

Becoming the Bully

So here we are. In a transition place in my life that I absolutely hate. After all these years of being bullied, the winds change, and now I see my moment. This was not a great moment. This was not a time to be proud of myself at all. I remember the day like yesterday, of reality hitting me in the face and feeling the weight of what I have done. I became the bully that I had hated.

Sometime during my junior and senior year in high school, I became what you would call the “bigger fish.” I was no longer the small freshman struggling in the hallway. I was finally an upperclassman with baggage. I would roam the hallways like a shark looking for the weak one. I knew exactly what they looked like because I still saw it every time I looked in the mirror.

I would make fun of others, cuss them out, belittle them in any way possible, trip them, pull pranks, and tell bad jokes. I did all this while wearing the “Christian t-shirt.” My heart was horrible, my tongue was sharp, and I had no one anymore to keep me in check. I made so many bad decisions in this time of my life.

I will never forget when the light bulb came on. We were in P.E. class, and I was chasing a kid that I had been picking on all year. He would get sick just before class, call home, or just lay in the corner so maybe, just maybe, I wouldn’t bother him. Here I was, chasing him like a lion on a gazelle, and then it hit me. I have become that bully that did these things to me. When I looked at him, I saw myself, tears and all. I stopped and let him go, all for both of us to hide in our separate shadows. I could not believe how far and so quickly I had fallen.

Psalm 37:23-24: “The Lord makes firm the steps of the one who delights in him; though he may stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with his hand.”

Y’all, I didn’t just stumble, I ran into a wall and then smacked the floor with my face. I failed because I did not delight in the Lord. All these years of pain and suffering had built up, and I never knew why or how to deal with it. I grew up in church; my mom loved Jesus, and so did I. I just didn’t know what it meant. This will start the long journey of growth for me and my walk with God. Because of His grace, He never gave up on me. I was His adopted child. Even though I had screwed up, He picked me up and dusted me off.

I could not understand how to delight in the Lord. There wasn’t much in my life to delight in at times. Now, don’t get me wrong, there were moments of joy and laughter, fun and games. But it usually was overshadowed by the darker moments by the end of the day. I seemed to stay in a constant rolling wave, mentally and spiritually. It’s like going to an ocean where the waves crash on the beach. Only ankle-deep, it isn’t too bad. You can fairly easily keep your footing and stand firm. But as you walk out deeper, the more force you feel against you. Footing begins to get questionable, waves start pushing even harder. The next thing you know, you are neck-deep and struggling to keep your head above the water. Even the strongest swimmers can struggle in these conditions.

At this time in my life, seeing the fear in this other kid's eyes, I realized how bad of a swimmer I was. I couldn't even doggie paddle in these conditions. I'm reminded of the story of Peter walking on the water in the New Testament. Matthew 14:31- Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" This was a moment in my life where I felt God reminding me of who I'm supposed to be. His child. I was drowning in fear, guilt, and confusion. God reached down that day and picked me up and said, "Stop doubting me and have faith in me." Did I know what any of that meant? Definitely not. But I knew something had to change, and that was me.

God already had stuff in motion to help prepare me down the road. As I wrapped up my junior year, I started trying to make a difference in my life. Clean up my act, my mouth, and my overall attitude. Like many times in our lives, we need a little boost and motivation to do something. I am thankful that I lived in a county that was willing to do different things within the school system. A week or two before my senior year, they held a revival in our school gymnasium. We will talk more about that in my next blog. That week would go on to help me in many ways. A lot of times, we never realize who is watching and paying attention to what we do and how we handle things. Little did I know that I was being watched. Me, the kid that was always overlooked in everything. My prayer for anyone who reads this is that you know God loves you. Even if you can't see it right now because your head is underwater. Trust Him.