

Perfection is not required here...

(Reflections on Confession)

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I'm not perfect. It's not like I don't want to be. I'm just not.

There's no place where I'm reminded of my own imperfections more than when I'm before God. For some people, that can be really scary. And to be honest, sometimes that's really scary for me too. But, really, it's amazing. To be confronted with the truth about my fractured humanity, and met with God's immeasurable mercy. Wow. I am not the same.

For me, faith is more about a relationship with our Creator than it is about a list of rules. And when we are talking relationships, perfection is not required. Persistence is. Perseverance is. Patience is. Not perfection.

So then, why am I so hung up on perfection? Because I deeply desire to be the woman that God created me to be. When I am confronted with the truth about my utter dependence on God's mercy, I am taken out of my small world view and placed before the greatest relationship ever. The Lover (God) and the Beloved (us).

In any relationship, reconciliations are part of the practice and progress. So please, let me break it down for you: Reconciliation isn't about reciting a list of sins. It's about coming to terms with how we are Breaking the Heart of God.

I'm 31. I have lots of evidence of my imperfections. I also have evidence of all the opportunities that God places before me to enter in to a real relationship with Him.

For me, and perhaps for you, everything is in flux. All is change. Everyday is an opportunity for a new conversion of my human-ness into a deep sea of God's mercy.

Isn't that what it can be? Isn't that what it is? When I see my own imperfections and try to "fix it" on my own, it can be pretty depressing. When I see my own imperfections through God's gaze in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, I'm met with mercy and a love that is so real that I can't help but be changed.

Do I fall down again? You bet.

So what brings me back? I desire God's presence in my life. I know I can change. I know He will never forsake me. I know He will never leave me. I know He will never stop loving me. No matter what.

And I know that everything matters. It's about persevering. It's about recognizing the fall and crawling back up. It's about the relationship. It's not about perfection.

I'm not perfect, and I'm willing to bet you're not perfect either. So what do we do about it? We rely on God's grace. Waiting for us to receive in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

How to do it:

Reflect: Where have I been? What trips me up? Where do I want to go? What are my weaknesses?

Reset: Find a priest. Find a parish. Find a time. Make it a priority. Be honest. It's never too late to get up and start again! (Yes, even if the last time you've seen the inside of a confessional was in 8th grade!)

My Act of Contrition:

God, I'm not who I want to be. I'm sorry for the ways that I have broken your heart. Please take me back. Call my name. I don't want to sin like this any more. I want to try harder. With your help, I will try harder. I will do my best to avoid this sin and everything that leads me to it. I'm sorry. I love you.

Grace. It's that easy. When we choose to come back to God in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we are cutting off some big things at the pass. Our little concessions can become habits and these habits become lifestyles and these lifestyles become who we are.

We are better than that. We are God's people. God's Beloved.

In a world where everything matters, can we choose in everything to be holy? Blessed Teresa of Calcutta said, "Holiness does not consist in doing extraordinary things. It consists in accepting, with a smile, what Jesus sends us. It consists in accepting and following the will of God."

For me, that means accepting that I'm human, but not settling for that. I want to be a godly woman. I want to be a holy woman. I want to be better than fallen. I want to be grace-filled. And I want you to want that, too.