

**God in Walking the Talk:
A Spiritual Journal of My Camino Journey**

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The suspenseful journey of this Camino has invested itself into many areas of my life in regard to the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual. In stretching out these 119 kilometers over the course of approximately six days in our ten-day trip to many cities in Spain, the challenges that had been revealed had also been the resolve for my own growth. While growth is evident in the Fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, and especially patience have been the most impacted by this endeavor altogether. Tested by the environment and the conversational interactions from the daily walks, God would allow these things to break me down in order to help me grow in the process, and in doing so, there were many things that I have learned because of all that's happened on this journey.

The walk itself begins at the city of Tui, Spain, a small town just on the outskirts of Portugal. In embarking on this walk while getting to know a few of our classmates, the first day had been completed, hours prior to our hotel check-in in O Porriño. At this point, many of the pilgrims, myself included, were tasting a glimpse of victory over this journey so far, but at the same time, an elevated level of pride in beating Ron to the city on the first day. This high pride was immediately shut down the next day, as the steep hills and heavy rain had brought forth the challenges that we had initially braced ourselves for prior to the trip. God had humbled my prideful self in the midst of thinking this journey could be rushed. The lesson that is reminded here is that God wants me to come to Him on this journey with an open heart for change—and not with a heart that desires to do so alone.

In the months leading up to this trip, I did not even know what to expect—all I knew was that I was anxious. My knees have been popping ever since I was in the third grade, and similar to how one would crack their knuckle, so too can my knees pop. Bringing pain to the joints in my left knee, the worries of this trip were dependent on well the compression sleeves would

lessen the friction. This was when I learned about the power of prayer. Through what was presented to our group as “the model prayer,” I learned the steps that were taken in bringing healing to an individual, both on the physical aspects of their discomfort and pain, but also the spiritual aspects of their heart. There was peace in coming to understand the power of prayer in our moments of trials but also in our daily lives. The night at the hotel in Caldas de Reis, the Spirit of God was in the midst of our intercession prayers and I witnessed how the Walborns were praying for Stephany’s knees, listing the joints down to the ligaments and the other specific points within the knee, in hopes that their prayer would bring about healing.

The peace in witnessing this intercession was due to the fact that it goes beyond what it means to pray for the general things and more of how we want our requests to be made known. Being taught to close my eyes and bow my head for the time of prayer, it all changed when Ron asked for us to keep our eyes open. While my hand was reached out in joining in this time of prayer, I see that prayer is not as formal as I had imagined it to be, and spending time with everyone has allowed me to see that there’s no right or wrong way to necessarily pray, outside of it being in reverence to God’s and His presence. Witnessing Stepheny’s knee being heeled over the course of the trip alongside Sarah’s knee brought about a lot of joy. I believe God is sufficient in all His ways and I believe that the power of prayer is powerful.

One of the small challenges that came with prayer was that it sometimes would not go the way that I would intend. The reason is that I desire control over things outside of my own. In hearing about everyone and especially about Ron’s blisters throughout the course of the trip, the discomfort in knowing that our prayers have not been answered brings about a sadness that was in a way overshadowing the main idea. It has taken some time for me to come to terms with believing that I am not in control of the things that I believed would be controllable. Given that

Ron had been in pain for the remainder of the trip, I witnessed the love for others in him praying while joyfully serving in the ways that he best knows how to. This was why I desired to go on this trip—it was to learn from the Walborns, individually, but also as they worked together.

Another impactful moment on this Camino had to be during our fellowship time in the city of O Porriño. After a quick day of walking from the city of Tui, we were all sitting down at the restaurant below the hotel. With my orange juice and two plates of food, amazingly equating to just a little over 15 euros, I hear Wanda speaking somewhere along the lines of Joel Osteen being denied from many churches due to his foundations in prosperity gospel preachings. As I have previously fallen for some of these teachings during a season of my life, I was intrigued to hear what Wanda had to say about her position on the matter. Take it or leave it, Wanda sums it up as the matter of how God uses these not-so-sound teachings in order to grow the follower into stronger believers. I also heard from Charles that night, he stands witness to the kindness and joyfulness that came from Joel Osteen the day that they had met, and by the end of his invitation to the conversation—I came to understand a bit more as to who God is in the midst of it.

Not to say that my mind has changed in being for the prosperity gospel movement, but needless to say that there is nothing that God can't do—especially in turning what is evil in His sight, into good, for His glory. God is to be praised in all circumstances and it is because of Jesus that we are saved and are even called to share the gospel to everyone. A highlight of the trip for Dan and me began on our walk to the city of Caldas de Reis. In stopping at the cafe as one of our checkpoints, I had mistakenly forgotten my phone back at the table with the others, but thankfully Nelson was present in pocketing my phone with him for the remainder of the trip. In realizing this, we had backtracked enough to catch back up to this stranger along the route, leading to Dan opening up to small talk for the next half mile. Alba, the woman who was

walking with us, shares a bit about her passions as a veterinarian, a somewhat lost walk in her Catholic traditions, and why she was on the Camino herself. In walking a silent half mile, Dan reaches into his bag and hands Alba one of the excerpts from “The Purpose Driven Life,” in a Spanish translation—for this was his way of sharing the gospel with those who didn’t speak English all too well.

Luckily for us, Alba had spoken English really well, alongside Spanish, Portuguese, and even Italian! But because of her fluency in English, we had some healthy small talk which eventually led to me sharing about my faith as a believer. In asking the right questions, I began to notice Alba’s eyes widen in a gesture of interest in the conversation, and while Dan was a short distance away, I found out later of his intentions in falling back were to give Alba and me some space to walk alone in our walk until the next spot. This was the moment that I realize that evangelizing was reaffirming in my journey of pursuing ministry as sharing the Gospel so that seeds are planted within those such as Alba is what God calls for us to do. While I do not entirely know if a seed was planted within Alba’s heart, I believe that whatever happened that day will be God’s way of allowing Alba and her family to come to know who Jesus is.

Patience was the word that I had written on my rock. My desire to be a husband and a father to many children is something that I very much feel impatient for. In sharing this with many who have been married by now, and have children who have children of their own, it comes to show that life is just getting started for me. Isaac and I had talked on one of our walks to the next city, and in doing so, we get crop dusted by Ron in the middle of our prayer session! It really brings about a lot of joy in coming to know Ron for these very moments. With Isaac sharing a bit about his background as a believer, it brings a lot of relatability and even reminds me of my former youth leader, who has now moved to California with his wife and newborn

daughter at the time. In speaking with Issac, I am reminded of how I long for a mentor, and in desiring this within my life, I have come to terms with the fact that this is not the season of my life where God has given me a mentor to be shepherded but through His Word.

Listening and essentially being still, within my soul, has been a torment of constant waves crashing in on each other. Desiring for the things that I cannot necessarily control in my life brings about disruption in my mental flow but as Wanda had illustrated during one of her devotions before our walk, “You will never get to where you need to go if you are constantly pushing against the current in the river, and so let go of any control you have over the situation and let the stream take you wherever the end of it is.” The lesson that I have learned in being more patient is that I have to lean on God in letting Him bring me to wherever I need to be in His time. In all of the accounts that God has given me what I had desired, it has led to a moment of revelation with a reflection toward the gratitude that came soon after. With that being said, standing at the edge of the cliff at Faro De Finisterre, I threw my rock, in hopes of it reaching the waters. With little to no surprise, the rock gets caught in my hand, swinging outwards towards the ground below the edge of the rock I had stood on. Laughter broke out as I had finally processed it and as dramatic as I had wished for it to be, I am reminded that this journey of impatience is not yet over, but it was a small step forward.