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Jason, Emily & Savannah Atkins

Please Pray for safe travels for us and our luggage as we head back to Guinea-Bissau! We leave the US on Monday, September 17 and after two planes, a taxi, a boat, and a station wagon, we'll arrive in Bissau sometime on Thursday the 20th!

GOODBYE *by Emily*

Our little soon-to-be-two-year-old has developed an amazing skill! Savannah is awesome at saying goodbye. Not only does she say goodbye frequently, she understands clearly what goodbye means – letting go of something so that you can move on to say hello to something else, not that you don't mourn for and miss the things that you've left behind, but you take the time to open yourself up to the next step.

In our missionary training they talked a lot about being intentional about making goodbyes count. The point was that until you've dealt with the fact that you're leaving one place (or thing or person) behind you can't be ready to say hello to the next place; and if you're not ready to embrace the new people or places or challenges or experiences that God has for you, then you will never really learn to be effective.

I had and have to work very hard on this skill, but to my daughter it's natural! For example, when we pull away from the gas station she says goodbye to the gas, when we exit a store she yells "goodbye people" and when we leave a play ground she says goodbye to the slides, the swings, the grass, the fence, even the gate! I don't think this would be as astonishing as it is if she was just saying it out of habit, but even at her tender age she has learned that goodbye means letting go.

A few weeks ago we were at a park with a cute little house and Savannah was having a ball playing in it. When it was time for us to leave she started to pitch the beginnings of a fit. When I told her that we needed to leave because we were headed to her friend's house to go play, she took a deep breath, looked longingly at the door that was just her size, and then loudly proclaimed "goodbye house", reached up for me to hold her, and started talking about the friends that we were going to go see. Just like that, she thoughtfully said goodbye and that opened her up for the next adventure!

For the past two months we've been all over the US – three days here, five days there – and leaving people that we love behind as we walk out the door to get back in the car has been wearing me out. I don't like saying goodbye. I don't like leaving, knowing I'm going to be missing out on big events and everyday moments in the lives of my friends and family. But I'm starting to realize that most of all I don't like opening myself up to the new adventure. I like familiar things, clear expectations, patterns, routine; but that's not where God has called our family. Over the past six years when I've been obedient to say goodbye and take a leap, God has always been faithful to give me the ability to do it, and he even gives me joy in the process, but it's still not comfortable.

I know that God puts us in the families that He does for a reason and I'm so thankful that He's blessed our family with Savannah. I never thought I'd learn so much from someone who doesn't even know her ABC's! So following in the footsteps of my daughter, I'd like to say goodbye to you guys! Words can't express how much your hugs and chats have meant to us as we've been traveling around the US. You guys are a constant support to us and we are humbled and blessed by your love!

Jason + Emily



Helping us pack - looks like she's ready to head back.

For the ministry of:

Jason & Emily Atkins

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