

February
2024

KEEPING UP WITH KENYA

Monthly Newsletter

WHAT IS GOD TEACHING US?

Caleb

This month, my reading plan has been taking me through Proverbs for the second time since starting this reading plan. During the first several chapters, one of the men's history and the bible tell us is the wisest humankind has ever known, mentioning multiple times the importance of seeking wisdom. Proverbs 2:6, 3:21-22, and 4:7 all emphasize the value of godly wisdom. For example, Proverbs 4:7 says, "Wisdom is supreme—so get wisdom.

And whatever else you get, get understanding."

This month, I have been asking God for wisdom because we are called to seek God's words, treasure His commands, and apply our hearts to His understanding.

Proverbs 2:6: "For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding."

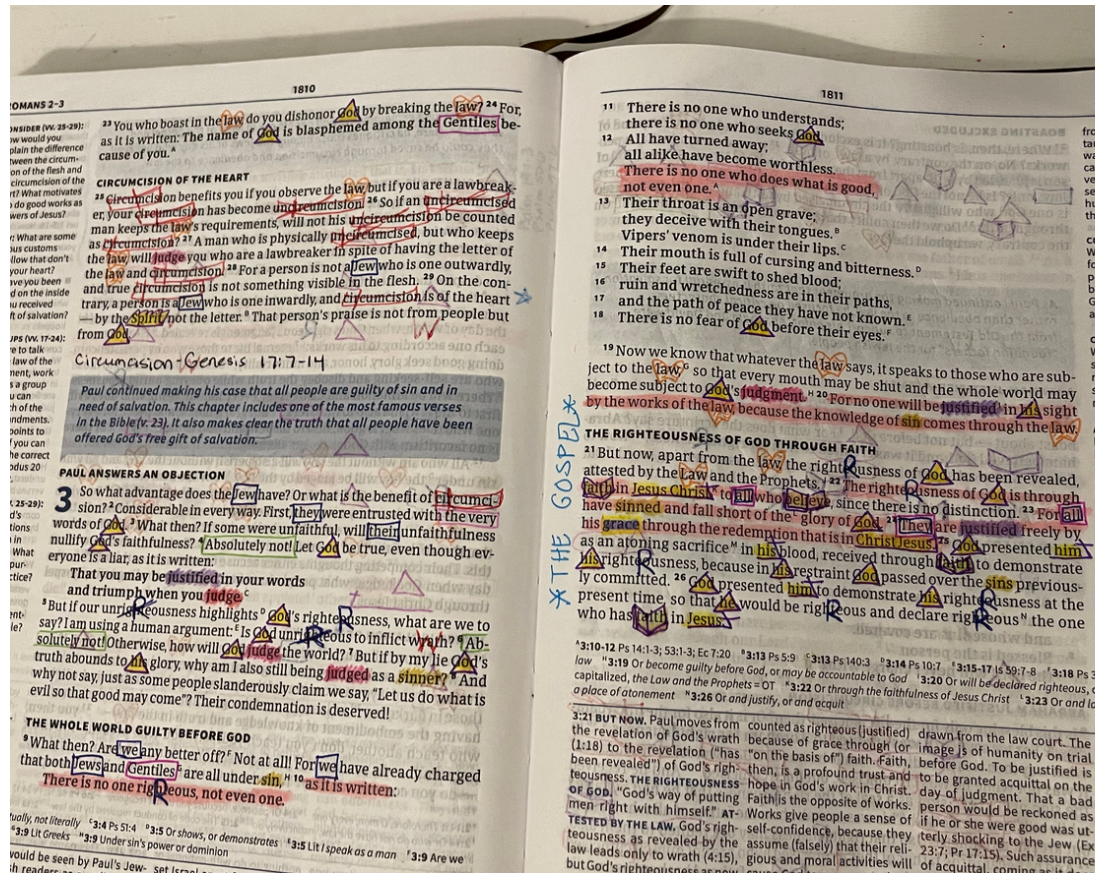
Proverbs 3:21-22: "My son, do not let wisdom and understanding out of your sight, preserve sound judgment and discretion; they will be life for you, an ornament to grace your neck."



WHAT IS GOD TEACHING US? (CONT.)

Rachel

This month I have continued my study through Romans. I focused on Romans 2-4 and have learned so much. I will admit that some days it is still challenging to sit down to dig deep and truly study the Word of God. But every day that I do study, I am so glad that I did and learn something new.



I have been learning how to mark repeated/key words and ask questions about those words. I have also enjoyed learning where there are references to things from the Old Testament. The Gospel is also repeated over and over in Romans which is such a great reminder. God is our Creator and has revealed His authority to all of us through creation, Scripture, and other ways. We are all sinners and have made mistakes that separate us from God. But Jesus lived a perfect life without making a single mistake and died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins. Jesus rose from the dead three days later to show that He was fully God. We can't do ANYTHING to earn God's love, but He has given us the gift of Jesus. All we have to do is confess our sins to Him and believe in Christ's sacrifice. AMAZING!

“The righteousness of God is through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe, since there is no distinction. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. They are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. God presented him as an atoning sacrifice in his blood, received through faith to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his restraint God passed over the sins previously committed. God presented him to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time so that he would be righteous and declare righteous the one who has faith in Jesus.” ~Romans 3:22-26

MERCY Nairobi

A lot has happened with Mercy Nairobi in the month of February. Our numbers are continuing to grow!

A young adults ministry has been started for all attendees ages 18-35. We had a young adults game night one Saturday night this month. It was a lot of fun to play games, enjoy fellowship, and laugh as we got to know people better.

The youth (ages 12-18) numbers are also growing for our Sunday gatherings. They are starting to meet once as a month as we build the youth program for the church. We talked to a few teenagers after their first gathering and they loved it and had a great time.

Our kids ministry has grown from 3 classrooms to 4 as we are having more kids come to church. We also have added another family group to show growth from 2 family groups to 3 family groups.

The family group that Caleb and I host has not had a leader for a few months. We have just been rotating who leads each week. After a few weeks of prayer, I have felt the Holy Spirit prompting me to lead our group. I have talked with Allan and am now the leader for our group. I am nervous but I know that God can use me to serve our church body.



Mercy Nairobi Church has started an 18 week series through Mark. We are also reading “The Walk” by Stephen Smallman to learn about discipleship. Please copy the link below if you would like to listen to the sermon series.

<https://www.mercynairobi.com/post/come-follow-me>

MERCY *house*



I am so excited to brag on our two kiddos at Mercy House! When we first started the preschool program at the end of August, structure was something we started from scratch on. Our Bible story time would last about 5-10 minutes and we often had crying and behavior issues. But now, 6 months later, Bible story time is something they get excited for. We do the same story two days in a row. Victoria will tell them the story in Swahili the first day and then I tell them the story in English the second day. I've also been able to use more English lately and they are understanding.



The top picture shows what our story time looks like each day. The second picture shows one of our kids choosing to spend his play time to read another book we have with Bible stories. He is loving the stories of David and Goliath, Jonah, Daniel in the lions den, and Mordecai from Esther. It has been such a blessing to watch him desire Bible stories and singing "Jesus Loves Me".



From Caleb:

Michael, Sarah, and I had the privilege of joining Rachel on a tour of Mercy House. Witnessing her impactful work being done was a joy. While there, we got to play with her students, join them on a walk to the park, and enjoy some traditional Kenyan cuisine.





WEST NAIROBI SCHOOL

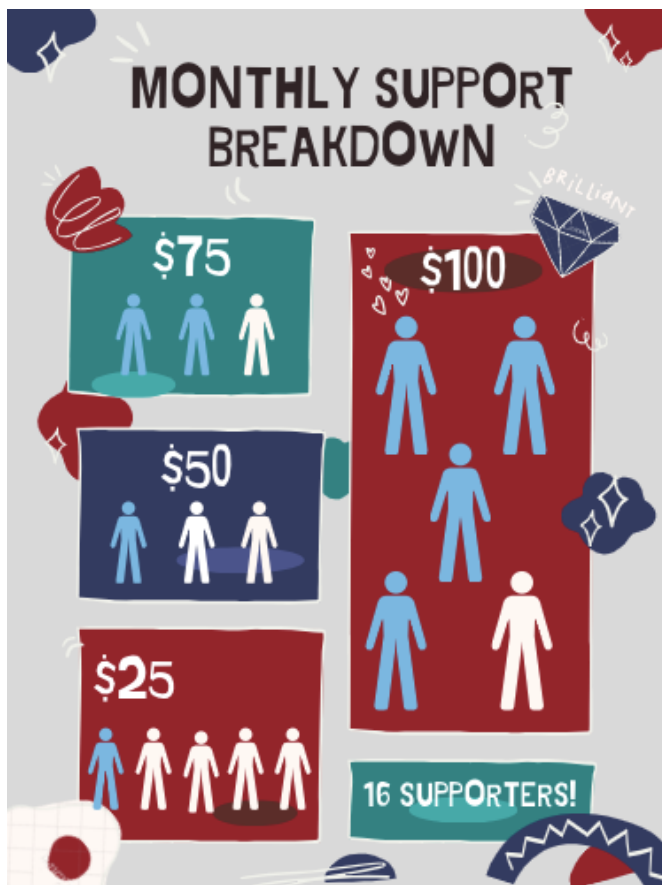


This month has been a lot of fun and exciting. During our Professional Development mini-sessions and conversations with other professionals, I have learned about how to utilize AI in my planning and lessons. These new methods have helped me make unique and fun activities. I have continued to have opportunities to disciple two young men throughout the week. We are having great gospel-centered conversations and discussing life events.

One fun theme that keeps popping up in my classes is how every man and woman is created in God's image (Genesis 1:27). This theme has helped us discuss the evil that Nazi Germany propagated against multiple people groups, discuss slavery throughout history, and discuss issues that my students are facing today from a biblical perspective. In all of these topics, we can look at how humans are sinning as they destroy and discriminate against the image-bearers of God. This topic has also allowed me to remind my students that they are "fearfully and wonderfully made."

SUPPORT RAISING UPDATE

Would you pray about financially supporting us at West Nairobi School?



The chart to the left represents support during Caleb's time at West Nairobi School. The blue figures represent commitments and the light figures represent what is still needed.

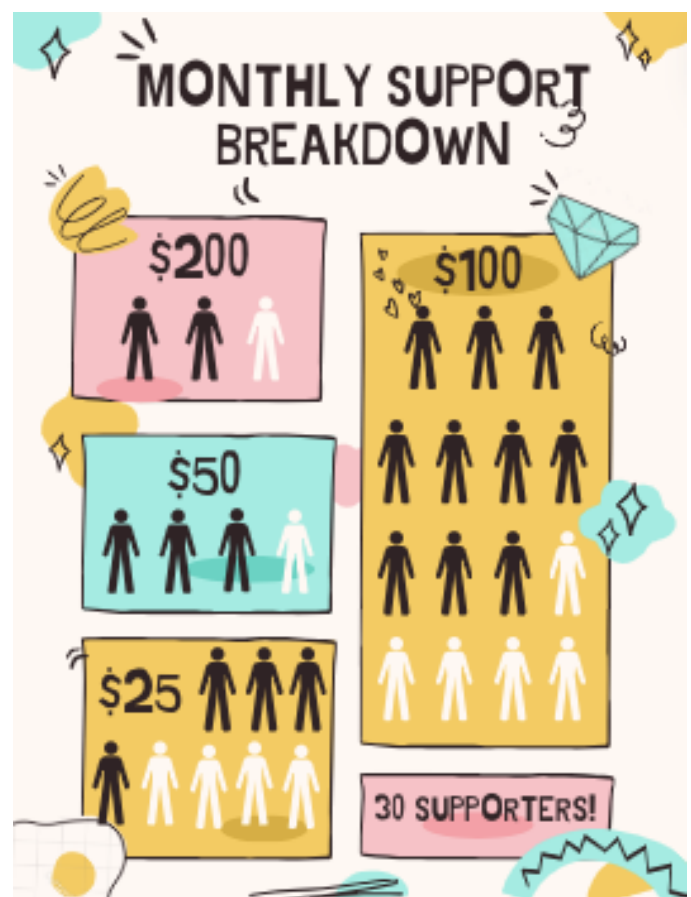
Currently, there are **8 of the 16 (62%)** needed supporters that have made commitments. We are excited to see what God has planned for the other 8 or more.

If you or someone you know would like to give, please email him at calebmdarden@gmail.com

The chart to the right represents support during Rachel's time at West Nairobi School from July 2024-June 2026. The dark figures represent commitments and the light figures represent what is still needed.

Currently, there are **20 of the 30 (74%)** needed supporters that have made commitments for the next two years. I am excited to see what God has planned for the other 10 or more.

If you or someone you know would like to give, please email her at rachelyoung826@yahoo.com



PERSONAL UPDATE



We enjoyed celebrating our first Valentine's Day as a married couple. We decided to do a date night in with a 3-course fondue meal. We continue to thank God for the love He first showed us so that we can love each other.



In a unique encounter in the park, Caleb conversed about Jesus with a new Kenyan friend who happens to be deaf. Through Caleb's college American Sign Language and his friends Kenyan sign language, they conversed and had a lot of fun while trying to gain understanding. It was a powerful reminder that faith knows no limits.

WE HAD VISITORS!!



Sarah and Michael came to visit us February 15-24. They are great friends, our community group leaders, supporters, and Sarah is Rachel's missionary care person. We enjoyed getting to show them what life looks like in Kenya.

During their visit we were very busy!

- We took a trip to Naivasha for the weekend to enjoy some rest and time with beautiful animals.
- We went to church together at Mercy Nairobi.
- We enjoyed various restaurants and coffee shops.
- We showed them around West Nairobi School.
- They spent a day with me at Mercy House.
- We spent numerous evenings just playing games together.



Naivasha & Crescent Island



PRAYER REQUESTS

Rachel

- Continued overall health
- Support raising
- Wisdom as I begin leading family group

Caleb

- Praise: We sold his car!
- Finishing this current PhD course well and starting the next course well on March 15
- Continued overall health
- Support Raising

Mercy Nairobi Church

- 8 deacon candidates that are going through training
- Family groups to continue growing in vulnerability and connection
- Praise: Our dear friend Sean has been hired as the college director

Mercy House

- Women as they have started hair school
- There is potential for some transitions to happen at Mercy House. Please pray that wise decisions will be made that are best for the residents.