

Today I put everything on the table—even though it already was I say, “Everything is on the table,” but I keep thinking of more things that I have not yet (really) thought of as being on the table. This week I put both of my cars on the table (street car and race car). Then I received an email from a car buyer I corresponded with last year. He said he was looking for a car like mine. I thought, “Well, this may or must be from the Lord,” so I offered him my street car. Then he sent back an unintelligible email that he wasn't interested. In retrospect, it seems a lot like a test.

Something I said out loud in my car Saturday morning on my way to the gym

The question is not whether I am an idolater, but how. It's best to just come out and say it. “I am an idolater.” There. Now we can deal with it.

The Crisis Lifts

Interestingly, once I quit trying to convince God I was really okay, humbled myself, repented, and reached out for his grace, the crisis lifted almost immediately.

My core error was trying to produce a particular outcome, instead of finding contentment in the act of doing my work. Going forward, I will try to lead a simpler life. I will attempt to find joy in the thing I am doing at the moment. For example, if I am writing I will find joy in the act of writing. If I am preparing a message, I will find joy in the act of preparing. This is my real life—right here, right now. Thank you for the grace that helps me understand all this.

Suggestions for How to Use This Article

For you: Take a spiritual day. Listen to music, read your Bible, pray, walk, sleep, go over this article, read a favorite book.

For a friend: Pass this article along to a friend who is having a spiritual struggle or crisis and needs to hear from God.

Finding Grace in a Spiritual Crisis

Patrick Morley

Recently I went through a spiritual crisis. It was of the 90 day variety, but nevertheless intense. This issue of *A Look in the Mirror* contains entries from my journal during that period. Why? Because I love sharing the lessons I'm learning, and relearning, with you, my brothers.

I had been working very hard since August. By the beginning of February, however, it was clear I was missing something that God was trying to tell me. Things were not coming together. I decided to seek God in a deeper way. What follows are some chronological entries from my journal over the last few months....

When I found myself worrying about the future: a moment of self-awareness

I'm just not going to trust God and worry at the same time. I'm just not going to do it.

When I was paralyzed about producing results

I'm going to buckle down and enjoy getting the word out.

When I became aware I was not enjoying the present

The further I live into the future the more confusion and anxiety I experience. Therefore, I will try to live in the present. But then how do we plan? We treat the future as a place we visit, not as a place we live.

This was the first time I can ever remember not questioning God during a tough time

It is not my faith that is under pressure; it is my emotions that are under pressure. (Alleluia, tough circumstances did not make me question God!)

When I bounded up the stairs to my office and realized I was more interested in checking my email than reading my Bible

What do you do when a priority is not that interesting to you at a

particular moment? Substitute discipline for a lack of natural interest.

When I felt joy slipping away from me

I never want to lose what it feels like to be a little kid (but I was losing it).

Something I read on the Internet

A God who is spelled “me” is not worthy of worship.

When I realized my dream wasn't going to come true the way I envisioned

“Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD” (Job 1:20-21).¹

April 21, 2007: I had heard an Alleluia song at the end of a TV show. The following week I downloaded eight Alleluia songs from iTunes and played them over and over. These lyrics brought tears...

“Well there was a time when you let me know,
what's really going on below,
but now you never show that to me, do You?
But remember when I moved in You,
and Holy Dove was moving too,
and every breath we drew was Alleluia.
Alleluia. Alleluia.”
-“Alleluia” by Jeff Buckley

My heart has grown faint, the light flickers, and I now only want the flame again.

May 13, 2007: I skipped church on Mother's Day (Patsy was out of town with her Mom) and had a spiritual day.

“Break me.”

Somewhere along the line I became weary. I remember saying to a friend, “I don't want to be a men's author anymore.” On this day—just two weeks later—God transformed my heart and renewed my passion to reach men.

May 15, 2007: When I realized I wasn't living as fervently as I wanted

Today I read in *The Message*, “But if you're not sure, if you notice that you are acting in ways inconsistent with what you believe...then you know you're out of line. If the way you live isn't consistent with what you believe, then it is wrong.” (Romans 14:23). That's it—I'm

acting inconsistent with what I believe.

ACTIONS: Stop reading the Bible when riding my exercise bike (does God really want me to multi-task?), restore praying in my backyard before daybreak, get back to seeking the moment of humility each day, stop processing emails before my personal devotions.

The lesson of letting it happen versus making it happen

What do we do when our circumstances are difficult? Steady plodding, day by day, in faith and obedience, not taking matters into our own hands, letting it happen versus making it happen.

How do I know if my heart is right or wrong?

When do I know my heart is right with God? When I don't have to check my email to find out if I'm happy.

What I want

Like a child. I never want to lose what it feels like to be a little kid. I never want to worry about whether God will catch me. I want to squeal in delight, not fear.

The desire for Renewal

I am at a point where I want to be deep in the Lord, not so I can then get what I want, though I certainly still want it, but now I just want the flame.

What God wants from me

I read in the parable of the talents that the servants who received five and two talents both were delegated their responsibilities based on their abilities. They both went to work and doubled their investments. When the master returned he gave them equal rewards—exactly equal. God calls me to be faithful, to go to work, to take risks, to not play it safe like the one talent servant did. But I only have to produce in proportion to my abilities. In fact, striving for more is the source of this discontent.

The Unexamined Life

The Unexamined Life thinks, “I am putting more effort into the relationship than God is.” That leads to other errors, like, “My loyalty to you is not in question, but I question your loyalty to me.”

The Rat Race

The Rat Race is the conflict between who I am created to be and who I am tempted to be.

(About this time I started talking openly about my troubles to a few men which helped immensely.)