

Christian Tradition or Temptation?

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PHOTO



Perhaps just one piece wouldn't hurt...

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IMAGINE your favorite sweet. It looks delicious, and isn't it the best thing you've ever smelled? You can almost taste it. Imagine how good it feels once the sugar hits your brain. The dish is coming your way . . . it's right in front of you. You inhale as your eyes pick out the nicest-looking piece.

But you're on a diet, so you pass it on.

Three months later, you've learned to fend off cravings; in fact, you rarely have them anymore. There's the dish. It's coming your way. You can handle this! You pass it on.

Six months later, you're still eating right, but occasionally you don't make it to the gym. There's the dish. It's coming your way. Perhaps just one piece wouldn't hurt . . . but no, you don't want to blow it now. You pass it on.

Nine months later, you pass it on.

One year later, you've reached your weight loss goal. Your friends congratulate you; your family is so proud of you. Way to go—you've done it! Healthy eating is a habit now. There's the dish. You decide to have one. Just one. I can handle this, you think. You know what to do.

Now imagine that you have a chemical imbalance in your brain. Imagine your favorite drink. Hear, look, smell, imagine the taste, the feeling. One drink can destroy your family, your life. There's no guarantee that you will ever quit again.

What does a sober alcoholic do? Attend support groups. Go to counseling. Stay out of liquor stores and bars. Avoid places that serve alcohol. Check the ingredients on food, medication, cleaners, perfume. Your friends and family hold you accountable.

What does your church do? Sometimes your church passes you the poison.

I went to a Christian treatment center. My pastor and many members of the congregation prayed for me and sent words of encouragement.

I am grateful to God and to my Christian Reformed church family who continue to encourage and hold me accountable. Many are concerned for me at the Lord's Supper. Many feel that I am being tempted to return to my sinful past. Others feel that the wine is a tradition that cannot be changed for only one lamb.

But should I drop my guard for one second, the devil will pounce. One drink, and I'm done. ■



Lilly Eggink is a member at Jarvis Ebenezer Christian Reformed Church and a single mom of two boys. She has been sober for five-and-a-half years.



Lament

Thank you for calling attention to the oft-ignored "Art of Lament" (August 2012). During times of profound loss, this authentic expression of grief has allowed me to embrace my faith rather than walk away from it. What a compassionate God we serve who welcomes, and even encourages, our raw honesty.

—Cindy Mouw
Holland, Mich.

After our second boy died from leukemia and I experienced seven years of depression, God broke through to enable me to grieve and lament persistently until he provided me with relief from depression and the peace of Philippians 3:6-7. My grief, however, included my expression and confession of my self-centeredness at wanting my plan instead of God's plan for my life. God's gift of the peace that transcends understanding enabled me to accept God's plan that allowed, but didn't cause, Keith's death.

Many thanks to Professor Wolterstorff ("The Art of Lament") for sharing a much-needed article with us!

—Rev. Bruce Leiter
Hudsonville, Mich.

Punch Lines

I'm writing in response to one of the jokes in Punch Lines (August 2012).