



## 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!"*



I know that Christmas and Missionary letters should highlight the positive — heavy on the victory and light on the failure. But in some weird way, we are beginning to realize that our supposed failure this year is most likely our victory. In this mess, this raw journey of faith and hope, our family has jumped into the big pool. We're just unsure about what success will look like or actually mean.



Yet, in this perseverance, this place of honesty and vulnerability, we have been sifted. We have been stripped of many comforts and have faced (and are still facing) many fears. Nevertheless, we are still going to pursue our goal. We refuse to back down because seeing people walk in freedom and victory in Christ is worth it. We have placed our methodology, our strategy, and our own great plans quietly before the throne of the Lord and we are waiting on Him to move, on Him to heal, on Him to deliver. We are waiting on Him. At the end of this year, we stand before you testifying to one thing: God is good.



His heart toward us is good. And that faith in Him truly delivers us into a peace and rest not dependent upon the circumstances that surround us.

## Cultivate Progress

In January of this year, we were privileged to launch the first weekly Cultivate meeting in Burnet, Texas. Along with these weekly meetings, we released two video-based

resources and the first of six core discipleship teaching videos. All of these can be found on our website (see below). Our hope and goal is to provide tools and resources that encourage and equip believers to be life-giving disciple-makers of Jesus. Visit our website:

[www.CultivateDiscipleship.com](http://www.CultivateDiscipleship.com)



We are receiving great feedback. One of our regular Cultivate participants had this to say:

*"This [ministry] has absolutely showed me so much. Nate and Lacey are awesome teachers to help anyone walk through struggles. You'll never feel alone again and your eyes will be open sometimes it won't be easy but it's definitely what you need." -Ilse*



We are blessed to be able to guide people through a clear path of discipleship. Thank you for making this ministry possible. As we move forward with God's vision and purpose, we seek to increase our resources and impact. Please be in prayer for us — that God would give us wisdom, opportunity, and connection to be able to expand what we're doing and where we're able to go.

*Through our faith, the mighty power of God constantly guard us until our full salvation is ready to be revealed in the last time. May the thought of this cause you to jump for joy, though lately you've had to put up with the grief of many trials. But these only reveal the sterling core of your faith, which is far more valuable than gold that perishes, for even gold is refined by fire. Your authentic faith will result in even more praise, glory, and honor when Jesus the Anointed One is revealed. - 1 Peter 1:5-7*

Much Love and God Bless,

## THE STEEL FAMILY

*Nathanael, Lacey, Lydia & Arianna*