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Dear Future Bostonians...

I'm so pumped for our trip this summer! Boston is truly an incredible city and we get to go there while serving an unsurpassable God. Something big is gonna happen!

One of the interesting things about the way that God works is that sometimes "big" things don't seem that big at first. Think about it...when Jesus was born in a manger, it was a cataclysmic event. But who was there? Just his mom, dad, maybe some animals and a few shepherds. Where were the fireworks, the royalty, the 24/7 news coverage? They missed out. Sometimes the biggest things happen in tiny, unexpected ways.

This summer we'll get the chance to see some big things happen. But they might not seem big at first. Putting food on plate for a new-found friend who doesn't have a home, sorting toys for kids that have none, serving a cup of cold water to a sweaty stranger...all of these seem pretty inconsequential, but we trust in and live for a God who takes the seemingly inconsequential things in our lives and explodes them into eternity altering moments, both for the server and the receiver. I hope you'll approach this summer with the attitude that every choice matters, that your attitude literally has the chance to change the world, that no matter what the world says about young people you not only can (someday) make a difference, you do (today) make a difference!

As I was thinking about how to prepare for this trip, a book kept coming to mind that reflects some of these same themes. *Wonder, Fear and Longing: A Book of Prayers* by Mark Yaconelli is an exciting, hands-on immersion into a lifestyle of prayer. Of all the Christian practices, I think prayer is the one that freaks out middle-schoolers the most. Let's be honest...talking to someone you can't see is strange. There's no other experience in life quite like it. And while many times the easiest thing to do with things that make us uncomfortable is avoid them, avoidance doesn't actually help us understand them.

So I hope that you'll join me in the next couple months in not just reading a book because you have to, but taking advantage of an exciting opportunity to learn about prayer, one of those things that may not seem like a big deal but actually can be incredibly life changing!

Here's how this is going to work. Every week you'll have reading that you need to do (you'll find the reading schedule on the back of this letter). Then you'll need to log onto <http://flipd7.wordpress.com> and join in the conversation. You'll find a post for each week's reading and you need to respond to the questions in that post. You'll also need to visit the post from the prior week and interact with at least 2 of your teammates responses.

I'm already praying for each of you and for our time together...can't wait to see what God's up to!

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Reading Plan (all reading/posting is due by the end of the day **Saturday, the date listed**):

- April 24 Read Chapter 1 - Love.
- May 1 Read Chapter 2 - Longing.
 Respond to prior week's conversation
- May 8 Read Chapter 3 - Fear.
 Respond to prior week's conversation
- May 15 Read Chapter 4 - Suffering.
 Respond to prior week's conversation
- May 22 Read: Chapter 5 - Compassion. (do *before* we leave for MMT)
 Respond to prior week's conversation (do *before* we leave for MMT)
- May 29 Read Chapter 6 - Rest
 Respond to prior week's conversation
- June 5 Read Chapter 7 - Reflection
 Respond to prior week's conversation
- June 11 Read Chapter 8 - Passion (by Friday)
 Respond to prior week's conversation (by Friday)
 Leave for Boston!

Bring your book with you and we'll do the last 2 chapters together on the trip.