



April -- Perseverance

We joined MVPC when we had only one daughter, but not long after our son was born, folks started telling us to get our name on "The List" for Troop 212. Seriously people? He's still in diapers! I don't think he's ready for high adventure camping! Thereafter our days were long, but the years flew by as they do, and before we knew it, he was in fourth grade. Now it was time to start thinking seriously about whether we should get our name on "The List." As with hotel and restaurant reservations, we figured it was easier to cancel than it would be to book at the last minute, so we joined "The List." By no means was our name at the top. Apparently others had known early on in Junior's life that he was the backpacking type, or wanted to follow in Eagle Dad's or Brother's footsteps. But not us. We were members of the church, so that put us ahead of non-members, but behind members that had gotten their names in prior to us, and even further behind members with siblings in the troop. Maybe I had waited too long. Maybe it wasn't going to happen for us.

In October of fifth grade we were invited to attend a prospective members' meeting at The Hut, the little red building across from the fire station where Scout meetings are held every Tuesday night during the school year. We had dropped out of Cub Scouts years before, so I was not going to be surprised if my guys came home from this meeting with the news that some lucky someone moved up a spot on "The List." To my surprise, my husband and more importantly, my son, wanted to hang in there until March to see if we'd make the cut. Guess what? We did.

As other Troop 212 moms said to me, joining 212 is one of the best parenting decisions we ever made. It is a big time commitment but isn't everything that's worth doing? I won't lie, there was a time when I thought Chad might not make it. Unlike academics or sports or other activities, we weren't asked to step in at Scouts and bail him out or help carry his load. They tell you when you join the troop that it's boy-led, but if you're like me, you just think that's good marketing! Turns out, they're the real deal. They live out the promises of the Boy Scout oath, one of which is duty to God.

Instilling faith in our children gives them hope and allows them to persevere. When they trust in God, they can find strength even when they feel like giving up. Going through tough times teaches them that God is always there. When it comes down to it, all of us have experienced things that we never would have experienced if we didn't push through the difficult times. When we get to the other side, we see something that we never would have seen before - if we just believe in what God can do and what God can do in us!

When things got tough - because they do for everyone at some point in middle school - Chad got encouragement from older Scouts that had walked in his boots, carried the heavy pack, tied all the knots, made the pinecone border, learned to identify poison oak even when it's dormant, earned the Cooking Merit Badge making dinner for his patrol, and knew some tricks for keeping the rain out of the tent. And now, five years, six ranks, countless meetings and campouts, one high adventure, and 21 merit badges later, Chad is embarking on his Eagle project.

Refusing to give up when life gets hard is the definition of perseverance. It also defines our time in Troop 212. Take it from me, it's never too soon to get on that list.

Blessings,
Elizabeth