

## WEEKS 3 AND 4

\$16.69 for week three groceries. I was able to get apples and kiwi...FRUIT was the main food I missed. I slept outside last night. The weather was perfect, and I like to hear the sounds of open space around me. But I wonder how it would be if I HAD to sleep outside. For lunch I made spinach salad (picked from our garden) and bean tortillas for my family. I was so happy to have enough extra this week to be able to share. Sharing made me feel empowered. I could give something after all.

The novelty wears off. The extra pushes of the pedal on my bike makes my legs ache. I get home after work and see all this beautiful food on the table and I want to eat it. I don't WANT rice and beans anymore. And I don't feel like cooking anything else. It grates against you. "Why can't you just be normal?" and "What's the point of giving up all these things?" and "It is not like you will ever really feel what it's like to be impoverished." Because I won't. My family will never let me starve. This little doing without things is like gnats. They don't hurt, they just irritate you.

Bitter. I can see how I'd get bitter really fast if I were not choosing to do this: seeing everyone else HAVE while I HAVE NOT. Why? Is this fair? I am working as hard for my \$2 a day as they are working for their \$20 an hour. In fact—I am working HARDER than most of them. All of this--just because of where I was born? Because of who my parents are? What does that have to do with me? "It is poverty to decide that a child must die so that you may live as you wish." --Mother Teresa

I've been thinking about how life with God takes us "outside the box" that we normally have. We have one way of thinking about things:

This is how I drive to work

This is what I eat

This is who I talk to

This is what I watch on tv

This is my music, my style of clothes, my hobby...

...This is how I follow Jesus

We get stuck in a rut, but there is so much more--God wants to lead us in all things--in so many ways we can't imagine. God is creative. How many more ways does He want to use us than simply going to church on Sunday?

"It would take 13 billion dollars a year to end hunger for the world's poorest citizens. Compare this with the 18 billion dollars that is spent on pet food every year in the US and Europe." --Debra Meroff (True Grit)

"But money won't solve the problem, Rachel, it never will." said my friend to me. I know...But what will? Tell me WHAT WILL solve it. Each person doing their part? What is their part? To give themselves to helping others. I think God wrote a calling/way of helping/social cause on the heart of each person. One thing that GETS them--it grabs their heart and won't let go. I think it is the job of each person to find this thing and then GO AFTER IT. For every person who NEEDS a donut, there is a person who needs to GIVE a donut. We are made to need others AND to be needed by others. We give ourselves because Jesus gave Himself for us. and we can do nothing less.

30 days--money spent: \$60.39. I found out that apple sauce and granola didn't taste very good together, and that the natives were very nice about trading eggs for milk in my granola. Because dry homemade granola...bleh. I found out that onions make everything better, from rice and beans to hummus wraps to spinach salad. I ate a lot of onions. I found out that I could only do this because I had family and friends that kept giving me free food. I found out that sometimes...you just want SOMETHING ELSE, ANYTHING ELSE to eat and drinking another glass of water just doesn't cut it. I found out that every single week there was a different price for eggs.

I found a lot of books of a lot of great people doing a lot of great things in the world. I found a lot of great ideas and dreams and optimism. I received a lot of encouragement from a lot of good people and had conversations with strangers and friends and family that would have never come up otherwise. I found that this experiment made me think outside the box on a lot of things. I found that I take more time to do the little things, and the little things bring me more happiness than whatever else I used to be doing. I found time to enjoy sunsets. I found that my choices were more limited, but my ideas became unlimited. I found myself tired and irritated at the food before me, and at my bicycle. I found myself more grateful for the little things. Like when John got me a kiwi.

I found that I felt strangled when I couldn't GIVE things to people, but satisfied when I made my family a spinach salad and bean tortilla lunch. I understand now why I have so many friends in Brazil who want to feed me. When you don't have money to give, you want to give something, and you NEED to give. It makes you feel better. It makes you feel...empowered. I found that I will never really know the hopelessness and helplessness that those in true poverty feel. That this is just a little baby step toward something...something I am not sure of yet.

RACHEL WINZELER

**POVERTY  
EXPERIMENT: ONE  
MONTH, \$2.50 A  
DAY, AND ME.**

Fact 1: One billion people live off of the buying power of \$1.25 a day

Fact 2: Three billion people (roughly half the population) live off of the buying power of \$2.50 a day

These are statistics on paper. I shouldn't call this the poverty experiment, I should call it the reality experiment, because half the world lives like this. If the 27,000 children (Peter Singer "The One You Can Save") who die every day because of poverty--preventable causes--are important, then I need to do something about it.

"We can be the generation that no longer accepts that an accident of latitude determines whether a child lives or dies--but will we be that generation?" --Bono

"We think sometimes that poverty is only being hungry, naked, and homeless. the poverty of being unwanted, unloved, and uncared for is the greatest poverty. We must start in our own homes to remedy this kind of poverty" -Mother Teresa

## WEEKS 1 AND 2

It became real when I was riding my bike with a backpack load of food and a box of oats balanced on my handlebars. Bike--no car--how could I afford a car on \$2.50 a day? All of that money is going towards food. I made a list and carefully calculated, and it was still \$19.21--so that food needs to last for 8 days. Eggs and cheese, rice and beans, some vegetables, oats and tortillas, and peanuts. That's what I got. And only that. I made granola for breakfast from the oats, tortilla wraps for lunch, and rice and beans for dinner.

It takes 30 minutes to ride my bike to work, but then it takes me 15 minutes to change into the right clothes, and another 15 minutes to stop sweating. Suddenly, the weather is really important. It makes the difference of a happy Rachel, or a wet, sappy Rachel who has mud splatters up her back and has to wash her legs in the sink of the employee bathroom. Everything takes more time. I have to know what I need to do for the day, and plan backwards to make sure I have time to do it.

Things I take for granted and make this experiment unrealistic (but NOT invalid):

- Free lodging and accessories: all that \$2.50 goes to food.
- Ideal situations: I picked a month of (hopefully) good weather, where biking is possible.
- Opportunities: I am already established and have a great education and training for life.
- Community: I have a family, and great friends who support me, and would never let me starve.
- Choice: I have the choice to do this...and when to stop: choices that those living on \$2.50 a day do not have.

Today was Mother's day. I already had a present for my mom, but what if I hadn't? I wouldn't have any money to buy her a gift. My dad had to drive me to work today--it was storming outside. Rain is disabling. It makes me feel weak, because I can't do it alone. You know what I really want? Milk for my granola.

Many people I know in Brazil live off of minimum wage. Minimum wage in Brazil is \$300 a month, \$10 a day. So if the guy works, has a wife and two kids, they are living like this...\$2.50 a day. They are the statistic. And in the United States I make in one hour what they make in a day.

\$14.74 for groceries my second week. I am getting better, plus I had some left over from last week. This week I was able to get applesauce and sour cream (it makes rice and beans taste much better), and noodles. No wonder everything is always late in Brazil. Everything takes longer than you think without the money we pay for convenience.

I thought this experiment would make food the focus--an even bigger deal than normal, since I had to be more careful with it, take more time to prepare it, and had less of it (at least less options). but in reality, food is becoming less of a focus. Time together with family is more important. When my brother bought me strawberries, I savored every one, but it was that he thought of me that meant more.

"In order to contribute, I would have to know myself better and be clearer about my goals. I would have to be ready to take (Africa) on its own terms, not mine, and learn my limits and present myself not as a do-gooder with a big heart, but as someone with something to give and gain by being there. compassion wasn't enough." --"The Blue Sweater"

Top 10 reasons why NOT to listen when Jesus says "Sell your possessions and give the money to the poor." (By Ash Barker in "Make Poverty Personal")

1. But then who would support the missionaries?
2. God has called me to minister to the rich.
3. It is on my to do list...i just have to finish (fill in the blank)...
4. Jesus only asked him because he had a problem with possessions.
5. Jesus only asked him because he didn't have a family.
6. Actually, you can get the camel through the gate--if he gets on his knees.
7. But Jesus wants me to have the best.
8. I would do it, if Jesus made it clear He WANTED me to.
9. I give 10%...He wants MORE?
10. Giving money to the poor is bad stewardship --they would use it for booze.

8 Keys to escape poverty traps (By Smith in "Ending Global Poverty")

1. Health and nutrition (to keep adults working and kids growing)
2. Basic education (to build self-reliance)
3. Credit and basic insurance (to defend against risk)
4. Access to income and opportunities (to get assets)
5. Access to new technologies (to gain productivity)
6. Non-degraded and stable environment (development)
7. Personal empowerment (freedom from exploita-

tion)

8. Community empowerment (participate in a wider world)

"New Friars" says that poverty can only be fought from within: the solution is living with them:

- Incarnationally--being God to them
- Devotionally--being devoted to God
- Communally--living together with everything in common
- Missionally--going to the geographic fringe
- Marginally--outside the norms

What would Jesus do about poverty? (Ash Barker)

- Give fish (like general relief, as Jesus did with direct healing and feeding)
- Teach how to fish (like educating and training, as Jesus did the disciples and all who stayed to listen)
- Ask why there are no fish (like protest and advocacy, as Jesus did turning over the temple changers)
- Model a new way to fish (Incarnational modeling, as Jesus did, becoming a man/ living in solidarity with us)
- See a new way to fish, owned by the people (like facilitating transformation, as Jesus did in bringing the new covenant--a movement that can live on in us even after He returned to heaven.)

12 Steps to solving poverty (By Paul Polack "Out of Poverty")

1. Go where the action is (and stop pitying poor people)
2. Talk to the people who have the problem and listen to what they say
3. Learn everything about the problem's specific content
4. Think big an act big
5. Think like a child
6. See and do the obvious (when you know the people, you know the problem: do what comes next)
7. If somebody already invented it, you don't need to do it again (help whatever is already going on)
8. Make sure it has positive measurable impact that can be brought to scale.(Can reach a million people and make their lives measurably better)
9. Design to specific cost and price targets
10. Follow practical three year plans
11. Continue to learn from your customers
12. Stay positive: don't be distracted by what others think