

FaithBIT



¡Buen Camino!

Reflection by Briley Nichols

On May 26, 2018, I embarked on a journey for which I had few expectations. A bus dropped me off in a small village of the French Pyrenees and the next day I would begin walking, making my way to Santiago, Spain, about 500 miles in 33 days. Day one began with rain and escalated from there. At the top of a pass, about 10 miles in, a storm rolled in, nearly knocking me off my feet. Hail was pelting, and pilgrims were scrounging to find any place to hide. When continuing became possible, I walked 9 more miles. Approaching a monastery, my resting place for the night, the reality of this journey set in, seeing the other pilgrims lying in the sun, attempting to dry, some laughing and sharing stories, others in overwhelming tears after an emotional first day. Day two was another steep and soggy day and I nearly limped the whole 18 miles with exhausted legs and torn up feet.



“...I was forced to give up my own ego and my reliance on my own strength, and allow Him to deliver.”

- Briley Nichols

After a startling beginning to The Camino, I was feeling defeated. Blisters covered my feet after walking in soggy shoes two straight days, my Achilles had become very swollen, and my body was not yet acclimated to walking 18-20 miles a day. Thoughts of never making it the remaining 750 kilometers stormed my brain. That night I sat down to read my Bible, and with little motivation, started from the beginning. The familiar imagery of God opening the floodgates to make way for new growth now seen with new eyes, wrecked me. As the floodgates opened on my own journey, I was forced to give up my own ego and my reliance on my own strength and allow Him to deliver. Little did I know His deliverance would far surpass my expectations.

The remaining 31 days were far from seamless (a lost phone, shin splints, countless blisters, and bed bugs to name a few), but the ways God revealed Himself were nothing short of spectacular. I encountered countless people from every corner of the globe, each with their own beautiful story and insights on the world. I got lost, sometimes literally, in thought and conversation. I built relationships with people I shared no common language with. I met people and minutes later knew their deepest passion, their deepest hardship, their deepest desires. I woke up at 5am and walked as the sun rose over the mountains. There were tears and a whole lot of laughs. There was confusion, but so much clarity. And through each encounter, I left knowing the character of Jesus a little more by knowing a little piece of another heart. But more than anything, the generosity, kindness, and compassion I met along the way allowed me to experience the goodness of God that lives within each of us in a more profound way I could have ever expected.