

WATCHING GOD WORK...

"IT'S NOT IMPORTANT WHO DOES THE PLANTING, OR WHO DOES THE WATERING. WHAT'S IMPORTANT IS THAT GOD MAKES THE SEED GROW."

1 CORINTHIANS 3:7

King Road Church, thank you for being on our team. Your prayers and financial support allow us to focus on introducing people to Jesus and helping them experience His power to change the world through sport.

The short passage above is part of a longer section in which Paul is confronting believers in the Corinthian church who are arguing about which person was best to follow. Some thought Apollos was better and others thought Paul was better. The reality Paul was trying to explain was that, in the end, while the human element of teaching and discipling is important, it is God who does the real work and ultimately God who needs to be followed. This is both a challenge and a relief. It is challenging because it means we can't expect to accomplish everything we want, nor should we take much credit for changed lives. It is a relief because life transformation is hard work and beyond the scope of any individual human being.

Below are two stories from our overnight camp that reveal this reality. As we are called to faithfully Love God, Love Others and Share the Gospel, we are excited to get glimpses of how he makes the seeds grow.



AIA Summer Coaches
L-R: Me, Olivia, Jarrett, Steph, Becky, Graham

#1 A Broken Family

The well known Bible story of Queen Esther is a narrative that describes how God placed people in positions for a specific time and reason. This reality was experienced at our AIA Volleyball Overnight Camp. During the evening program of the final day, campers were invited to participate in a time of reflection and had the opportunity to connect with coaches for prayer. Billy (not real name), asked to talk to two coaches. Clearly struggling emotionally, he went on to share about a broken home life where his parents were largely absent, leaving him and his sisters to mostly fend for themselves. Throughout the conversation, he mentioned that his broken family was such a heavy burden on him and that he had never told anyone about his struggles at home. Curious about what led him to share this after spending just 4 days at camp, a coach asked why he was opening up about this if he had not shared this with anyone before.

He responded by reflecting that two years prior, one of the coaches at the camp had guest coached at a Provincial team tryout. They had led the beach volleyball sessions and he had appreciated their coaching style and personality. What he did not know was that this coach was reluctantly participating in this event and was actually just filling in for another beach coach who had dropped out last minute. Two years ago, God was placing people and coaches in Billy's life for a reason. That summer, he participated in the AIA Overnight camp for the first time and further developed an admiration and trust for the coaches of AIA. Two years later, he was back at camp as he knew he would be able to engage with a great community, be encouraged by spirit-led coaches and escape the brokenness of his home for a few days.

This was the reason he opened up to share, he trusted. This story does not have a happy ending, Billy's mom actually forgot to pick him up from camp at the end of the week and he had to wait for a sister to come out. He went home to his family after camp and to our knowledge, is still exploring the idea of fully committing his life to Christ. Yet, it provides a reminder that God is at work, placing people in situations in order to allow them opportunities to share the hope that is found in Christ to those who may feel hopeless. In these situations, our summer camp coaches are able to be tangible examples of God's love and how it motivates them to relate with each other and the athletes.

#2 Encouragement

A major theme of the AIA Overnight volleyball camp this summer was integrating sport and faith principles. Athletes were challenged to think of personal Thank You statements and to develop a personal Truth statement that reminded them of how God values them. Athletes were then encouraged to implement and remind themselves daily of these statements as they trained and played.

One morning, I spent some time following up with individual athletes to see how they were doing with implementing these statements into their play. One individual replied that she actually felt like she was doing pretty well. She went on to explain that, since she had participated in the virtual Total Athlete Training Camp that we hosted online last summer, she has been personally working on integrating her faith into her sport. I was surprised to hear about the impact of this virtual camp as we had only had 10 athletes register for three weeks of camp and felt in some ways like it was a disappointment.

As we finished up our conversation, she called me back to say one more thing. She thanked me once again for hosting a virtual camp during our COVID summer of 2020. She went on to explain that as things were shut down at the start of spring 2020, she was nearing the edge of burnout. The pandemic was a blessing for her physically as it gave her a chance to rest, but it became quite a challenge mentally and spiritually. The lack of personal connection to a church or youth group made it quite challenging. When she heard about our virtual camp, she was happy to register and mentioned that it came at the perfect time. It reminded her of the truths of how God saw her and gave her some practical tools to put into place once she got back into sport, in order to keep this idea in mind. She was so grateful that we had run this virtual camp.

What an encouragement it was for me and our staff to hear this. Here we were, a year after investing a lot of time and energy into an online camp that did not seem to have much impact, hearing a first-hand account from a participant of this camp about how God used it to re-ignite their faith.



AIA Overnight Camp 2021

QUICK HITS

- This year, our spring and summer volleyball coaches interacted with over 200 campers. Sharing the gospel through their actions, their relationships and their words. We trust that the Lord will continue His work in the lives of these individuals.
- As the summer comes to a close, our family is looking forward to a short vacation and time away before the beginning of the college year. I am grateful for 15 athletes who I will have the chance to journey with for the next 8 months (yes, we are currently scheduled to be playing games again!!).
- Please continue to pray for:
 - The two athletes in the stories above. Both require a growing knowledge of who God is, how he loves them and what he has done for them.
 - Our family as we enter into a busy Fall season. It can be easy to have time slip by without spending intentional time together.

JASON & VANESSA

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We send our regular updates to those who have expressed interest, or are partnering in our ministry both prayerfully and/or financially.

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