susanna in Luke 8. It references them as both ladies that supported the ministry of Jesus and his disciples.



Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: And there were others mentioned too, but how cool is that? Jesus and his disciples were able to better minister without having to worry about earning an income because of Joanna and Susanna. Like, how awesome is that?

Janet: I know. I know. Who wouldn't want to be that?

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: I love that. And especially in a society where most women didn't have access to money on their own or a way to make it, these women did. And that's how they used it. That is so cool.

Noelle: It is so cool, yeah. And I'll try to be careful in the way I say this, but I do wanna say I don't think this is true, this principle of giving, isn't just true for people who are well off.

Janet: Yeah. Don't we have the, is it the widow's mite?

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: That she gave all that she had, and Jesus praised her for that. Yeah.

Noelle: Yeah. The truth is, especially in the US but around the world, that a lot of us live with extravagance, and it's normal.

Janet: Yeah, we don't think it's extravagant.

Noelle: Exactly.

Janet: We think it's base.

Noelle: We think it's baseline.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: I remember a story that was told to me, and I'll probably not get some of the details right, but it was essentially this group of pastors in Cuba that came together, and they heard about a



church with a missionary in another country that was really severely struggling. This was just a couple years ago.

Janet: Okay, first of all, that Cuba would say somebody else is severely struggling is in itself amazing because Cuba's got so many struggles.

Noelle: Yeah, absolutely. And they heard about this need, and the group was able to raise, I think it was \$200 for this need, which you're talking about, I had asked later when I heard this story how much were these Cuban pastors bringing in income a month, and it was like \$10 a month or something like that.

Janet: Wow.

Noelle: So together they came together, and it was just like, oh my goodness. It was so impactful to me to think through.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: \$200 is a lot of money, Janet, but also, like if you told me, I really need \$200, like I'd be able to scrap it together.

Janet: Yeah. Like you could get there. Yep.

Noelle: Yeah. And it's just, oh my goodness, like I don't really think of myself as wealthy, but I make more than \$10 a month. I'm really convicted by that. Another story that comes to mind is I have a friend that's a missionary and she had sent out a normal kind of newsletter a couple years back, and she talked through the usual throughout the letter, what had happened since the last update, how the Lord was working, how we could pray for the different situations, and then she said that they were in severe financial need 'cause they had lost several supporters. And she said, even just a dollar a month would significantly impact us right now.

Janet: That's crazy.

Noelle: Yeah, and she went on to explain how cost of living that obviously stretched a lot further in the context that they were in. But for me to just think about, oh my goodness, like a dollar a month, and she's just saying, we're here. We're doing these things.

Janet: They're on the front lines.



Noelle: We see the Lord working.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: And could you spare a dollar? And it wasn't, she trusted the Lord. It wasn't.

Janet: Like Paul. They shouldn't have to be ashamed.

Noelle: Yes.

Janet: To just be honest about what the need is. Not manipulating, just honest. Yes.

Noelle: Yeah. Yeah.

Janet: Wow. It just puts things in perspective.

Noelle: Yeah, absolutely. So I just think a lot of people, when they hear, hey, I think you should consider financially giving to missionaries or missions, they just think yeah, I'd like to do that one day when I can. It's like, well.

Janet: When I have more.

Noelle: Maybe let's evaluate your lifestyle now, and I can't pretend to know everyone's situation.

Janet: And we don't need to.

Noelle: No.

Janet: We're just asking people to consider.

Noelle: Honestly, I've always felt the tug and pull of being wise financially and what that means in our context, in our culture.

Janet: Yep, yep.

Noelle: Because we do things here meaning the US, in a way that are pretty normalized that wouldn't be that way around the world, like retirement or.



Janet: Yeah, here it's wise to save for retirement. And I think about passages of scripture that talk about the ant saving for the future.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: And we don't want to be a burden on our kids. We wanna be wise. But in other cultures, they're not even thinking about that.

Noelle: Yeah. Exactly. Or things that are super normal, like maybe attending a certain university. Yeah, now you've put yourself in a situation where you're paying off \$200,000 in debt. does that mean that's wrong? No, I'm not trying to say that certain things are sin. I'm just saying pause and think and consider.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: What about paying for monthly subscriptions of entertainment.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: Is that within your norm? And if that's within your norm, then I would submit to you, hey, other things can be within your norm as well. Yeah. Does that make sense?

Janet: Yep. Now you're just getting a little too close to people.

Noelle: I am behind a microphone.

Janet: Give the girl a microphone. She gets wild.

Noelle: And I am far away from all the residents.

Janet: That's right. That's right.

Noelle: Oh, my goodness. I don't think we need to spend all episode on these controversial things. However, this is my point with this, within our budgets, are we choosing to give cheerfully?

Janet: Yeah.



Noelle: And are we giving sacrificially for the good of the Gospel being spread around the world?

Janet: And to realize, yes, we're all just growing. But the opportunity you're giving us is to increase our joy. Because as we don't let money have a hold on us by thinking, I have to have, I have to have more, I have to have more, even if it's not that I overspend, I may over-save. All of these things, we just need wisdom, wisdom. I gotta deal with the logs in my own eyes so I see to have wisdom. But the joy of being able to be part of what God's doing, you're inviting us into joy.

Noelle: Yeah, absolutely.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: And I would say finances are not the only way that we can support missionaries.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: The other super important thing is to think about how often and how we pray for missionaries.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: So obviously, it can just become a joke like, oh, did you pray for the missionaries today? Or whatever, but no, I really mean it. Like, are you praying for them? Think about Paul, who asked for prayers pretty regularly.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: In his letters to the churches. Why do you think it's important? Janet, tell me what you think about that.

Janet: I think sadly and there are certainly, I am growing and to understand this better, but I think for a lot of us it's like, prayer is what you do when you can't really do anything to help.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: We don't see that actually it matters.



Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: I love your example that Paul asked people to pray for him.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: Paul was not asking, it's 'cause he knew it mattered.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: God hears. In the last few years, there's just been a lot that's happened in our lives, and I'm like, and some things are happening for us now even health-wise, and I asked my husband, okay, I've got a group of people I know they pray. Can I tell them? Not because they're gonna. I don't need anything. I need prayer. It truly matters. He actually hears, and He says He hears our prayers.

Noelle: Absolutely.

Janet: But if I think about all the missionaries, even just the missionaries that we support, the missionaries our church supports, I don't really know them all well. I know some. I don't know all of them. Remembering them all, praying for each one of them, all that feels very overwhelming, so then the temptation is to just say, pray for all the missionaries.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: Which isn't very helpful.

Noelle: No.

Janet: So I've really benefited from, and we've mentioned this on here before, but the PrayerMate app that I use. And I have a section that's missionaries, and when I get a prayer letter and I read it, and then I see the part that says, here are our prayer requests, I cut and paste it into that.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: So that when their name comes up again, I'm not just trying to remember. I'm not. So I try to, my thing is when I read the prayer letter, I pray.

Noelle: Yeah.



Janet: So there's, I'm gonna pray right at that moment. I can do that. How awesome that the Lord, I can just do that, and then I cut and paste and put it in there.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: And then every time it comes up, I can pray for them specifically. Otherwise, it's so overwhelming to feel like I can't, I don't even know how to do all of it, that I do none of it.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: And that can't be right.

Noelle: One of my dear friends that I respect so much. She, with her kids, she has a jar on her table that has Popsicle sticks with people's name on them, and some of them are missionaries, some of them are people in their family, different things like that. And then every meal, or every, you know.

Janet: Whatever.

Noelle: Yeah. At least once, one meal a day, they choose a Popsicle stick, and then they talk through how they can pray for that person, and then they include that in the prayer before their meal. And then they.

Janet: I love that.

Noelle: Put it into another jar until they go through all the Popsicle sticks and then go back and forth. Yeah.

Janet: I love that.

Noelle: So there's easy ways to do that.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: You probably can't pray for every person you know every single day.

Janet: That's right. That's right. But I think that's what gets overwhelming.



Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: Is not having a way of doing that. And one is, when they come to your mind, just pray for them.

Noelle: Yeah. And then if you have a chance, tell them that you did.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: Send them a text or a message or an email. Maybe not every time, but maybe sometimes you can.

Janet: But how encouraging.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: If to say, I'm gonna do that once a day or maybe once a week.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: One person that I've prayed for, I'm just gonna text or an email and say, hey, I was just praying this for you. Even what you prayed for.

Noelle: Yes.

Janet: For them. So encouraging.

Noelle: Yeah, absolutely. Okay, so we talked about supporting missionaries through finances and through prayer. Let's change gears a little bit. We're talking about living a missions-focused life. Let's, so let's talk about short-term trips. So first of all, word of warning, when I talk about short-term trips, I think it's super important to be careful about the potential drawbacks if the trip isn't done well.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: Because I think our American society loves the idea of short-term trips, and unfortunately, the way that we do a lot of them are not awesome. So let me clarify just a couple of things really briefly of what I don't mean. So some of the drawbacks. So I think it's a



drawback, a short-term trip is a drawback, if you're not preparing well while you're at home, or if you don't have a good testimony of service or mission mindedness in your own home culture.

Janet: That's so interesting. 'Cause I think a lot of us are very self-absorbed here, but then we're excited to go to this third world country and serve, but we have not had a good testimony of that here.

Noelle: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I also think that if you're not careful, short-term trips can give you a warped view of missions or of culture in general. So the way you talk about it when you return matters, and I would definitely highly suggest that you think through that while you're on the field, like with the missionaries or with the church, and then, under the guidance of your local church. The way you talk about it matters.

Janet: It's so easy to sit in judgment of other cultures when.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: When part, a lot of that can be there's so much we don't understand.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: Yeah. Yeah.

Noelle: Which kinda goes along with another one, which is having a savior mentality. Hey, I'm gonna go into this place, and I am going to make all of their problems disappear.

Janet: I'll probably wear a cape.

Noelle: Yeah. Yeah, and sometimes the way that we do things can be harmful or hurtful for either the nationals, the locals, or the missionaries and just create a lot more work.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: So yeah, just please don't assume that you know the best way to do something. Another big one, I think, is not connecting nationals or locals to a local church, like, on a short-term trip. I don't think that's for 100% of the time. Sometimes there are trips that maybe you don't get to do that, but I think.

Janet: But that we should at least try. We should want that.



Noelle: At least try, absolutely because we care about discipleship, and that happens within the local church. And then my last thing I'm gonna say about this before we get to the positives is please don't call a tourism trip a mission trip if you do a service project. Now, I am not saying tourism is wrong. I love tourism.

Janet: But call it that.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: And so just be careful, okay? We need to be careful with what we say is a short-term missions trip.

Janet: And I think that's so valuable because ultimately, if the point, the the point of a missions trip should be a blessing to the missionaries.

Noelle: Yes.

Janet: If I'm causing them more work, or I want them to entertain me, or I wanna make sure that we go to all the sites and if I wanna go there on vacation, I'm probably not gonna ask the missionary to show me around.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: So go on vacation.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: But if I'm going on a mission trip, I'm not going to get the missionary to do all the work for me. And that's so much to think about. We need to be intentional and prayerful in these things. But, honestly, just looking at that, I would go then maybe we shouldn't do them.

Noelle: Yeah. I actually had this moment a couple years back, no, it was more than a couple years, it was more like 10 years back, where I thought, there's so many disadvantages or drawbacks or dangers of short-term missions trips, maybe we should just send the money, maybe we should just send the money.

Janet: And they know better how to use it.



Noelle: Yeah. And then I went on a trip that really changed my perspective on that. Even as someone that grew up in missions, I should have thought about this before, but there is so much encouragement and good that can be had. So please don't hear me discouraging you from going. That's not what I'm saying. I'm just saying please consider the way that you do it.

Janet: Yeah.

Janet: So let's.

Noelle: To be a blessing.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: Yeah. So let's talk about that. Let's talk about some purposes of short-term missions. I think first and foremost, we should think about growing a Christ-centered love for the nations. Yeah. What do you think about that?

Janet: So I think instead of I just wanna go visit all of these places, if I really am committed to serving with and helping a missionary, not being entertained like we just talked about, I'm gonna get to meet the people they minister to.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: I'm gonna get to, even if I'm serving in different ways, I'm watching how they're really connecting with their people. I'm gonna get to see them on the front lines. Our heart for those other nations are gonna grow.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: Because where your treasure is, your heart will be. And as I invest time and effort into loving people on behalf of this or with this missionary, my love for the nations will grow.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: Instead of hoping it grows before I get there.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: Part of it growing will be getting to know those people and loving them.



Noelle: Absolutely. I think another purpose that could be for a short-term missions trip is to fulfill a specific service so that, oh my goodness, there's so many different possibilities. It could be a VBS or construction or maintenance or medical services or teaching and training, manual labor. There's lots of different things, but I think, man labor can be a huge blessing.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: I was telling, I took a group of teens on a missions trip a couple years ago, and they told me, Miss Haynie, we did a lot of painting. And I said, okay, but there are 10 of you, and each of you painted for 10 hours between, whatever, the three days. Think about that, that's 100 hours of labor. Something like that can be very significant for a ministry.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: So don't downplay, I don't have any special skills. I can't, and maybe, yeah, we're not, definitely not all doctors that can go and do a medical missions trip, but we can fulfill a specific purpose.

Janet: Yep. And I think what I love about that is It's a specific purpose, and I know that you would say it's a purpose that the missionaries desire being fulfilled.

Noelle: Exactly. Yes

Janet: Not, hey, we've got a team of people that wanna do a VBS, and we wanna come to your church, and they're like, VBS doesn't even fit our calendar.

Noelle: That's right.

Janet: That's not even, I'm gonna give you more work.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: To try to put on a VBS at your place. But if I know from the missionary, because I know them and we have a relationship, that what they would really be benefited by is a week of somebody putting a house up.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: Then what a huge blessing to go and do that.



Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: But not if that's not what would be a blessing to them, so letting them determine what would actually be helpful to them.

Noelle: Absolutely.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: Yeah, for sure. I think another important purpose that you just touched on right now is to consider how to grow an ongoing partnership between you and/or your church and then that ministry or church.

Janet: Yes. I think going to missionaries supported by your church, where you can continue the support after you leave, is ideal. Yeah.

Noelle: Yeah, for sure. Let's talk about one more purpose, and I think it's often overlooked, and that's to actually encourage the missionaries. The truth is that hosting groups, whatever the size, is gonna be a lot of work.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: And often that work is placed on the missionary family, so that can be especially hard if the group comes in with a mindset that they're all that and a bag of chips.

Janet: You should all be thrilled that we came.

Noelle: Yeah. We're coming and serving, and really they're just being a burden or creating more work. And so I would really encourage group leaders to think about, okay, how can I train my team and prepare my team and discuss with my team on how we can be an encouragement.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: To that missionary family, to that local church? How can we bless the missionaries while we're there? As opposed to how are we creating more work for them.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: Any ideas on that?



Janet: Yeah and I think what we mentioned already is having a meaningful conversation with the missionary before you go.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: If I talk to them and I realize what they really need is a few days away, how could we hold the fort so they could get away if that's what the need is?

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: Or what would really be a blessing to them is whatever, or if finances are tight, do we walk in with some money.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: As well as us being there? But I think asking them. Also, friends of mine that are missionaries, I know at one point she even said, we just know that when a mission team asks to come it is gonna be a lot of work for us.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: And and she didn't say that meanly. They see that as part of their ministry.

Noelle: Sure.

Janet: But it's like it would probably be valuable to talk to other missionaries.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: Or people like you who lived on the field. And say, what are they not telling me?

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: What would actually be a blessing to them instead of them having more because we're there.

Noelle: Yeah.



Janet: More to do. And so I think being more sensitive, let's acknowledge our ignorance and ask the missionary we're gonna visit, but also ask other people, other missionaries, other people who've lived on the field, what are they not telling us? What can we do?

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: I'm sure you have some ideas.

Noelle: Yeah. I do a lot of short-term trips, both on my own, and then with groups as well. So one of the practical things I do is try to leave the missionary family with money to cover my costs of food and gas. If they're picking me up at the airport, like something like that can be a hardship on their budget, and so I wanna think about that.

Janet: So, do you always do that at the end? I'm thinking would it be helpful. Do you hand it to them at the beginning and say, this is to help pay for us? Or do you do that at the end or?

Noelle: Yeah, so I do it at the beginning.

Janet: That's what I wondered.

Noelle: I always set it up ahead of time. I just straight up ask, can you tell me how much it's gonna cost per person per day, if it's for a group, or, for me, for the day, to cover my cost of food? How much does gas cost there? How far away are you from the airport? And then sometimes they say, oh, it's not a big deal, and so then I just give it to them anyway. But usually they'll give me a number. So that's helpful. So I try to do that. I also try to be really intentional with filling in simple needs. So maybe that means something like, hey, I'll watch your kids so that you can go to a meeting or go minister somewhere else.

Janet: Love it.

Noelle: Or maybe I'll say something like, hey, while I'm here, you're just not allowed to do the dishes, okay?

Janet: Oh, I love that.

Noelle: I'm gonna do the dishes every time.

Janet: I love that.



Noelle: Those aren't, it's not a list that's exhaustive. There's lots of different ways, but there's easy ways to be a blessing.

Janet: If you're intentional, most of us, we're thinking about a short-term trip, I'm not thinking about dishes and childcare, 'cause I can do that at home. I wanna do the things I can't do at home. Which means I'm not thinking about I want to be a blessing. I'm thinking about I either want a story later or I want a cool experience. So I love the idea of saying, no, really, this is not about I wanna be able to say I did amazing things.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: What I want to do is be a blessing to this missionary, and childcare or chores could be such a blessing.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: To them, so I love that. They're the ones who are gonna be there long term.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: Building those relationships. So if I can do something that makes that easier, it may not be a great story for later.

Noelle: Sure.

Janet: But wow, it means my focus is actually on seeking to be a blessing and help them minister. I love those ideas.

Noelle: Yeah. Okay, let's go ahead and transition to our third and final way of living a missions focused life for this episode. So as a reminder, we've covered the first point was supporting missionaries through finances and prayer.

Janet: Yep.

Noelle: And then we just talked about short-term trips.

Janet: Yep.

Noelle: So that covers everything.



Janet: There you go. We're done.

Noelle: All right, I'm sure.

Janet: But apparently we're not.

Noelle: Yeah. I'm sure there are things that I've missed or that we could make into a much longer episode, but the third one, please don't discount the importance of this, and that is seeing our current lives as active mission fields.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: This is sadly something that very few Christians practice on a daily basis. But honestly, if we truly believe that God has ordained each of our days, like it says in Psalm 139.

Janet: Yep.

Noelle: And we believe that our purpose is to bear His image.

Janet: Yep.

Noelle: Like it says in Genesis 1, and that means to be a visible representation of an invisible God.

Janet: Yep.

Noelle: Then how could we not see our lives as an active mission field?

Janet: Because we're not thinking.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: We just get so into our routines. When I walk into Meijer, I'm not thinking.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: There's people around here that don't know Jesus. But you're exactly right. I love this. We were very aware of that when we moved to Chicago for Brent to pursue a degree, and we were



gonna be there 10 months. And we kept our membership here, but we were gonna be there for 10 months, and it felt like I don't know how else to say it, a waste of 10 months. You can't build long-term relationships.

Noelle: Sure.

Janet: We're coming back. But what we decided before we went, and we had a kindergartner and first grader, so it's really me and Brent deciding this, but we did it as family.

Noelle: Sure.

Janet: We are on a 10 month mission trip to Chicago.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: And Brent's going to school, I'm homeschooling. We're not out there doing things that were obvious mission, but we wanted to be mission minded. So our phrase, which I try to remember back here, and I will tell you, it's a battle to remember it here. It was easier there because we knew.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: We only have 10 months. And I come back, and I forget. But ours phrase was, take the next step. Whoever you talk to. Not, get everybody saved. That's up to the Lord, but that intentionally take the next step.

Noelle: I like that.

Janet: And I'm like, I can do that here.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: We should do that everywhere. And we would when we first moved there, we went to Cub Foods to. It's so much more expensive in Chicago than it was in Indiana.

Noelle: Yeah.



Janet: And so everything I picked up, I said to Brent, do you know how much this costs at Meijer in Lafayette" 'cause I'm just, dollar signs, trying to figure it out. And he finally looked at me and he goes, at this point, it doesn't really matter. We have to have bread. We just gotta do it.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: So I'm already struggling, and some woman, young woman with a very thick accent comes up and asks me if I wanna open a checking account in Cub Foods. No. And so I did the incredibly Christian thing. I smiled and said, no, thank you, and walked away. And Brent's looking at me, and I hear. He didn't even have to say it. We'd said it so much. He looked at me, and I'm like, I didn't take the next step.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: And so he looked at me, and then he looked at her, and he said, so where are you from? 'Cause you have an accent. And it was like, that's all we're gonna do. We're just gonna try.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: And in the conversation, we find out she moved to this country for a boyfriend, who then broke up with her. So she's here with her uncle, can't find a job, and got stuck trying to sell people checking accounts in Cub Food because she can't find a job, and she doesn't know anyone, and she's very lonely.

Noelle: Wow.

Janet: And Brent goes, you wanna come over for dinner?

Noelle: I did not expect that.

Janet: And she goes, okay.

Noelle: Oh, my word.

Janet: We're in Chicago. Who goes to a stranger's house for dinner?

Noelle: That's wild.



Janet: It wouldn't have occurred to me to do it, only because I would never go to someone's house.

Noelle: Sure.

Janet: So it was and then he said, Do you wanna bring your uncle? 'Cause I'm thinking, she's gonna go back and tell her uncle, and he's gonna go, you are not going to their house. Who are these people?

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: She and her uncle came over for dinner.

Noelle: That's awesome.

Janet: That was crazy.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: But take the next step.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: So now we're walking in the pond behind our apartment complex. I am trying not to cry because I miss being home.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: And we're walking, and a woman passes by with her little kid, and she goes, hi. And I said, hi, and I kept walking. And Brent looks at me. And so I turned around and I said, hey, have you lived here very long? It's like just anything.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: We got talking. We ended up spending a lot of time with them. We had the couple over for dinner. We were able to talk to them about the Gospel.

Noelle: Yeah, praise the Lord.



Janet: And our son, our children learned how to hang around a very angry young child. It's a lot of teaching opportunities there, but okay. It was like just trying to do that. We decided we would have an open house. Nobody has an open house in an apartment complex.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: But we had to get to know our neighbors, and we were trying to teach our kids to serve, so they made invitations, put them under every door, 'cause people don't open their door to you, and I get it.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: We're in Chicago. And what one woman, a young woman, came down the hall to go into her apartment, I am confident had zero desire to come down to this, probably didn't even remember. I don't know. But my son, who's first grade, standing at the very end. We're at the very end of opposite end of the hall. And he's watching for people.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: 'Cause our door's open. So he stands out in the hall. He sees her come out, and he goes, Are you coming? Are you coming? And she goes, just let me change my clothes. So she came. We end up having a conversation about horrible things going on in her life. She came to church.

Noelle: Wow.

Janet: Another family, an older couple, we went over and met them, and they were from I think they were from the Ukraine. And she said that, we have lived here for 10 years, no one's ever invited us into their apartment.

Noelle: Wow.

Janet: And we had them over. Another couple, we ended up helping them with some issues with the Russian mafia. Very long story.

Noelle: Whoa.

Janet: But they both ended up making a profession of faith.

Noelle: Wow.



Janet: Before we left. And I look at that and go, all we did was say, whatever we're doing, take the next step.

Noelle: Take the next step. I like that.

Janet: And if it goes nowhere.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: And I'm like, we can do that, and I think that's what it means to be mission minded at home. I walk into Meijer, and when someone smiles at you, I can just say, hi, and slow down. I don't have to have a speech ready. I just, but I might notice, oh, your kid is really happy about. Just start a conversation. And they're either interested or not, and they walk away, that's fine. But I don't do that all the time here. And 'cause I'm in a hurry. 'Cause my ministry, my mission, is to get in and get out. It isn't seeing it as a mission field when i'm in there, to my shame.

Noelle: Yeah, and it's interesting 'cause even though your time in Chicago was 10 months, which is a considerable amount of time, for some reason it was a little bit easier there to keep.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: That focus.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: Than here in Lafayette, where you've lived for years.

Janet: That's right.

Noelle: Yeah. Okay, so let's talk about how can we be visible representations? You just gave tons of great examples in your apartment complex in Chicago.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: What about in your workplace?

Janet: Yes.



Noelle: Could you be a visible representation of an invisible God there?

Janet: How do you take the next step there, or again, at the grocery store?

Noelle: Yeah, or a coffee shop.

Janet: In my neighborhood when I'm going out for a walk.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: What about I don't wanna say this 'cause this is hard, but what about in our families, Janet?

Janet: Oh, come on, now you're being ridiculous. There needs to be a place where I can just think about myself. No, absolutely true.

Noelle: Yes.

Janet: I get to represent Jesus to my family, and it's supernatural, and it will get me praying when I'm trying to do it.

Noelle: Yeah, absolutely. I'm really motivated by passages that encourage us to be the light of the world and I think that connects really beautifully with thinking about living a missions focused life.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: Being the light of the world.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: Because really, honestly, when I say being missions-focused, all I'm really saying is being gospel-focused.

Janet: That's right. That's right.



Noelle: And so one of the passages I like about light of the world is in Matthew 5. Can you read for me Matthew 5:14-16?

Janet: Yeah. It says, You are the light of the world. Like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

Noelle: Yeah. That doesn't say be a light or you're the light of the world if you're living as a quote unquote full-time missionary.

Janet: Bummer, but no. No. Seriously, we have the incredible privilege of lighting up the beauty of God wherever we go.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: And as I grow in just choosing to do that, I think my heart for helping other missionaries is gonna grow, too.

Noelle: Yeah, absolutely. I just think in that verse it says, it gives light to everyone in the house. So again, I'm reminded, that's not talking about, oh, go into your house and give light, physically. But if you look at the analogy there, okay, are you in your own home.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: In your house? Are you giving light?

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: And my goodness, there's so many different ways to live a missions-focused life, and I'm just hopeful as we think back through this episode that, if you start every day think about this, what if every day you started by thinking about, hey, I'm a missionary? And then I went out and I acted on that.

Janet: Oh, that would be cool.

Noelle: That would be.

Janet: And it would change how I view my day.



Noelle: Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. So I would just encourage me and you and those listening that living a missions focused life isn't set aside for just the select, the few Christians, who have some apparent superpower to go live in a jungle. It's actually the duty and within the purpose of every believer.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: Because it's connected to that purpose of bearing God's image.

Janet: Yep. Yep.

Noelle: So yes, some will and should go to the remotest parts of the earth.

Janet: And we wanna support them while they're out there.

Noelle: Absolutely, and they might even stay there for their entire lives.

Janet: Yep.

Noelle: And that's a beautiful thing.

Janet: Yep.

Noelle: And some will serve on short-term trips. Some will serve on regular short-term trips. And I believe that pretty much almost all should faithfully support those.

Janet: Yep.

Noelle: Who have gone, and so that support can come through finances and prayer and encouragement.

Janet: Yep.

Noelle: But no matter what, we are all called to live as the light of the world. So that means that we are called to see our workplaces, our grocery stores, our neighborhoods, our local gyms, and our very homes as a mission field.



Janet: Oh, and such a privilege that it is to do that. But boy, we need each other to remind each other.

Noelle: Yes.

Janet: Of that, so I'm thankful for the body of Christ.

Noelle: Absolutely.

Janet: Thank you for sharing this, Noelle.

Noelle: Yeah. Absolutely. Happy to.

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