

TALITHA KOUM

Making alumni feel seen, known and loved as we arise together.



A CONTINUED WALKTHROUGH OF WHAT WE TEACH STUDENTS, ALUMNI AND PARISHIONERS ABOUT DISCIPLESHIP.

Dear partners in this wonderful mission,

Last month, we talked about how prayer is merely “an intimate conversation with God” and I challenged you to deepen your prayer through quiet, consistency and simplicity (find that edition [here](#)). What has prayer looked like for you this Advent?

This month, we get to jump into [Fellowship: Virtuous Friendships](#).

A routine Friday evening in the Eby household brings Cody home to immediately make a protein shake. He started working out with his friend Anthony, who owns a local gym. Sometimes I’m a compassionate wife who gives him a massage as he complains about his sore muscles, and other times I lovingly chuckle at him.

But despite the copious amount of bananas I now buy, I wouldn’t have him trade this Friday ritual for anything. Because Anthony isn’t just a workout buddy; he’s become a brother in Christ who can challenge Cody to use his strength for the good of the Kingdom. Cody comes home from time with him reinvigorated in his love of God and desire to be a better husband.

We use the image of “hot coals” to best explain our need for Christian companions on this walk of discipleship. If you took a coal out of a fire, it would quickly cool off. But stick it back in the fire, and it takes on the warmth of the surrounding coals. That’s exactly what Anthony and Cody do for each other.

How much easier is it to live the Christian life when you’re surrounded and encouraged by people trying to do the same?

It isn’t always easy to build this community. People’s availability, shallowness of faith or natural introversion can all be barriers to finding not just friends of utility (people who are useful to us) or friends of pleasure (people we enjoy doing things with) but true friendships of virtue. While all these types of friendship are necessary and beneficial, it is in hanging out with our fellow “hot coals” that we are encouraged to be better disciples of Jesus.

Do you have “hot coals” in your life? If you do, how could you take two seconds today and thank them for being steadfast friends? If you don’t, what obstacles do you face in building the community you’re looking for?

Take some time to pray with these questions. If you’re looking for more, I adapted this from the FOCUS Discipleship Article by the same name, hyperlinked above. Hit reply and let me know how I can pray for you and your community, especially if you’re facing obstacles in finding the friends you want!

In Christ,
Katherine

APOSTOLATE UPDATE

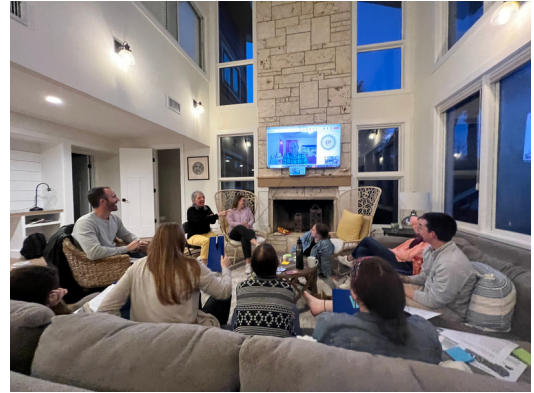
The desk job continues to stay busy as we prepare for our national SEEK conference Jan. 1-5. You might imagine all the little details it takes to make an event for 17,000 people run smoothly!

But the HIGHLIGHT of my November was our in-person alumni gathering. My team hosted two dozen alumni and missionaries in St. Augustine, Florida, while we were there for our yearly strategic offsite. Most of my teammates' jobs involve in-person gatherings, but this was my first. I loved hearing about the amazing ways our alumni continue to sneak Jesus into their jobs as data analysts and moms!

On the home front, I've preparing my heart this Advent through the "Rejoice!" Marian book study with friends, as well as our continued work with the teenagers of our parish. We balanced harder topics like the Eucharist and Confession with a fun Christmas party to wrap up 2023.

Check your mailboxes for a Christmas card coming soon!

Pictures, from top to bottom: hosting alumni for a gathering at our beach house, the team strategizing, a visit to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Le Leche in St. Augustine (oldest city in America!)



PRAYER REQUESTS

~For the 343 alumni who are joining us at our January conference in St. Louis, SEEK.

~For the teenagers in our Confirmation class, especially that they'd stop spending so much time on social media, which they tell me is not fulfilling for them.

~For the FOCUS Marketing and Events teams, as they make final preparations for SEEK

~For my family's health, especially as they recover from from knee surgery and COVID

GOT TO SEE MY HIGH SCHOOL FRIEND CHRISTINA, WHO LIVES NEAR ST. AUGUSTINE!



In Christ,

Katherine Eby
Katherine (Stevenson) Eby

Found in Mark 5:35-43, *talitha koum* means "little girl, arise!" We are called to be the little girl—to be redeemed through Jesus' love for us, and arise to live life as His disciples. It tops every newsletter as a reminder to see, know and love those around me, helping them arise to spread love of God in their homes, schools, and workplaces.

612-414-7423 // katherine.eby@focus.org // 372 Section 14 Rd, Iron River, MI 49935