

## John To Uganda

My Sister drove me to the airport on 11/11/19 and it was kind of a nerve racking trip. It started to snow on us and the roads were getting covered. I was checking flights on the way up and noticed some were getting delayed. I was beginning to worry mine could be one or them. This could cause a problem because I was supposed to meet Tim in Atlanta. We made it to the airport on time and everything ended up being ok. Kelly sent me off and I made my way through customs with no hold up. When I made it to Atlanta



and was on my way to the next gate, I stopped to look at the departure board and there was a man standing behind me so close I could feel it... I finally turned around to see what his problem was and saw it was Tim! We hugged and talked for a couple minutes and headed to our next gate. We had a stop in Amsterdam before we would make it to Uganda. Tim flies so often he gets a few perks in the airports, luckily he also gets to bring his guests along. We got to use the lounge with free food and drink, and board the airplane before everyone else. After we made our quick stop in Amsterdam, we were then loaded on the plane to Uganda. We landed at the airport in Entebbe Uganda around 11P.M. on 11/12/19 and had to go through and get our visas. Tim paid for my visa, which was \$50. We then waited for our bags that hopefully made it, considering I hadn't seen them since St. Louis. We got all of our luggage and proceeded to the money exchange. There were two different ladies both waving trying to get us to come to their line. Tim walked up and talked to both of them to see who had the better rate. Tim came back to me and told me they were the same, so I went to one, and Tim went to the other. \$1= 3,660 shillings, I exchanged \$200 for 732,000 shillings. Man, it feels good to have 732,000 of anything! We got our money and started to head out of the airport when suddenly we were physically stopped by three men. They wanted to see our passports, Tim was leery so I was kind of uneasy. One of the men took out his phone and took a picture of Tims passport, which made Tim angry. Tim said "Why are you doing this? I come here all the time and this never happens." Tim got out his phone and took a picture of the man. The man then took my passport and proceeded to do the same. I



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gently tried to take my passport back, then put my hand in front of it so they could not get a picture. They eventually got the picture of mine and said we did not have the correct documentation for our visas. The man at the visa desk was supposed to put a sticker with the stamp he gave us. Tim took our passports back to the visa desk and I stayed with our bags. Tim was able to go back and get the stamps we were supposed to receive. This whole situation worried me with what may lie ahead of us with the rest of our trip. We finally made it outside and found Moses. He is one of



the board members for Tim's "Forest of Hope". Moses would be taking us to our hotel. Driving is a lot different here in Uganda as they drive on the opposite side of the road and they follow absolutely no transportation laws. We passed trucks that were stacked 30' high with goods and men were riding on top of it all. Keep in mind, it is the middle of the night! Tim did not sleep much on the plane so he was dozing off the whole way. If anyone were to drive like they were in the states, they would have pulled over and there would be a fight. They would drive in the middle of the road and when they approached someone they would get on their butt and either pass them, or honk their horn so they would move out of the way. We would pass them after riding their butt and honking, both drivers would act like nothing happened and continue on their journey. Many times, they will pass blindly and there is a car or big truck coming head on, both drivers will adjust, even if they have to go off the road a little... I should have brought more

underwear! During all this craziness nobody seemed to get irritated, they just acted like it was normal life. Along the roadside there were a lot of little food stands with men cooking, this is 12 a.m. or later. It seemed very busy for that time of night. We made it to the Abba Hotel just outside of Kampala at about 1 AM. We were let in the gate by a young lady who was carrying a club. There's a wall around the hotel with razor wire on top. We were greeted by a couple men that helped us



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carry our bags to our rooms. There were a couple of bottles of water in the room for me and the lady that checked us in brought me a portable AC unit. Unfortunately, the compressor did not work. My bed had a mosquito net that I had no idea what to do with, haha. The lady that showed me the room got it all set up for me. I also had a small refrigerator in my room (that did not work). I received the Wi-Fi password but barely had any service. I tried calling Erica and was able to get connected but she could not hear me. So, I just texted her to tell her I made it and was going to bed. I charged my phone on my computer which still had some battery, since I did not have a power adapter. I finally laid down for bed at about 1:30 and the power went out before I went to sleep.



11/13/19

I woke up at about 6 a.m. and the power was still out. I couldn't go back to sleep and all the roosters in the village were beginning to crow. I decided to get up and go take a shower, it was still dark so I used my flashlight on my way to the bathroom. I got the flashlight all set up and ready to go... then the power came back on... I'm not mad though! I got my much-needed shower after my long trip to Uganda, and then had some time to kill since I wasn't supposed to meet Tim for breakfast until 8:30. I decided to go ahead and head down to the restaurant and read out the devotion book I brought along. I sat there for almost 45 minutes before a young man brought some warm water, milk, and instant coffee. I have used instant coffee to etch knives, but never drank it. It wasn't the best coffee, but it was one of the most peaceful, calming moments I have had in a long time. Almost finished with my first cup, Tim came walking in bearing gifts from the nearby market that he had taken a walk to. When he walked in everyone greeted him like he was their brother and were very happy to see him. Tim asked the waiter to retrieve the coffee press he had brought and left there a few trips ago. Tim cut some cheese he got at the market, and pressed me a much better cup of coffee. Tim asked me what I would like to eat. I told him.



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“Whatever you have. I am following your lead on this trip and eating whatever you eat.” Tim ordered us two eggs, potatoes with onions, and vegetables. While waiting for our food, Tim noticed my devotion book and asked me if I would mind sharing the devotion with him. The devotion was about “The Source of Happiness” Psalms 47:1. We had a prayer for the day, and then I enjoyed some of the best vegetables I've ever had. They were so fresh and had a little earthy taste, but not too much. They were cooked with tomatoes almost to a sauce, with cauliflower, broccoli, mushrooms, onions, and spices. I could not get enough of them. We ran back up to the rooms to get our things before Moses would pick us up again. We stopped on our way to the forge to get some stuff for the guys at the market. While we were there, I picked up an adapter so I could charge my phone for 60 thousand Shillings and a Coke Zero for 1500 Shillings (like 40 cents). Tim picked up some fruit and water for the guys. Also, I forgot... When you go into the market you get searched with a metal detector. I had my Leatherman in my pocket so I took it out. He gave me a funny look and said I needed to leave it with him, so I did. On my way out I went to pick it up and he was showing everyone all the tools in it and everyone was very interested. We got back in the car and Tim had to make one more stop before we made our way to the forge.

At the next stop, I stayed in the car with Moses. I asked him some questions about his family. He has two kids, one is 6 and the other 1yr (1 month older than Austin). I shared a little about myself and showed him some pictures. After that we headed to the forge. People drive crazy all the time. When you come to an intersection there are no stop lights or signs. Everyone goes at the same time. There are about 10 cars in each intersection all going different ways. Add to that



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motorcycles that are threading through trying to avoid getting hit. During all of that everyone is just living their normal life and not getting upset at all the chaos going on. It is about a 20-minute drive to the forge from the market. The roads to the forge are all dirt with the same crazy driving going on and a ton of people walking on the side of the road. Some of the motorcycles had three people on them and even mothers with babies on the back. A lot of people will hop on a motorcycle (boda-boda) as a taxi. Boda-boda came from the word border- border, because they would hop on the motorcycles to get from border to border. Getting close to the forge we go through a village, where the roads look like washed out alleys with ruts close to a foot deep. There were a bunch of cute kids playing by the road with no parents in sight. The houses they are living in looked like a very old tool shed. Going down one of the alleys, I see a Bamba Forge gate. It was very well painted and the logo on the gate was perfect. I got very excited as it was the most professional looking thing I had seen in Uganda yet. Moses honked the horn and Emma, the forge manager, came and opened the gate for us. The men were very happy to see us and came out to introduce themselves. They all called



Tim " Uncle Tim" and already knew who I was. We went into the forge and Tim gave updates on how things were going in the US. He told them how the knives are not selling very well and

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that he brought along some leather. He told them he thought the knives would sell better if they had sheathes. He said we were going to teach them to make the sheathes and Weaver leather donated lots of leather tools for them to use. Tim brought some construction paper and pens to show the guys how to trace around the knives and leave room for the stitching and welt. He then transferred the paper cut-outs to the leather and began to show the guys all the new tools and how to use them. Everyone watched eagerly and asked a few questions. Tim showed them a basic stitch and finished it up. He could not find any leather dye locally, so Tim bought some shoe polish. The shoe polish didn't work all that great, but it looked fine. All the guys made a pattern out of paper for a knife they wanted to make a sheath for. After that, we showed them how to place their templates on the leather to keep the waste down as much as possible. Everyone started on their sheaths as Tim and I went around giving pointers and helping. When the guys started to use the tools, they were using a lot of force and Tim told them they don't need to use so much force since it is hard on the tools. A couple ladies brought us some food and you could tell the guys were very excited about that. The men insisted that Tim and I eat first after the prayer from Emma. We had some great fried chicken along with beef and gravy, rice, vegetables, and matoke. Matoke is a green cooking banana they prepare by steam cooking and mashing into a meal. It is one of the national dishes of Uganda. We finished eating and I started to assemble a grinder that Tim had sent over for the guys. The only tools I had to put it together were my



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multi-tool and a pair of pliers that were already there. Needless to say it was not a quick assembly. When I finished it, Tim and I brought it out to show the guys. They knew what it was and were really excited. We didn't have the motor there, so hopefully it will come in by the end of our stay so we can finish putting it together. Some of the guys were really starting to get the hang of the sheath making. Sam was really paying attention to detail and I could tell he was going to catch on quickly. I was helping Bannet with his work and got out my Leatherman to cut a piece of thread. He was amazed with my tool and took it around to show all the guys. The day was starting to come to an end so Tim told everyone it was time for us to take off. We headed back to the hotel and got back around 7 PM. We decided we would meet at the restaurant for dinner at 8:30. I went to my room and rested a little bit, the power went out again and I fell asleep for a minute. I headed down about 8:15 so I could get on the Wi-Fi and call Erica. Erica was not at home so I did not get to see Austin. After that I got to the table where Tim was and we checked some emails and ordered some food. Tim ordered us some goat curry with rice, vegetables, and chapati (bread). We got our food and I am not just saying this, it was one of the best meals I've ever had! After all of our talking and eating it was a little bit after midnight and I figured it would be a good time to call Erica again. This time when I called, Austin was napping and didn't want to wake up. I told Erica about my day then headed up for bed... Not before the power went out one more time.

11-14-19

I woke up about 6am and jumped in the shower., I wasn't quite sure how showering was supposed to happen here. There is no shower curtain and water is just all over the bathroom. Anyway, I finished my shower and headed down to meet Tim a little early so I could do my devotion and get on the Wi-Fi. I guess they must turn off the Wi-Fi when people are not using it at night. There was no one at the desk, but luckily I saw how she turned it off before. I was sitting outside and the waiter came and asked if Tim and I would be eating. He brought us some hot water so I made coffee with Tim's press and ordered some omelets because Tim had bought cheese for them the previous day. I also ordered potatoes and vegetables. Tim came down and we had a



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cup of coffee and I read him my morning devotion. Tim read me the passage that he read before he rededicated his life, Colossians 1:9-14. Our breakfast came and we had a great talk about my testimony and other things we were going through in our lives. Moses showed up about 8:30 and we headed to the forge . I grabbed some passion fruit and some Desi bananas (a very small sweet banana.) I shared some with Moses while Tim went into the store. Tim showed me how to open the passion fruit, and after Tim went in the store, Moses showed me the “real” way to open up passion fruit... haha! Tim got back in and we headed to the forge. When we got there the guys were already working. They were anxious to show us what they had done while we were gone. The guys made some good progress and the sheaths were looking good. I decided to show them the fold-over belt loop style sheath. I made one while they were working on theirs. All we had was shoe polish to stain the leather and it did not want to soak in very well. After I made my sheath, Tim put together some items he had picked up at the market to try for staining. He mixed some lacquer thinner with food coloring and it worked amazingly. The ladies brought food again and this time we had chicken and some kind of broth, a little beef, rice, and posho (it is a cornmeal porridge made like matoke.) I would have to try matoke again, but I think I like posho better. Tim went over everything the guys had learned and showed off Sam's impressive sheath. Sometimes the guys do not listen well and Tim has to rein them in. Tim wants them to really utilize the time we have with them. They were also bending up the leather tools a little bit and it had only been a day and a half, we had to remind the guys how expensive the tools are and how hard they are to get. While the guys were



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working I decided to make them a wooden mallet that Tim suggested they needed. Hopefully it wouldn't be so hard on the punches. I found a small log and a stick in the yard and made a small pilot hole in the log then chiseled through it before I shaped the handle and fitted it. That was pretty much all we had time for today and so we started back to the hotel. On the way we stopped at the market and I got some mango juice to see if it would help me poop. I had not pooped since I was home. I know TMI! When I got out of the market Tim was talking to someone. Tim then told me we were going back to the hotel and that the man he was talking to is going to take him somewhere to meet with a travel agent. It was about 6:30 and he told me I would probably have to eat without him. I told him I would wait until around 8:30, if he wasn't back I would go ahead and eat. I went up to the room and rested a little. I went down about 7:30 to check some emails on the Wi-Fi and make a Facebook post. By that time it was 8 p.m. meaning Erica was home for lunch. I called her and finally I was able to see Austin, I could not quit smiling. He was happy to see me and even kissed the phone when it was time to hang up. He turned 11 months the day I left. It was 8:30 now so I went to the restaurant and ordered some goat curry again, since it is my new favorite food. I then ran up to the room to drop a couple things off, when I came back down I was informed they were out of goat..... Thought about going to buy a goat. I ordered chicken curry instead. I also got rice, and vegetables. While waiting for my food I asked a few questions of the men working. I had questions about things I had seen today. I sat back down to wait for my food and began to journal a little bit. All of a sudden I heard a couple of girls giggling right next to me and one ran outside. The other girl asked if she could get my phone number for the other girl. I held up my ring and told her I was married and she said "oh" and giggled then went and said some stuff to everyone at the bar. She was speaking Luganda, so I couldn't understand anything they were saying. It was really funny how they acted like little schoolgirls. My meal came and it was very good but it was no goat Curry, my meal was 20000 Shillings which is about \$5.40. I gave the waitress 40,000 shillings and you would have thought I gave her \$100 from the smile on her face. Thinking back, Moses said he paid his construction workers just over 36,000 shillings for an entire day's work. I went back outside to send an email to Leatherman to tell them what I was doing in Uganda and to see if they could hook me up with some multi tools to bring for the guys. Everyone that saw my Leatherman acted like they had never seen a multi tool before and were amazed. After the email it was about 10 p.m. and I was ready to go up to bed. On my way up to my room, Tim walked in and I asked how his trip was. He told me it was great, there was a lot of traffic and it was hard to find the lady, but the drive was great and he was able to meet her. He went on to tell

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me that he went to see if there was any way we could go see the gorillas before we left. The lady said it was too short notice and you have to have permits, people usually book things like that months in advance. That would have been really cool, but I am having a great trip, so it doesn't really matter. I am one hundred percent happy with whatever we do. After talking to Tim for a bit, I told him I was going to go up and get ready for bed. It seemed like he was going to stay down there for a while and probably check email and maybe eat something. Oh yeah, I forgot the power went out about five separate times while I was downstairs.

11/15/19

I woke up at 6:15 and showered so I could meet Tim for breakfast at 7. We wanted to get on the road early to get to the leather factory. Tim made a contact in Jinja to hopefully supply the leather for the forge. Anyway, we had our normal morning routine. Made coffee, talked, Tim ordered us omelets again and they still had no idea what they were doing haha! This time we had fried eggs with cheese and vegetables (the veggies are always good). We had our devotion, today it was about keeping your eyes open, seeing the world around you and rejoicing in God. A little after breakfast, Moses showed up. Moses had things to do that day so we waited for Emma, the forge manager and James operations director. James would drive us. James took a while to get there so Moses decided we would meet him. We went from Nalya, through Miko and the forest to Jinja. Miko had a lot of street vendors trying to get motorists to buy their food. If a car stopped about 25 of them would swarm the vehicle. The scenery was beautiful with sugarcane & tea leaf plantations. I was asking the guys about the forest we drove through and asked if there were gorillas.



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They said there were more in a different part of Uganda. James is a little less crazy driver than Moses, but would still be considered insane in the United States, HAHA. When we were getting close to Jinja we drove across the Nile. The lake that is the source of the Nile is here. Jinja is a big city, but a lot of the roads look like you were to drive through a heavily rutted dirt field. In the U.S. you sometimes drive through a city and see very few people because everyone is inside.

In Uganda, it is the exact opposite. Everyone is sitting outside and it seems they are in a hurry to go nowhere. Tim navigated his way through Google Maps on the dirt roads and with a little help from some people on the side of the street, we finally found the leather factory. There were armed guards at most of the bigger businesses. Regular civilians are not allowed to have guns... I asked them why and they said that would be treason! James talked to the guard and he directed us to where we needed to go.



James and Emma always tell us to take our travel bags with us when we get out of the vehicle. We got inside and met a lady we talked to before we got there. We went into an office and Tim explained what we were doing and showed her some leather he brought along. Tim asked her if she had anything like it she could show us. She didn't seem real sure about the whole thing. Anyway, she took us to the factory and opened a locked room where the leather was stored. We looked through it and a lot of it was too thin, but we were able to find some nice black pieces. We picked out all of the pieces we thought might work and brought them back to the office across the road. The leather factory had a wall around it with a road going through the middle and buildings on each side. When we went back into the office the lady had us go into another room and lay out the leather. We picked



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the pieces we wanted and it was about 90 square meters. She said it would be 6000 shillings a square meter. Tim asked if we could talk to the boss. You could tell she really didn't want to go and ask, but she did anyway. Tim told her we would only take a minute of his time and Nelson, the CEO, agreed to meet with us. Tim told him about the forge and what he was trying to do in Uganda. He also introduced me, and how we met each other. It was cool to see Tim talk about business with him and watch how he witnessed to him, by giving him examples of how God has worked in his life. Nelson seemed to love what Tim is doing and was excited for the opportunities that could come. Tim asked him if we bought some bulk if he could cut us a deal. He told us he would see what he could do. Tim told him if it was a problem at all, not to worry about it. We went back in the room and the lady came in and said Nelson said we could have it for 5500 Shillings. We took the deal, said Thank you, and loaded up the car. We were all starting to get hungry so we looked for a place to eat in town. Tim found a nice restaurant and we went there. There were a few Americans there and it sounded like they were missionaries. Of course I ordered goat curry. We ordered a few appetizers, sodas, and everyone a big meal. We ordered some vegetable samosas (they did not have beef ones). We also ordered butter Naan and some garlic naan. Naan is kind of like chapati but they make it with a little yeast so it rises a little and has bubbles in it. Everyone enjoyed themselves and got very full. I picked up the check and it was around 130,000 Shillings which is like \$36 for all of us to have a big meal and about four appetizers. We started back on the road and passed a bunch of vans with chickens on top of the vehicles. They were just tied to the top. I asked James about them, along with a bunch of other questions haha! He said they take them to the restaurants to sell, and the ones that died on the way, they will try to sell to shady roadside vendors. We stopped at a few stores in Kampala on the way back. They have a mall that made you feel like you were back in the United States... But the prices also made you feel like you were in the United States. We saw a lot of Mzungus, that is what they call white people. We were looking for borax so we could teach them to make Damascus. We picked up a few things for the forge, and I picked up a soccer ball for the guys. They did not have borax, James said there is another place we could try. We went there, but still had no luck. Nobody had really ever



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heard of it. James and I waited for Tim to exchange money. He was taking a while so I decided to get the guys some ice cream and they were pretty excited. I had to go to the bathroom so I had Emma watch our bags. When I got back I snuck up behind Emma and scared the crap out of him LOL! I had James take a video of me scaring him, and Emma thought it was funny and asked me to send him the video later. We got back on the road when Tim returned and it was dark by this time. The traffic was horrible, on top of everybody driving crazy. It was like driving in New York. It took us a long time to get back. When we were almost back, Tim was in the backseat with his window down playing on his phone and someone walked by and reached in to steal his phone. Thank God, Tim said for some reason he was thinking about how Emma told him to be careful having his phone with his window down earlier. Tim gripped his phone a little bit tighter right before the man reached in. Not that he saw the man, but for some unexpected reason... God! We got back to the hotel and Tim and I stopped in the restaurant to grab a quick bite before bed. I wasn't too hungry because of the lunch, ice cream, and I also grabbed some sugar cane from a roadside vendor because I have never had it. I had Tim order beef samosas because I wanted to try them. They were pretty good. Tim and I talked about prayer along with other things. When I got back up to the room I felt like God was talking to me and wanted Tim and I to challenge each other so I wrote in my devotion notebook that we would challenge each other with our devotion the next morning. I also began to pray about how I was feeling from God a pull to do more things like I am in Uganda. I prayed that if it was God wanting me to do this, and I'm not just saying this because I am in the moment, to let me know. Just make it clear for me.

11/16/19

My alarm went off at 6. I do not get good Wi-Fi in my room, but I saw I had a Facebook message. It was from someone back home that I barely know. I don't normally talk to this person. I wave at him or say hi to him when I see him, but we are not good friends or anything. He wrote to me saying he just wanted to tell me that I am an awesome example of God and when people say let God's light shine through you I am the person that comes to his eyes. He said he lost his dad about 6 months ago and said his dad was one of the "Good Ones". His dad was a Christian and after his dad died and a couple other men he knew, he asked why God was taking all of the good guys? He said what he sees in me is that I am one of the good ones and I am an inspiration and example. What he said felt like a slap in the face from God. I feel like this is what I'm supposed to be doing... What God wants me to do! I talked to Erica shortly after that

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and told her what happened. I got emotional and we talked for a while. I am glad we did because it cooled me off before it was time to eat with Tim. Tim came down and I told him about my crazy night and about our challenges. He was all for it, he told me a few stories and about when he was in Boy Scouts. We did our devotional after Tim ordered our usual breakfast. We prayed about our challenges and after our prayers we gave them to each other. My challenge for Tim was to pull one of the guys at the forge aside and just talk to him about his life and listen. Tim's challenge to me was to listen to God and if I feel like God wants me to say something to someone, like a word of encouragement, do it and tell them that I think God wanted me to say it if I truly felt that way. They brought our breakfast out and with a little guidance from Tim they finally got the omelets right. It was good too. James arrived to take us to the forge, we had to make a stop at the hardware store in the market on the way. We picked up some pin material for the tongs, and a roll of sandpaper so they can maybe make belts. We ran into Quality after that to pick up some cookies and watermelon for the guys. When we got to the forge the guys were already working with the new leather. Tim had a good long business talk with them about honesty and pride in the things you make. Tim jumped in and helped with the sheaths and Sam, Bannet and I started working on the tong project. We made a couple rivet headers and started on the tongs. Between heats, I showed Bannett how to make a leaf keychain. We were able to make a working set of tongs for them to be able to use with their leaf spring material. Bannett and I finished the leaf and he was pretty excited. I cut up the watermelon we brought and everyone dug in. I took a couple guys out in front of the sign so I could take some pictures with their sheaths. After we were done, I saw Bannet walking towards me with his sheath. He said "will you take a picture of me?" I said yes, so I snapped a few pictures and on our way walking back I felt like God wanted me to tell him that he likes his smile and God wants him to keep smiling because it makes people happy! It was Saturday and the guys were only working half a day. It was still almost 3 when we wrapped up. We loaded up and Tim was talking to Emma so I had Bannet grab the soccer ball. There was a clothesline strung up and we played volleyball. Five of the guys came over so we played three on three. The guys had played before so it was pretty fun. We didn't keep score... Which is probably good because I would have been



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way too competitive. Tim came out of the forge and was ready to go so we headed back to the hotel. When we got back we were both pretty tired and sweaty so we decided to skip lunch and go take a shower and rest. I took a little nap and after I woke up I hung out in the room for a little while. I went down and sat outside about 7 to get on the Wi-Fi and do a little writing. I called Erica, she was having Thanksgiving at her grandma Brenda's. Austin was crying because he wanted to hold the phone. We didn't stay on long and it was starting to get late and I did not know where Tim was so I decided to go in and order. They did not have any goat again, so I asked Brenda what she recommended. She said the fish is her favorite but she seemed worried I would not like it. I told her I would like it and I wanted that with rice and vegetables in the sauteed tomato sauce. I was writing and waiting for my food when a kid came crawling in. I waved at him and he slowly made his way over to sit with me. I asked him what his name was but I couldn't understand him. I asked one of the servers what he said and he said his name is Zachary. I asked him how old he was but he didn't know or he didn't understand me. I asked him if he went to school and he said no. He asked me what kind of soda I was drinking, and I asked him if he would like a soda. He shook his head yes, I said what kind, Coca-Cola he replied. I asked the waiter to get him a Coke so he brought him a glass bottle and a straw. He got up after a little while and came back with a plastic bottle he found. He wanted me to pour His Coke in it. They brought my food and he asked me if I was getting chips, which are french fries. I said no but I asked if he would like some chips. He shook his head yes so I asked the waiter to bring him some. By that time Tim made it his way down. Tim reached out his hands and smiled, Zachary put his hands into Tim's and they both smiled together. Zachary took my phone and picked it up, I opened it and he accidentally FaceTimed Erica. Erica and Austin answered the phone and I told Zachary who they were. Austin wanted the



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phone again so he started crying so we did not stay on the phone long. Zachary accidentally took some pictures while he was talking to Erica. After we got off the phone I was trying to show him a bunch of different pictures but he kept going back to the picture of Erica while looking at it with his head on my shoulder. Zachary was probably with me for over an hour and nobody came looking for him. I asked a couple days earlier about little kids just walking around by themselves. I asked if the parents ever worried about them getting taken or wandering off and getting lost. He said that stuff doesn't happen and everyone just kind of watches out for the children. Zachary left again and when he came back this time he said his mother wanted my phone number. I gave it to him and he sat with me for a while. He left one more time and said thank you for everything. Tim was looking tired and said he was going up to hit the hay. I told him I am not going to be far behind him. I sat for probably 5 or 10 more minutes and was getting ready to go up to the room, when Zachary came walking around the corner one last time. This time he was leading his blind mother. She had a huge smile on her face and said Zachary wanted her to meet his friend. Her name was Oliver. She spoke the most clear English of anyone I have spoken with so far. She thanked me and told me Zachary was her first born. He is 6 years old and has a four-year-old sister. She asked where I was from and what I was doing there. I told her and she was very nice and happy. She had a huge smile the whole time we talked. She helped teach at the school for the blind. I asked if I could take a picture of her and Zachary so I can remember them. They were very happy to take the picture. After our talk I headed up to bed. Tim said we would relax tomorrow and maybe meet for breakfast at 9:30 or 10. The guys do not work on Sunday and some go to church. I went to bed a little after 12:30 a.m.



11/17/19

I woke up about 5:30 am and couldn't go back to sleep, so I decided to get dressed and go down to do my devotion and drink some coffee. I did some more writing after my devotional

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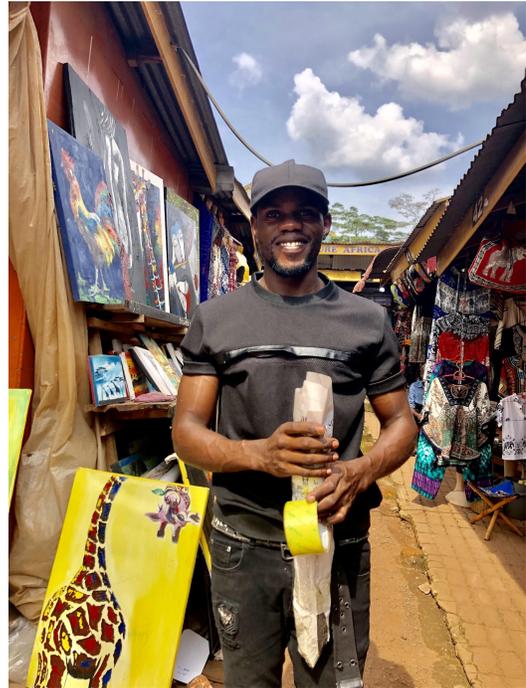
and decided to go ahead and order breakfast about 8 a.m.. Brenda took my order again. It seems like the waiting staff works all the time. I think a few may actually sleep in one of the staff rooms at the hotel. They got the omelet right again and the vegetables were just how I like them. I am starting to learn how to order a little better. It was still before 9 when I finished and we were out of coffee so I decided to go to the market before Tim came down. Plus, I was not going to go another day without goat curry, so I wanted to pick up some goat. I told Brenda where I was going in case Tim came down while I was gone. So I started walking towards Quality. I walked down the short alley and I wasn't sure which way to go. I saw a bota bota sitting there and I thought what the heck, I might as well live it up while I am here. I asked the driver to take me to Quality, I jumped on and away we went. Quality wasn't far at all so I gave him one thousand Shillings. He seemed very happy with what I paid him. I went into the market and asked the meat department what would be the best for goat curry. They were not sure what I was saying so I just picked something out. I went and grabbed some coffee and I wanted to try a few of the seasonings



they use here, it is awesome. I just guessed and grabbed something. I also grabbed some sugar to take home because it is so much different in Uganda. It is real sugar. It's not processed like the stuff in the United States. I tried to go up to the money exchange but they were not there yet. So I hopped on another bota bota and headed back to the hotel. All I had were my 2,000 Shilling bills so that is what I gave him and he had a big smile. I went back into the hotel and wrote in my journal while I waited for Tim. I told the staff that I took a bota bota and they were very excited for me. I gave them the goat and told them to put it in the fridge for tonight. Tim came down and was excited about the goat and the Boda ride. We had a cup of coffee and Moses stopped by to see what we had planned for the day. Tim asked him if he could come back in a few hours to take us to lunch and look for souvenirs. We went to meet Moses' two boys. One looked to be around 2 and the other 4. They were cute kids with great smiles. While we were saying good-bye, one of Tim's friends stopped to see him. Her name was Kathy and Tim wanted her to come by to meet me. She was a very pretty lady and had a cute son she showed me a picture of. She was saying how her boy was sick and she was let go at her recent job

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because they had to do cuts and she was having a little bit of a rough time. Tim and I gave her a little money so she could get some stuff for her son. Tim and I had not read our devotional yet so I asked if I could share it with them. She thanked us for sharing the devotion and then she had to go. Tim and I talked about doing future blacksmithing classes together among other things. We decided we better go up and get ready to leave. We came back down and Moses pulled up ready to go to Kampala. We stopped at a little hole in the wall where the locals like to go to eat luwombo. It is like goat stew cooked in a Banana Leaf. I tried Matoke again and still wasn't the biggest fan of it. It is weird, if you ask I bet 80% of Ugandans favorite food is motoke. It would be like an American saying their favorite food is mashed potatoes. While we were eating lunch Kathy texted Tim and told him thank you, with what we gave her she was able to pay for her son's medical bill. It seems crazy how what seems like so little for us in the United States means so much to the people in Uganda. A lot of the workers may make less than \$2 a day. We headed to the souvenir shop after we ate lunch. Men stand on the side of the road trying to make you give them money for parking. They act like they own the place where you are parking but really are just trying to scam you out of money. We pulled up to the place where the local vendor set up to sell stuff they have made. I saw something that was exactly what I was hoping for. We walked towards it and people were already yelling at me to come into their booth. It made it even worse when we went in and Tim said "this is the guy that's buying the stuff", talking about me. People were almost pulling me into their boosts. I stopped in one ladies booth and picked up a couple wooden spoons she carved and an elephant out of ebony wood. I told her I would like a painting and she brought over who she thought was the best guy to take me to his booth. His art was amazing. He



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spoke pretty good English and he said he does a lot of it with a putty knife. I really wanted a big piece but I could not fit in my suitcase. He said he could break it down and roll it up. I did not have a lot of Shillings left so I asked him if he could take American money. He decided he would and I talked him into throwing in a small painting as well. Every vendor I went by hounded me. I walked into one more booth and there were four women in there, they were all arguing over who was going to get to sell me something. I bought a mask from one of the ladies and the rest of them were disappointed. I felt bad and said sorry I have no more Shillings. They said they would take American money lol. I felt bad so I gave them all a dollar and that made them happy enough. I saw Tim buying something so I went up to see what it was. While standing there I saw this cool carved pipe. I thought I had to get this for Chris Manser. I told the guys "Let's go, I need to get out of here before I spend all of my money". We went back to the hotel, Tim and I hung out for a while. We were not hungry yet so we decided to go back to our rooms for a while until 8:30. I had a lot of time to think while I was in the room. Why has God brought me here and what are his plans with me moving forward? It is tough here. I figured up some



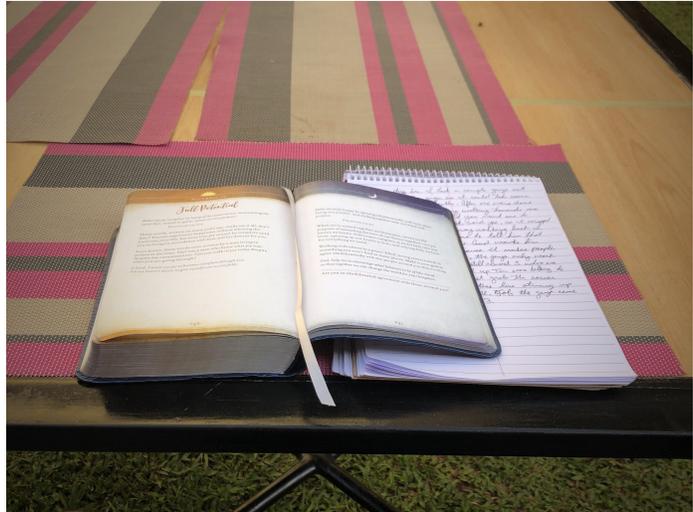
numbers, and it really makes me think what more can we do to help? The people working in the sugar fields make 7000 Shillings a day, that is less than \$2. The people driving the bodas only get 1000 shillings a trip which is like \$0.25. Most people in Uganda probably make around \$2 a day, give or take. The people here need to learn skills instead of settling for these kinds of jobs. Tim is trying to teach people skills. I went downstairs to call Erica before dinner. Then I went to order for Tim and I. I told her I would like goat curry with the goat I bought at the market. Dinner was great, then we went to bed. Before we went up I walked around a little bit. There had been a security guard I had seen all week. He just kind of sits there all night. When I came back I felt like I should give him a few Shillings and just tell him God bless. Every time I feel led to give while I'm here I try to do it. So little for us Americans, but it is so much to them. After I gave him the Shillings he said thank you so much bless you! I walked away and he had his head in his hands. A lot of people may think "I am not going to give, all I have is \$10". That is 36600 Shillings in Uganda. Most people do not make that in a week. That guy may have needed that 10000 shillings to finish the last payment for his child's school, or maybe to just buy a little extra

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food for the week. We're not called to find out why people need money and then decide to give it or not. We are just called to help others “ a generous man will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.” Proverbs 11:25

11/18/19

Tim and I met down for breakfast at 7 am. I went down a little early so I could journal and go ahead and order our food. Tim came down and shortly after our breakfast came. I told him about all the stuff I had been thinking about and we talked about how people don't really understand the impact they can make on people here with so little. Also, the same thing happens in the US, a lot of the time people do not have the money to wash



their clothes or have dinner that night. We got our breakfast and shortly after Moses came. I shared our devotion for the day. We loaded up and headed to the forge. We got the motor for the grinder so I worked on wiring it up to the variable frequency drive. While I was doing that, Tim was working with the guys on different patterns of sheets. I tested the motor before I put it on the grinder and everything worked. I mounted it and put on the contact wheel and Tim showed them how to use it. They were amazed! After Tim showed them how to use it, I showed them some weekly maintenance they can do on it. The guys have an order for 200 steak knives for a guy that Tim knows that owns a restaurant. Sam and Bannet worked on a prototype blade for Tim to take back with him. I filmed the guys making it then showed them how to grind it with their new 2 by 72 belt grinder. It took a long time for me to get a grinder like this. It is a game-changer for a knife maker. It might take a while for Bamba Forge to learn to use it properly but it will be very beneficial in production and in the things they can do with knives. We had lunch in the forge again. We had beef poshue and chicken. We worked a pretty long day sheath making and finishing the steak knives. Before we went back to the hotel we got the smoker setup with the pig the guys got from one of the locals. You could tell Tim knew what he

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was doing. He got everything ready and then instructed the guys on how to watch it overnight and what temperature range they were to keep it at. Barnett and Brian were going to take turns sleeping to make sure the fire didn't flame up and burn the pig. We headed back to the hotel, my blood sugar was starting to get low so we stopped to get a soda. I checked it when we stopped and it was 68. We got back to the hotel, James and Emma dropped us off and they are supposed to pick us up at 8 a.m. in the morning. Tim and I had the last of the goat I bought (curry of course). Before our food arrived some of the people from Tim's "Mission for Character" group came. Timothy is the director and he sat beside me. He is very nice and we talked for a while about Toro. Is right next to the Kenya border and he said a lot of athletes cross over to Kenya from Uganda because they do not participate in sports as much as Kenya. He was talking about thieves in Uganda and how people will kill a thief if they get a hold of them. The people on the street will hold them and beat them. Which reminding me that I was asking James about gay people in Uganda. Some men hold hands walking down the street. James was explaining to me friends do that there, it's not considered at all to be gay. In fact it is against the law to be gay and the punishment is death. Sam and Emma were talking about how they knew someone in college that got caught being gay and he was killed. Anyway, back to dinner. They went around the table and introduced themselves telling me a little bit about what they did and where they're from. When it got around to me I told them the story of how Tim and I met and how my time in Africa had been so far. It was getting late so Tim and I excused ourselves and went up to our rooms and I made my nightly Facebook post. I was pretty tired so I went to bed and slept well. Tomorrow is our last day in Uganda. Is very bittersweet. I'm ready to be home and see Erica and baby Austin, but I will be sad to leave. We are having a party tomorrow, Tim is smoking a hog all night for it. It's a very special time for the guys. A lot of people in Uganda only eat meat a few times a year because they cannot afford it. I got a soccer ball for us to kick around and have fun. I might have to set up a volleyball net or something. Everybody knows how I am at losing, and how good people from Africa are at soccer! It is so easy to find an opportunity to help someone



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here, I try to do it every chance I get. It really makes me think ... It is pretty easy to find someone that needs help in the US also. Why are we not mission-minded all the time in our regular lives? That is what God calls us to do!

11/19/19

I got down for breakfast a little early again so I could write and order breakfast for Tim and I. Tim made it down and told me a story he remembered from when he was a kid with his dad and a pie a lady made for him at church. He said it reminded him of the goat I bought for our dinner. I like listening to Tim stories and how detailed they are of what he remembers from such a long time ago. We got our breakfast and a few of the ladies from last night made their way down for breakfast also. James showed up while we were eating and said we probably need to get going before too long. I thought I might as well get up and share our morning devotion with everyone. After I shared the devotion I prayed for the day and the ladies breakfast and we left. We left our bags at the hotel because we planned to come back and shower and pack up before we left. When we got to the forge we looked at the pig and it looked gorgeous! The guys were finishing up some sheaths then they were supposed to match all the knives with them. While they did that, Bannet and I made some leather key chains for the guests. Tim ran into town with James for a meeting, so it was just me and the guys for a while. A couple of the men went nearby to borrow a BBQ Grill to roast the goat meat on. They started some coals on the grill and spread it out and covered it with the motoki leaves to roast



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the goat over. The guy roasting the goat also brought the liver to fry and eat while they were grilling. I hung out by the grill for a while so I could try the liver when it was ready. I got some and it was very good. Some of the women from the village started to come into the forge. Some brought their children so I got the soccer ball I bought for them to play with. A boy and I kicked around for a while then after watching us, a group of the girls came over, so we played keep away. This was the middle of the day on a weekday so I am guessing none of the kids go to school. The ladies from Mission 4 character showed up and everyone left for a while to have their meeting in the village. The ladies from Mission for Character are trying to teach the women how to be good Godly women and raise their family. Tim showed up in the meantime, we worked on trying to get the belts made but we couldn't figure out the right combination to make it work. The ladies came back and had lunch, but we did not eat. We were going to have goat and pig later. Tim and I ran back to the hotel at about 2 o'clock to pack up and take a shower. I took a quick shower then went down and told all the staff goodbye and gave them a little extra money. They all seemed like they were going to miss Tim and I. We headed back to the forge for one more time. When we got back to the forge they pulled the hog out and started pulling it apart. It was cooked perfectly. We pulled it all apart and tried some while we were doing it. Before we ate Tim called an official meeting and voted a few guys into the forge including me! So I am an official member of Bamba Forge now. We ate and Tim and I had to get ready to go. I went over how to sharpen knives with Sam on the grinder one more time before I left. We got everything packed up and said our goodbyes. I gave



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my buddy Bannet my boots, he was wearing sandals the whole time we were forging (as many were). I wasn't as sad as I thought I would be. I think it's because I know it's a see you later and not a goodbye. James the Forge supervisor and a different James, one of the workers, went with us to the airport. The traffic was absolutely crazy like every other time, but this time it seemed even more extreme. We finally made it to the airport and James wished us off. This is a trip I will remember for the rest of my life. I had emotional ups and downs throughout the week, but they were all for the good. The emotional downs really made me reflect on my life and the way we live in the United States compared to how they live in Uganda. It's not that how we live is wrong. It's saying that in Uganda, they have to work so long for so little, taking a lot of time away from their families. There are no labor laws so that employers save a lot of money making everyone work all the time. Everyone that I would see working somewhere, the next I went, the same people would be working. They are good hard workers... They have to be because there are so many other people that want jobs, if they don't like it or talk back they will just get someone else to replace them. More skilled jobs need to be created and people need to learn the skilled positions. Thinking about it is very overwhelming and it seems impossible especially seeing all the people out during the day without jobs. All we can do is try to affect as many lives as possible and maybe one day the weight will fall to the other side and Africa will start to change for the better.

