

Struggling for breath, I pushed on my weakened legs; forcing another step. The heavy weight of my backpack pulled me back down the trail. I glanced ahead, watching Dan's figure slowly trudging up ahead of me. Gathering up another ounce of resolution, I took one more step forward. This was one of the hardest hikes of my life. Looking back, I can see that during that trip Dan introduced me to concepts that he would continue to reinforce during our weekly time together.

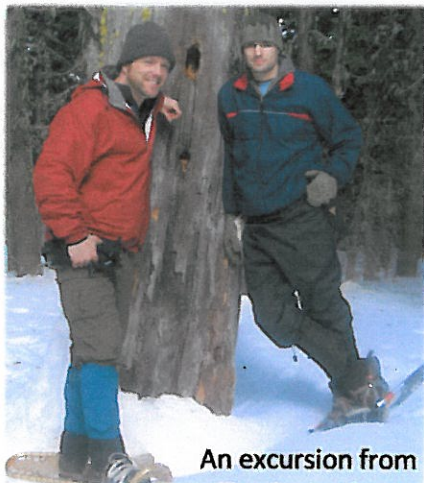
Perseverance Step after step, we climbed closer to the top of the Gorge from the riverside far below. Our destination for camp was over 3600 feet up from the trailhead – a daunting task for those not ready for it. Hiking up that trail taught me a bit about perseverance! *Dan has been meeting with me weekly for the past three years, and has shown consistency and perseverance when helping me with struggles of faith.*



Taking a much needed break at the half way point up Ruckle Creek.

Discipleship This was my first backpacking trip, and I was relying on Dan to show me how to do it. He guided me in what to take, showed me how to secure my pack, and detailed how to light a pump stove to cook our food. From his guidance and my own experience that I have gained, I have been able to take others on their first backpacking trip. *This is a small picture of Discipleship. Dan has been pouring into me. He has been equipping me to follow his lead by giving me a tangible example of how to go and make disciples.*

Love Looking back, I can see that Dan carried more than his fair share in weight up that trail. This example of carrying one another's burdens has been replicated many times over. *Whether it is meeting with me at 6:30 am in order to accommodate my work schedule or taking extra time to bring helpful or encouraging materials to our discussion, Dan has shown love to me as no other man has.*



An excursion from Flag Pt. Lookout

I greatly appreciate the time I have spent with Dan. He has guided me through many struggles and I am very encouraged and grateful for his hard work.

Rich