

Fighting Addictions and Bad Habits

Father Cedric Pasegna in his 6:00 a.m. broadcast on TBN on Feb. 4th ended his program with a simple 3 step approach to overcoming habits one would like to be rid of but lack the will power to break. Habits such as over eating, gossiping, laziness television & cell phone over-use plus addictions to nicotine, porn, and drugs can be overcome by first, admitting to God you are powerless to break that stronghold. Then says Father Cedric, you tell God you believe He has the power to deliver you from that habit, and lastly you trust God with the whole battle based on the scripture, “the battle is the Lord’s.”

His teaching astonished me because I recognized that his 3 steps, “admit, trust, surrender” were exactly those I stumbled upon in trying to stop smoking. As I have previously written, I sat in the Econo Foods parking lot smoking a butt I had stolen from their outside ash tray and chagrined that I had once again failed in my efforts to quit. Then in desperation I said to God, “God, I just can’t quit so I’m gonna give the battle to you. I’ve heard you can do anything, so thanks.”

Then I went right on smoking, but hoping God would come through. The results were amazing: next cigarette that I bummed tasted odd and I tossed it after a couple puffs. The next morning at the NDSCS library I joined my English teacher cohort, Errol Erickson who got a wicked delight out of tempting me with free smokes. I accepted it and it tasted so rotten, one puff was enough. I tried one more smoke that afternoon and that was awful too. Then I realized that God was being true to his word. If we confess our

weakness to him, (*admit* we are powerless), *trust* God's power to help us, and *surrender* it all to Him, He is "faithful and just to forgive us and deliver us from our sin."

I think I struck a vein of rich teaching when I discovered Father Cedric. If I'm lucky to be up by six on Sunday mornings, I usually try to catch his program "Living with Passion." I love his humble, straight-forward approach. I think he appeals to people on a human level, well aware of the burdens people carry. Hearing confessions probably opens a huge door of understanding of the burdens many people bear.

His "live with passion" theme also reminded me of classes I had back in the 70's trying to get through to a generation that seemed so 'laid back' that the only thing that turned them on was "far out" acid hard rock music which I didn't much care for. I recall getting theatrical in one class and proclaiming to them, "this is a great poem. Doesn't anything turn you on? Wherein the hell is your passion? You need to get passionate about something. Life is passing you Lotus Eaters by." They looked on stolidly and gaped, "far out."

Too many of us judge others by their denomination rather than by the strength and content of their character. I once stereotyped a denomination for only wanting to preach about Saturday sabbaths and the prophecies in the books of *Daniel* and *The Revelation*.

Still, I tuned in their Saturday morning show and who was being interviewed but one of my true heroes, Dr. Ben Carson, the brilliant pioneer in heart surgery. I'd once hoped he'd run for president so I could vote for him. But he was too humble and soft spoken to stand a chance against the

typical politic wind-sacks feeding us their party lines. The Carson interview taught me that it's always good to keep looking even in unfamiliar places for the great ones sojourning out there whose wisdom can improve one's life in so many ways. Have ears to hear. That message may be God talking to you.

Father Cedric's 3 point teaching once more reminded me of the song the two little Whistler kid did for our church back in the 80's: "I cast all my cares upon you/ I lay all of my burdens down at Your feet/ And any time, I don't know/ What I should do/ I will cast all my cares upon you."

That song through the voices of little children, is one of the most powerful moments a Christian can experience. "Got your ears on, Good Buddy?" "Somebody's knocking/ Will you let Him in?"

Gene Pinkney for the Daily News 02-05-2023