

## Personal Improvement Project

Approximately at the same time that this class was beginning I decided to reveal to certain members within my core circle of friends, and some of my family that I had been struggling with an eating disorder. This came as quite a shock to some people because I had struggled previously in my life with this same issue and had since claimed to have been healed/recovered from it. Well, that revelation and repentance seems like ages ago and quite a transformation on my view of the problem has taken shape. No longer, for example, do I feel that my behavior warrants the title of “disorder.” That term seems to communicate the idea that my sinful behavior of regurgitating my food after meals is out of my hands and insinuates that I am a victim or serves to place the blame elsewhere. The truth of the matter is that it is all a matter of pride and fear of man rather than God.

My initial plan backfired. In an effort to overcompensate for my lack of “reaching out” to others, I overwhelmed and exasperated several people. Slowly I came to the realization that there was nothing anyone could say or do to remedy my problem. Christ is sufficient and while He places people in my life that can aid me, my reliance must remain upon Him and Him alone. I am amazed at the progression of the class this summer. Each lecture seemed to hit the issue of pertinent struggle for that week or period of time.

I initially planned to have people keep me accountable, fill myself with the Word and just cease my sinful behavior. I underestimated however the strength of the flesh and how deeply ingrained my habit had become. For the past 13 years I had regurgitated almost every meal. I was obsessive about my weight and entirely critical of myself and others. I realized however at the very onset of class that merely changing my behavior would not result in a spiritual transformation of any kind. I had to first understand why I had begun in the first place and what was keeping me now from being obedient to the Lord and ceasing my sinful habit. While reading “When people are big and God is Small” I came to the conclusion that for most of my life what drove my every action and reaction was the acceptance and love of man. I was entirely idolatrous while claiming to worship Christ. As a result of this discovery I thoroughly scrutinized every behavior and every motive throughout this time. I wanted (and want) to be able to fully understand why I do what I do and I want to be “diligent” in my servitude of Christ and in my life.

This semester has been humbling in that every day I am awakened by a fresh view of how insignificant I am compared to God’s grandeur. My entire being is reliant on God and His sovereignty. I feel as though my behavior will change as a result of my relationship with the Lord. I must continually strive to improve my behavior in an attempt to be obedient, but I will never attain perfection. When I falter I know that I am forgiven but in no way is that an incentive to falter once again. I have grown in that I truly realize that no matter how immense my struggle, it is *all* a blessing. Anything other than the divine wrath of God is blessing and that has opened my eyes to realize how truly ungrateful I have been and continue to be.

The issue at hand is not my bulimia, it is not my compulsiveness; rather, it is my ignorance of the things of God. I must diligently strive to understand God and His nature, I must fully fear and revere Him and not ignore that which is being taught me. Growing in knowledge of Him has made certain sins and actions impossibilities. Simply changing a behavior does not remedy anything spiritual. The motives behind any form of change must be made pure for any lasting change to take place.

My second week into the semester I realized that my plan of action had to change. The transformation had to occur as a direct result of my relationship with Christ and no one else. I am willing to admit that I had reached a very prideful place in my life in which I felt that I had in fact attained a level of spiritual superiority. I did not think that that was an issue but the more I analyzed my actions and behaviors the more I realized how much pride motivated my life. This realization was disheartening and altogether difficult to recover from. It was a remembrance of God's infinite grace and mercy that has allowed me to recover and be joyful once again.

For the first time in my life I am realizing how innocently and unknowingly the enemy can creep in and we can become idolatrous without ever realizing our worship. I want to be careful to fully understand my direct motive for my actions. While I may be fooled, God never is and He fully understands my motivations and feelings. The bible tells us to be diligent for a reason, and that if we do not strive to serve the Lord we will quickly fall away. While serving others and doing good "Christian" things may appear charitable and godly we must further analyze whether what we are doing is for God's glory or for our own, or for the acceptance of others, etc. I am attempting to glorify God in all I do and I am failing miserably. It is that realization that continually pushes me to strive and attempt to glorify God all the more. I am striving to further understand God and fully fear Him.

Due to these observations I have changed my plan of action accordingly. Rather than immediately relying on the wisdom and guidance of others I must 1. Read God's Word 2. Reflect on His truths and 3. Realize the immensity of who Christ is. I have seen that the more I reflect on the greatness of God the less likely it is that I fall into sin, especially re-occurring sin. If I choose to regurgitate after a meal I now know that it is willful. It is a direct rebellion against what I am called to do and how I am to behave. It now carries a different weight and I can either choose to be obedient or have my sin destroy me, now that I am more aware of the significance of my sin.

This has been a very difficult and trying semester. I have had to combat preconceived ideas as I slowly came to the realization that I had adopted several secular principles which in reality contradict the biblical truths I believe. It has been difficult to apply what I have learned to myself and further analyze all my motivations and inner most workings. I am entirely incapable of fully understanding why I do what I do but I at least would like to become more aware and not act out of ignorance but rather with a direct purpose of glorifying God. What was very difficult at first and has become surprisingly easier throughout this time, is putting others before myself. My struggles should in no way

affect the love I have for others. I must be willing to put others before myself despite my situation. Christ like love is the love we should be striving to attain and that form of love is in no way self serving.

I am tremendously grateful for the opportunity I was given in taking this class this semester. I entered and enrolled with the purpose of learning how I might better counsel others. I am now leaving the class understanding that I cannot counsel others. I must strive to improve my own relationship with Christ and the more I do that the more Christ can use me as a vehicle for helping others. Whatever proceeds from me that proves itself beneficial to someone else is all of God and none of my own. I have never been and never will be sufficient to solve or remedy any problem, but through my experiences and love of Christ I can merely attempt to share what Christ alone can do in the lives of people and how through faith in HIM all things are possible. (made available by spencer maccuish)