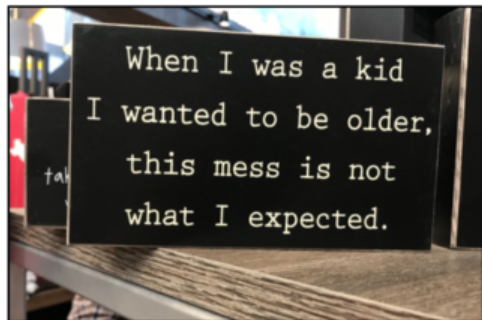




STEEL FAMILY UPDATE

Let's be honest. Some of you will read this. And, some of you will just look at the pictures. So, for you picture people, I will give a few quick facts from 2018.



1. The picture of this sign is both hilarious and painfully true.
2. Our children are getting too old. Lydia now steals Lacey's shoes.
3. Recently, both of us had the horrifying realization that we began 2018 individually praying for increased faith (see sign above to see how this has worked out).

Seriously though. This past year has stretched our family in new ways as well as forced us to persevere in areas that are still a struggle.

The YMCA & Perseverance

One of the wonderful things about the town we live in is the local YMCA. Along with a myriad of other activities, the Y has two indoor pools. Well, the first time we went to swim in the pool, Arianna discovered that she would only be able to swim in the "baby" pool until she could pass the required swim test for the big pool.

The big pool had diving boards, a deep end, and a giant inflatable obstacle course. The big pool was the place to be. However, Arie just could not pass her test. She was only allowed to take the test three times per visit to the pool. Yet every single time, without fail, she would reach about half way and the life guard would pull her out.



Great hope followed by crying and her screaming things like, *"I am never going to pass the test"*, *"I am just not good enough"*, and *"I always fail."* We would comfort her, encourage her and 10 minutes later she would ask to take the test again. This happened three times every visit. Every time she failed, she was devastated. She took that test several dozens of times — visit after visit, week after week. I had to look forward to the crying, screaming, and disappointment every-time I wanted to work out or take my kids for a "fun" activity at the pool — going to the Y became slightly miserable.

Until finally it happened — she passed. She did it. She persevered!

This year has felt a lot like that stupid swim test. Time after time, great hope is followed by crushing disappointment. This is then followed up by us screaming the exact same things as Arie, *"We are just not good enough"*, *"We are never going to succeed at this"*, and *"We always fail!"*

