

Oklahoma: Dealing with disappointment

August 13, 2015

As I filled out my final report to send home to my mission coordinators, I faced a tough question: “What has been your biggest disappointment on the field?” I knew the answer immediately. Admitting it was much harder.



Chelsea Bradley It's easy to come in to a mission field believing you already know the people you're there to reach. You get this picture in your head of who they are and what their needs will be. You stroll in, confident that you will be able to provide for them. I walked into the shelter certain that these guests just needed some love and a few Spirit-led conversations. I was so convinced I could get through to them, and all they were waiting for was someone to tell them how loved and cherished they are by God. So, the first time I watched a guest walk away from the shelter and back into the arms of her abuser, the pain was my reality check.

The truth is, we spent two months here and saw two salvations. We presented the gospel, we shared our testimonies, we taught devotionals, and still we saw guest after guest leave all of it behind to return to cruelty, abuse and neglect. I have never experienced heartache like hugging a

guest goodbye just before she gets in the car with her trafficker.

But I celebrate the women who are still here, and who still are fighting for themselves and facing a new day, every day. They are the bravest, strongest group of women I've ever known, and I praise God for the way he has pursued and captured them, even if they don't know it themselves just yet.

Maybe we didn't see dozens of salvations, but the impact of this summer has been an eternal one. God is changing lives here. God was present for every prayer, every conversation and every Sunday school lesson. God was listening to every intake call from a terrified victim seeking shelter, and he was mourning alongside us as we cried over losing guests that we had come to love. I think that's the most important thing we did here—showing these women, whom the world has forgotten, that the Most High knows their name, and that he cared enough about them to send an entire team of witnesses as advocates of his great love.

I will never forget the beautiful, talented, creative women I came to know and love. I pray that when future Christ followers walk in these doors, they do so with great humility and patience, and an understanding that nothing could prepare them for what they are about to experience. Nothing about this position was easy, but it was worth every second.

Chelsea Bradley, a student at Tarleton State University, is serving with [Go Now Missions](#) in Oklahoma at a shelter for survivors of domestic abuse and human trafficking.