

SPOTLIGHT

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I am Not Special

By Cliff Yu

“Wake up! Wake up wake up wake up wake up wake up!!!” says Rachel. “No,” I mumble.

I am not special; I’m not the oldest, the youngest, or the only girl, but I am the laziest. So what have I got to lose? I remember that I used to wrestle with my family, and play in the dryer or laundry hamper when we played hide-and-seek; I was a hidden heat-seeking missile. Those were the days. Now we have to go to high school, to college, to transfer to a university, to graduate school, to pay off the loans that were used to go to college and graduate school. My family has no time to play with each other, which is why I think we’re very independent.

Since we’ve been pretty much conditioned to not rely on one another for much, besides our parents, I try to do everything on my own, if I ever get around to doing it. I haven’t really relied on God for any of the decisions that I made, but I know that it was foolish of me. Recently, I feel that our family has been starting to grow a little closer, which is definitely a good thing. Now that Andrew graduated high school and came up to GNC, we can start to hang out more.

Being in such a big family requires more work than you think, and you often have a shorter fuse. You always have to be taking care of someone else and cleaning up their mess, even if you don’t see eye to eye about things, but isn’t that what Jesus did for us? He cleaned up our nasty mess, and we still act like nothing happened. It seems so distant, almost fiction, because it’s written in a book. Well that’s how I used to feel anyways. I remember that as a family, we used to do Bible verse memorization and Bible reading together. We used to pray to

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Out of the Zone

By Jennifer Han

Recently, I read an article entitled, “Stepping Out: Beyond Your Comfort Zone,” in the Christian magazine, “Mops International,” a ministry for mothers of preschoolers. It was an article about a woman named Keri and her experience of serving women in a homeless shelter. She and two of her neighbors got up early, packed her mini-van with breakfast food, and drove 45 minutes from the suburbs to an impoverished neighborhood in the city. They served a full plate of hot food to these women and also offered them a smile and kind words. What really got to me was when Keri wrote about how her first few visits to the shelter called her to go outside of her comfort zone. As followers of Jesus, he calls us to make a difference. That sometimes requires courage. That may mean venturing into the city, if you live near one, or finding the poor in your suburb or rural areas.

I related with this article so much because it’s something I’ve been wrestling with for quite some time. It challenged me to reflect upon my life. About six years ago, I became a mom. I have 2 children whom I love and adore to death, and they have been nothing but joy & a blessing in my life. I can’t imagine my life without them and I would do anything for them! I would lay down my life gladly at any time for them! Was I committing the sin of idolatry?? I found my life being dictated by my kids, which meant less and less time for myself and for anything or anyone else. I was growing in my selfishness and self-centeredness, which was far from being ‘Christ-like’. Don’t get me wrong! There’s nothing wrong with being available, loving, and providing for your kids. In fact, that’s my responsibility as a parent. The danger is that

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Growing Pains

By Young Baeg

When I graduated high school, I asked alumni and other older folks for any advice they had for me while I was in college. From all the input that I received, the top three statements that I heard were: 1. Be open; meet as many people as you can and make lots of connections, 2. Find a girlfriend before you graduate; its nearly impossible afterwards, and 3. Enjoy yourself; college is the best time of your life. I know that most of these statements were said to get me excited for college, but it didn’t paint such a happy picture of what post grad life was going to look like.

It’s now been almost a year since I graduated and I can say after one year of experience in the working world that the bleak mental picture that I had of post grad life was not that far off. Maybe the fact that I graduated near the peak of the recession made the transition more difficult. Whatever the case may be, this year has been an extremely stressful and humbling experience. However, through the struggles I encountered, I realized that I depended way too much on my own abilities and needed to cling like a child onto God’s grace and mercy. As I prayed each night and read His word, my attitude changed from depressed Young to thankful Young.

Things that I have been extremely thankful for this past year are the people in my life, such as: my parents, who have fed, clothed, housed, me for 20+ years; my sisters, who are always praying for me and

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gether and do more family stuff, but now that the world's gone and got itself all complex-like, those things are now nonexistent.

Whenever you get angry with your family members, and you will, make sure not to say or do anything that will truly break them down, or else you will regret your decision for a while. I remember when I got my petty theft ticket, my Dad wanted to know who got arrested, because one of those stupid attorney ads was in the mail box. I used to think that was the day that my Dad stopped loving me as much as before, but that's just how I felt.

Love your family and friends because that's pretty much all that you have on this Earth. Always stay close knit with your kin, because you never know when God's going snatch someone away from under your nose. But you must, and I mean must, love and fear God more than anything in this universe, for he holds everything and can do anything. †



cont. of "Out of the Zone" by Jennifer Han

you can lose sight of other things in the midst of it all. I was growing too comfortable in my own little bubble called, 'motherhood'.

When my husband presented an idea of going out to summer missions together as a family, my initial answer wasn't a 'NO' but it wasn't a "Yes!" either. I knew it was an opportunity God brought for me to 'step out of my comfort zone'. It was an opportunity for me to put my faith into action in a more meaningful way. Why spend one week of my summer in a hot, humid and rural neighborhood, taking along my 5-½ & 3 years olds when I can just relax in an air-conditioned house with everything within a reach? If I can't even give one week of my entire summer to something other than my own needs and comfort, that's absurd! Utter selfishness! John MacArthur wrote, "Self-discipline is essential for spiritual victory and growth. A disciplined mind avoids the intoxicating allurements of the world. It is clear, with fixed and balanced priorities, resulting in moral decisiveness." My decision to go is a practice of self-discipline and an act of obedience.

I desire that our kids will learn and grow in the joys of serving the Lord & others. I hope that they will get a glimpse of what that means through serving a different community this summer in Canton, Mississippi and I want to be the first to model that before my beloved children.

In this season of my life, there are definitely limitations to what I can do. However, I can start with small things... God is calling me out of my 'comfort zone.' †



cont. of "Growing Pains" by Yong Baeg

never giving up in trying to start a conversation with me; and my friends, who (thanks to the recession) remained unemployed, which allowed us to reconnect and mature our friendships this past year. I am also thankful for my current job in the field of Human Resources. It's not the high paying engineering job I had in mind, but there is a lot of valuable experience to gain from it and my patience is experiencing new levels of growth each day working with my manager. I am also very thankful for the church and especially for Life Groups. It's amazing how refreshing a couple hours of bible study a week with a few good brothers can be.

Even though this year has been filled with many challenges and struggles, there has been and there always is a lot to be thankful for. There's still times when I wish I was back in college, free of all these new responsibilities and burdens, but what's the point of that? If you're not constantly being forced to face new challenges and thrown into new environments, you're never going to grow up and you will always stay a college kid--all theory and no results. I'm pretty sure year two of post grad life will bring new struggles--bigger and more annoying ones-- that I will be complaining my lungs out to God about when I am faced with them. But I am exceedingly grateful to know that God is willing to continually discipline me so that I will draw near to Him and grow to trust Him with my life each day. †

