Devotion:  The Road that Leads to life

~ "Live simply that others might simply live."  ~Elizabeth Ann Seton ~

Do we really understand how good we have it?  11 years ago I thought I had a really good understanding of poverty... of hunger.  Heck, I volunteered at my local homeless shelter and went on many service trips.  I knew what God was sending me to do in Guatemala.  I was prepared.  I look back and laugh now at how "prepared" I thought I was.

Do we really understand how good we have it? Did you eat dinner last night? Was it chicken or maybe beef? How about to drink? Do you go to your fridge and pull out a glass of cold water?  Did you have a myriad of choices?

Do we really understand how good we have it?   Many parents sit down with their kids at the dinner table eating huge meals, plan and talk about college, career, marriage... futures.  In many parts of the world, parents don't sit down because there isn't enough food, maybe none at all.  They do not discuss plans or the future because they do not know about tomorrow and whether they will have any food whatsoever to put on their child's plate. Life becomes about mere survival, survival of today, not future.

I remember taking a group of students to a village.  The smell when we arrived at one of the mud homes was unmistakable - skunk.  As we approached, the father held up a very small dead skunk and a tiny armadillo and very proudly showed us what he caught for dinner.  Nervous giggles from the students could be heard but with a funny tone because most were holding their noses. Each and every one told me after that they truly thought he was joking.  He was not.  The other village kids were all beginning to arrive and gather around the father and there were no giggles.  Mild jealousy was the order of the day.  This family would eat meat tonight and everyone wanted some. Everyone was hungry.  True hunger.  The kind I personally have never experienced.  No one cared that this meat might carry disease (armadillo can spread leprosy to humans) and most certainly carried with it a smell beyond all compare.  It was purely nauseating. In my head I wondered how hungry would I have to be to eat that meal? Ironically, while I wondered, the father asked if we could stay and share this meal with them. We politely declined, stating we had to leave soon but thanked him profusely.   It still makes me tearful thinking about that day and that despite having nothing, and perhaps not eating for quite some time, this family was willing to share with us.  This happens each and every time we visit a village.  We know that sometimes they feed us the only food they have.  We do not want to eat but it is considered rude if we do not share in their blessing.  I cry every time.  But I learn as well. I learn to be grateful... and yearn to BE a blessing.

We really need to understand how good we have it!  We have no control over where we were born.  But we do have control over what we do with what we have.   Guilt is counter-productive.  We should not feel guilty.  But, be mindful that God gave us what we have been given for a reason! God blessed us all with talents, wealth, knowledge, time etc. We must use those things to live our lives and BE A BLESSING to others!

 *When someone has been given much, much will be required in return; and when someone has been entrusted with much, even more will be required.  Luke 12:48 NLT*

Rita Doppenberg -  on behalf of the DIG