Need something bigger than yourself? Try beauty

I spent much of my life in fishbowl living.

It was beauty that shattered the glass.

looking back on the wasted years, it is tempting to sit in the ache of regret. An eating disorder robbed me of living fully alive for much of my young adult life. The inward focus I worshiped became a self-imposed prison. Instead of counting my blessings, I counted calories, steps, pounds, ounces, grams, even bones.

It was fishbowl living. Confined by the glass, meaningful connections were broken. Instead of living with people, I watched the way other people lived. The couple that looked so in love strolling down the cobblestones of Beacon Hill. The mother and toddler throwing torn pieces of bread like confetti at ducks in the city park. The college friends, loud and inebriated, shovelling plastic forks into an Entemanns raspberry cheese danish at 2 am. Did they not know that just one piece of that stupid Danish contained 440 calories? Were they out of their minds?

Ironically, getting out of my mind and into Christ's is what saved me. Make no mistake, there was no overnight miracle. The healing took place by way of a gradual response to grace, reaching its turning point at a parish retreat. I was sent home with a simple assignment: Give the Lord 10 minutes each day. So that is what I did. Not a minute more. Not a minute less. Remember, I was a recovering rule follower and wore disordered discipline like a badge of honour. So 10 minutes it was.

Until it wasn't.

Entrusted with four tiny souls, the only minutes I could give to the Lord were the ones when my children were asleep. So, I set my alarm for 5:45 am and tiptoed down the stairs. What I discovered took me by surprise; a miracle that I'd been sleeping through for 40 years.

I witnessed the world awaken. The first chirp that sang from the branches of a tree I looked at every day but never saw. The stream of sunlight that shot across the coffee table highlighting my severe lack of dusting skills, but I didn't care. I didn't care because, for the first time, I was overwhelmed by something bigger than myself. Beauty.

Today, 10 minutes with the Lord looks like two hours. How could it not? Every additional minute I offer to Him is a minute taken off of myself, and that's a good place to be. Beauty opened my eyes, shattered the glass, and released me to swim freely in an ocean of peace.

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