

BUGGIN' OUT!

Newsletter

Applying Biblical Truth and Humor to the Struggle.

Guard It Jealously

Robert, when the Lord instructed us to greet brethren with a holy kiss, nowhere does He say we must leave a hickey as evidence we obeyed.

With that said, Steve's eyes glared angrily into mine as I sank down into the sofa cushion, feeling the full sting of his rebuke. This was the inevitable moment I had been dreading. Steve finally had had enough of my "revisiting my past to better understand myself" (as I called it) or "crap" (as Steve preferred to call it).

I won't go into great detail about my fling with Miguel, but I was now seeing him weekly and "enjoying an intimate brotherhood" (as I labeled it) or "screwing around again" (as Steve saw it). Take your pick.

I had every good reason in the world for my current rebellion:

- A lot of Christians I know are hypocrites.
- I cannot just abandon Miguel because he is gay.
- We're just friends. (to which Steve interjected, "If Adam and Eve had been as friendly as the two of you are, they could have populated the earth in half the time.")

Steve believed my rebellion stemmed from other circumstances:

- You haven't been to church in eight months.
- You've dissed all your Christian friends.
- Your Bible has gone from "Instruction book for life" to "nightstand coaster".

Actually, I knew pretty well what triggered the whole mess. It was that incident in Bible study. The incident itself was very insignificant, but I put my guard down and it snowballed on me.

It was a typical evening of prayer and fellowship when our leader announced that we were all to draw verses out of a basket. The following week, we would have to speak on the verse we drew.

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Call me fickle, but everyone else got a "cool" verse. Steve got Psalm 23:4, my friend Kevin got John 3:16 and Myrtle, an ex-lez who arrived to Bible study each week on a Harley, got Genesis 1:1. When I unfolded my piece of paper, it read "Exodus 39:2, which states simply *The ephod was made from fine linen cloth and embroidered with gold thread and blue, purple, and scarlet yarn.*

I'm not a terribly vocal person to begin with, so I panicked on how I was going to speak, intelligently to boot, on yarn. Besides, I didn't even know what a stupid ephod was.

So, I skipped Bible study the following week, telling everyone I was ill. When Sunday rolled around, I reasoned I'd have to skip church as well so I wouldn't be bombarded with questions by suspicious members of my study. The snowball was garnering force.

It soon came to be that while Steve and the others were fellowshiping, I was at home bored. After my third week of skipping church and staying in my room listening to Christian radio while I played Scrabble against myself, I realized I was going insane after I challenged one of my own words. I had to find something to do. If I just reappeared at church (which I was really starting to miss) I'd be swarmed with questions, not to mention any scenario Steve and Myrtle might have staged to teach me a lesson (they always get a sick pleasure ganging up to humiliate me. I guess they never forgave me for the time I signed their names to the roster asking for volunteers to tidy up the church grounds and they both contracted wicked cases of poison sumac, but that's another story). I soon found myself out cruising, one thing led to another, and I found myself in the third month of a gay relationship with Miguel. It was at this point Steve rebuked me.

I wish I could tell you I then "saw the light", repented with sincerity, and went on to become a great evangelist, bringing the Gospel to some undiscovered Eskimo tribe living incognito off the coast of Cape Cod. Unfortunately, that did not happen. I continued seeing Miguel for another two months.

Soon, however, my infatuation with Miguel wore thin as I began missing Jesus more and more. The day came when I told Miguel I'd have to stop

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seeing him because I wanted to return to my walk. To my surprise, Miguel was devastated. Steve explained to me why this was:

You see, Robert, the Lord began a good work in you and He promised to complete it. It was feasible for you to leave Miguel because your first love is Jesus. It was tough for Miguel because he was placing his faith in you.

After a few weeks of missing Miguel and feeling like a jerk for hurting him, I mustered up the following prayer, which, by all standards is truly pathetic, but it was all I had:

Father, I want desperately to return to You, but I have nothing to offer. I have no energy, no passion and no faith. In my heart was placed this response, You do have something to offer Me. You have your time. Give to Me your time and I will restore your energy, your passion and your faith.

I promised Him my time and true to His word, minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day and mood swing by mood swing, He restored me.

I remember a man named Duncan once told me, *Guard jealously what God has given to you.* I could not have phrased it better. I learned a big lesson about guarding jealously what God gives to me. If I allow anything ungodly to enter my heart, no matter how small and seemingly insignificant, it can snowball.

It's a tough thing to do. Last year it almost happened to me again. Steve and I were on our way to New York City one evening. I had a Kathy Troccoli CD in my car stereo and set the REPEAT button on a song called "How Would I Know". The song was about to play for the 11th consecutive time when Steve said, *No offense to Kathy, but if you play that song one more time I am going to spit on you.* (It was at this point he added that I was lucky to have him as my accountability partner because no one else would put up with me.)

I ejected the cassette and told Steve to find one he wanted. In the interim, a club song I do not hate called "Sexual" by an artist named Amber came on the radio. Instinctively, I reached over and upped the volume. With a look of disapproval, Steve also reached over, but lowered it.

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Have you learned nothing about guarding jealously what God has given to you? he asked.

Patiently, I explained to Steve that this was different because I dedicate my music to the Lord. He shook his head and said, *That's the same logic you used the time you declared 'When I have a boyfriend, my homosexuality goes away'. Turn that garbage off now.*

Satan uses every means at his disposal to get into our hearts. Guard jealously the gifts God has given to you, for the enemy waits to snatch them away.

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