# The Commencement Address I'll Never Get to Give

*May 20, 2014*

Graduations mean commencement addresses. Most of which are eminently forgettable, containing feel-good charges to go do great stuff and change the world. But in my experience, they're always given by men, who are some kind of celebrity.

I am neither.

But I have a few thoughts on practical life lessons that newly-minted graduates might use.

"Hey graduates, congratulations. You made it to the cap-and-gown stage. Not without a lot of help and prodding and prayers and frustration from your parents though, right? Thank them. There's not a single thing you are or do or have that they didn't have a part in. Thank them again.

"Speaking of thanking, one of the most important habits you can ever form is gratitude. Especially toward God. He is continually blessing you with everything from the ability to draw your next breath, to your ability to remember your name, to your ability to walk or drive and think and talk and get a job or more education. Thank Him for all those things. Regularly stop and ask yourself, "What would I really miss tomorrow if I didn't give thanks for it today?"—and then thank the Lord for it. A grateful heart is not a complaining heart, or a critical heart, or an entitled heart. Believe me, it will make you a much better person to live with, or work with, or play with, or just be with.

"You've just finished many years of schooling, and you may have been indoctrinated with a bunch of hooey about how wonderful and special you are because of some well-meaning

self-esteem curriculum. You may have thrown away dozens of ribbons or trophies you received just for showing up. Those days are over, because that was never real life. Self-esteem and self-confidence are only gained one way, the hard way: working hard to meet a challenge and not give up until you succeed. You earn self-confidence by doing, not by reciting platitudes in a mirror.

"If you haven't read Dale Carnegie's book *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, read it. It's a classic of how to understand people and how they like to be treated. The reason it's so true is that the book fleshes out the second great commandment, 'Love your neighbor as you love yourself.'

"For example, when you see a service person, like a waitstaff or toll booth attendant, call him or her by name. One's name is the sweetest sound on earth to each person, and service personnel are often treated as if they were invisible. Using someone's name says, 'You are *not* invisible to me, and I honor you for your service.' Prospective employees and spouses have been known to disqualify themselves because of the way they treated people with disrespect or contempt when out in public.

"Everyone has an invisible tattoo on their forehead that says 'Please encourage me.' Most people have an invisible speech bubble over their heads that says, 'Do I matter? Please show me I matter.' Every single person you will ever meet is infinitely valuable as the handcrafted masterpiece of the Creator God, and they deserve to be honored and respected simply because God made them and He loves them.

"Some final pithy words to the wise.

"Listen to your body. You are fearfully and wonderfully made, and it will tell you what it needs.

"Learn to recognize the nudges of the Holy Spirit, and follow them.

“Pray for your future spouse. He or she is out there somewhere. Your prayers WILL make a difference.

“If you wonder if you should be doing something, you probably shouldn’t. If the thought, ‘Should I be doing this?’ even enters your head, it’s an alarm.

“Don’t believe everything you think.

“When you’re on a road trip, never pass up an opportunity to use the restroom. Consider taking some disinfectant and a roll of paper towels with you, and leave it cleaner than you found it.

“And finally, do one good thing every day that no one will see but God. It will build your character and make deposits in your heavenly bank account that you’ll forget about, but He won’t.

“The Lord bless you and keep you. Your real education is about to begin.”

This blog post originally appeared at [blogs.bible.org/the-commencement-address-ill-never-get-to-give/](blogs.bible.org/the-commencement-address-ill-never-get-to-give/)

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# Boy Scouts: Let’s Hear It For Masculinity

Ceremonies make me cry. Any ceremony, no matter how cheesy. But some ceremonies are deeply meaningful and important, which is how I about cried off all my makeup recently at a Boy Scout Court of Honor where the son of my Probe colleague Byron Barlowe received his Eagle Scout rank.

Understanding God's gift of gender is a big deal to me, and I viewed the ceremony through that grid. I saw the glory of healthy, godly masculinity on display, particularly the goodness of men teaching boys to be men.

I saw men serving others through leadership and modeling. The long-term commitment of many volunteer years in this particular troop showed that the leaders understood the value of faithfulness and persistence over time. Each Eagle Scout recipient was featured in a video that included remarks by the scout, each of his parents, and his troop mentor, and the many thank-yous to the men who gave of themselves as leaders pointed to their servant leadership.

Boys who had earned badges and who had advanced in rank were rewarded with a badge, affirmation and applause. (Which included the left handshake, which I now know, thanks to Uncle Google, is a worldwide scouting thing.) Nobody gets badges and pins, much less the coveted Eagle scarf and pin, without working hard for them, a powerful antidote to the "everybody gets a trophy for showing up" mentality. It was a good reminder that true self-esteem and confidence don't come by speaking feel-good affirmations into a mirror; they are earned the hard way by accepting a challenge and working through it to achieve a goal. But none of the boys who earned badges and rank advancement did it on their own. It took cooperation with and encouragement from others to achieve these things. The men were teaching boys that "no man is an island," that God intends for men to do life in community, learning to ask for and accept help from others even as they offer help to others.

In the midst of all this male-glory, I loved that each boy advancing in rank was called forward with his mother, given a pin to place on a ribbon worn over her heart, and directed to give her a hug. When one of the scoutmasters was honored for achieving a leadership rank that he had worked on for many months, his wife was asked to come to the platform to assist with the ceremony, and he asked for the whole family to come

up. All nine children. In this troop, boy scouts are not just about boys and men. Their connections and commitments to family are also valued, another glory of godly masculinity.

At one point, one of the scout leaders was at the microphone calling scouts and their mothers forward. His own son and his wife, carrying a toddler boy, stood on stage to receive their pin. As soon as the toddler saw his daddy, he started jumping excitedly and reaching for his father with uncontainable joy and delight in his daddy, who took him into his arms with a big smile. Later, I told this leader something I heard recently from an experienced therapist who wrote *A Parent's Guide to Preventing Homosexuality*: even with boys on the emotionally sensitive, artistic, creative end of the gender spectrum, the ones more at risk for taking a gay identity when they get older, if a little boy lights up and runs to his father when he comes home (or, as in this case, when he sees him unexpectedly), that boy is in a good, secure place emotionally. A warm and positive connection with his father is the best foundation for emotionally and gender-secure boys.

And that is one of the benefits of Boy Scouts for any boy, especially the fatherless or the badly fathered. When a boy receives attention, affirmation and affection (the Three As) from father-figures, he gets what he can only get from men, and which he needs to grow up to manhood. Even if a boy's dad is not around, those needs can be met by other men who can introduce him to the world of men in safe, healthy, godly ways. (And that is why the idea of gay scout leaders is scary: men who lack gender security cannot impart to boys what they don't own. They are still looking to get their own need for the Three As met, and that unmet need can so easily turn into predation. Even if they don't intend that initially.)

The final highlight of the evening was the scoutmaster's comments and charge to each of the two Eagle recipients. His grasp of the meaning and application of God's word, combined with his personal knowledge and understanding of each young

man's character and story, was one of the most excellent manifestations of a pastor-teacher I've ever seen. The newly-minted Eagles were blessed by a man soaring in his position and responsibility as a spiritual leader as he pointed them, not to himself, but to Christ, and urged them to follow hard after Him. This is what godly leadership looks like.

I have long seen that women cannot imprint masculinity on a boy's heart; we can confirm it, we can affirm it, we can clap and cheer for it, but we cannot imprint it. We don't have what it takes, because God gives *men* that privilege.

And I am so, so glad He does.

This blog post originally appeared at blogs.bible.org/tapestry/sue_bohlin/boy_scouts_lets_hear_it_for_masculinity on May 6, 2014.

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# The Power of "Withness"

*April 25, 2014*

The day after Easter, our beloved Golden Retriever Calvin, only seven years old (that's mid-life in dog years) had to be put to sleep because of cancer that had been sucking the life out of him. When our son and his wife moved from Texas to California, they were forced to leave him behind because their housing does not allow dogs, and Calvin became my husband's dog.

Calvin was the exact same shade of red as our Irish Setter, who died seventeen months ago. When we had to put Pele down, there was another big red dog in the house.

But not yesterday. Or today.

And it's painful.

Ray has always connected in a deep and special way with his dogs, and God has used them to "love on" him, as they say here in the South. So the loss of two beloved four-footed family members in less than a year and a half struck a deep blow of grief to his soul.

I looked forward to his return home so I could just ***be with*** him. I knew I couldn't say anything to make him feel better. Nothing makes a grieving person feel better. But there is comfort in the ***being there*** for someone in pain.

Or in stress. The next morning a friend and I went into a courtroom with another mutual friend to support her in a legal hearing. Several times, our friend said how much she appreciated us ***being there with her*** and for her.

I am mindful of the week of comfort Job's friends brought to him when they sat ***with him*** in his misery, saying nothing in words but everything with their silent, supportive presence (Job 2:13).

I am also mindful of the good news of the Incarnation, the Son leaving heaven to come into our darkness and misery of life in a fallen world, coming as Immanuel: God ***with us.***

And I am mindful of the big "no accident" of the timing of our painful loss: the day after Easter, when we celebrate Immanuel's resurrection from the dead, Who is forever alive and, as He promised, He is ***with us*** always (Matt. 28:20).

***With us*** in pain.

***With us*** in loss.

***With us*** in stress.

Praise God for the power of “withness”!!

This blog post originally appeared at
blogs.bible.org/tapestry/sue_bohlin/the_power_of_withness

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# The Dark Underside of Female Friendships

Cherry and Beth met in a MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers) group at their church, hitting it off immediately. They loved the mutual connection with another mom, understanding the stresses and joys of having small children about the same age. Their weekly play dates became the highlight of each girl’s week. They would chat on the phone every day, comparing notes on what they would be fixing for dinner or what great, repeatable golden nuggets their toddlers spouted. That morphed to texting each other throughout the day, at least once an hour.

The intense sense of connection, of feeling heard and understood and valued, grew to be like an emotional drug for them. Over time, they realized they felt closer to each other than they did to their husbands. They preferred each other’s company to anyone else’s—including their husbands’. Texting throughout the day felt like a lifeline, a continual source of reassurance that all was right with the world. Eventually, caring for their children, the very thing that had brought them together in the first place, started to feel like an unwelcome burden that interfered with their first love—each other. Anyone and any thing that came between them was cause for resentment and annoyance . . . when it didn’t make them outright angry.

This was not normal female friendship. What started out as a lovely gift from God was corrupted into emotional dependency, which Lori Rentzel* defines as "When the ongoing presence and/or nurturing of another is believed necessary for personal security." Emotional dependency happens when one or both people are looking to a person to meet their basic needs for love and security, rather than to God (relational idolatry). It is characterized by a desperate neediness of the other.

Emotional dependency (the other ED) is at the core of most lesbian relationships and a lot of homosexual relationships, but it is not limited to these. Husbands and wives can be emotionally dependent on each other, and so can women friends. When friendship spills over the retaining walls of what is healthy into an enmeshment with another person—when they put all their emotional eggs in the other's basket, so to speak—the relationship has become broken and unhealthy.

My favorite anthem to emotional dependency is Barry Manilow's *Can't Smile Without You*, which sounds romantic until you think about how unhealthy it is:

> You know I can't smile without you,
> I can't smile without you,
> I can't laugh
> and I can't sing,
> I'm findin' it hard to do anything.
> You see, I feel sad when you're sad,
> I feel glad when you're glad,
> If You only knew what I'm going through,
> I just can't smile without you.

Do you see how sick that is?

Emotional dependency feels like, "My happiness, my sense of security, is completely wrapped up in you giving me ''The Three As' I need: attention, affection and affirmation. And if you withhold any of these from me, I will feel insecure,

unloved and abandoned."

When people feel insecure, they feel powerless. And when they feel powerless, they usually resort to some kind of control to get their power back. Manipulation is the glue that holds emotionally dependent people together, since the desperate neediness (remember, "I can't smile without you"?) drives people to do desperate things to make sure the other person is tied to them at the heart. Such as sending close to 100 texts in a single day, to make sure the other person responds to them. And getting paranoid and angry ("Why aren't you answering my texts? I can tell you read them, my phone tells me you read them, why are you avoiding me? What did I do? Why aren't you answering me? TALK TO ME!!!!"). Such as giving gifts and anything else designed to bind the giver to the recipient. Such as using guilt to force the other person to engage ("You're the only person in the world who understands me! You're the only real friend I've ever had. If you leave me I will be completely and utterly alone!").

The good news is that when friendships have overflowed healthy boundaries into emotional dependency, people can repent of their relational idolatry (making another person more important than God) and step back into balance. The other good news is that every aspect of unhealthy, emotional dependency on a person, is healthy dependency on God. One of my friends told me, "This was life changing for me, to realize that I could redirect my unhealthy energies to Jesus and it would make me a much better disciple!" Contacting Him 95 times a day through prayer (no texting necessary) is healthy. Feeling desperately needy toward Jesus is healthy. Giving gifts to Jesus to bind one's heart to Him is healthy. Saying, "If you leave me I will be completely and utterly alone" is true-but praise God, He has assured us that He will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5).

When I have spoken on this topic in churches, I hear, "I expected that the dark underside you'd be talking about was

gossip or something. I never would have expected THIS. Wow. I see how it can happen so easily."

Forewarned is forearmed, I trust.

*Lori Thorkelson Rentzel's little booklet Emotional Dependency, published by InterVarsity Press, is an invaluable and highly practical resource for understanding this issue.

This blog post originally appeared at blogs.bible.org/the-dark-underside-of-female-friendships/ on April 8, 2014.

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# Bohlins in Belarus 2014

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# "Welcome Home": A Biblical Response to the Ukraine Crisis

*March 11, 2014*

It has been an, um, *interesting* experience to be in Belarus, in the former Soviet Union, for two weeks while their next-door neighbor Ukraine was shaken by civil unrest, a takeover by angry citizens, the disappearance of their president who showed up in Moscow, and then their invasion and occupation by

Russian troops. At the conclusion of one Sunday's worship service, the pastor led us in prayer for Ukraine, which had just called up all eligible men for military service and was preparing for war if need be.

One thing that made it um, *interesting*, for us as Americans was to find that we didn't have access to American websites of particular political views, and even Google search was blocked.

I was so thankful for English-speaking friends who were able to give us their perspective on the nearby tinderbox.

I learned that Ukraine is divided between the western portion of the country, which sees itself as European, and the eastern part, which feels more Russian. There is still some unhappiness over Nikita Kruschev's decision to award the Crimean peninsula to Ukraine, which didn't seem like such a big deal when it was all part of the U.S.S.R., before the fall of the Soviet system in 1991.

What struck me about all this was the role of identity and allegiance to nations. As we prayed for the Christians in Ukraine and Belarus and Russia, I thought about the fact that for believers in Jesus, no matter where we live, our identity should always be first citizens of heaven (Phil. 3:20), and our allegiance to Jesus as our head.

As soon as we landed, I tweeted this: "Talked to a young Belarusian who loved his country so much more after visiting Europe. USA, I love you as least 2x as much. #WelcomeHome." I do love and appreciate my country (especially flushable toilet paper and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Oh, and TexMex), but I am very aware that I have much more in common with my believing brothers and sisters around the world whose language I don't understand but whose heart to worship Jesus I share.

A hundred years from today I won't be an American, I will be a

fully alive, unbelievably glorious citizen of heaven. That's my true identity, my greater allegiance, and I'm sticking with it. Even as tears come to my eyes when U.S. officials check my passport and say, "Welcome home."

That is NOTHING compared to the "Welcome home" that awaits me in my ultimate home in heaven.

This blog post originally appeared at
blogs.bible.org/tapestry/sue_bohlin/welcome_home

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# Converting Christians

*February 27, 2014*

Jim Denison recently found a "15-step strategy for converting Christians to atheism" and wrote about it in the Denison Forum on Truth and Culture. Although the article is supposed to help atheists convert Christians, I think that Christians can learn some valuable lessons about how to approach and dialogue with non-Christians.

The article tells atheists to think about building relationships before trying to convert them to atheism. That is certainly good advice for Christians. Jim Denison reminds us that we should earn the right to share the love of Jesus.

The article also encourages atheists to learn the common arguments leveled by theists and the best rebuttals. Again, Christians should always be ready to make a defense (1 Peter 3:15) for the hope that is in us. I have noticed that in many of the debates between Christians and atheists that it is the atheist argument that is often inadequate.

The article also encourages atheists to understand their holy book cover to cover. This would be good advice for Christians interacting with people of other religions or people who say they have no religion. What is their standard of authority? Do they believe in truth? Do they believe in revelation?

Atheists are also encouraged to study basic physics and biology because "believers may form arguments using a flawed interpretation of physics and biology." Actually, Christians can benefit from the great work done by leading scientists, theologians, and apologists who use a proper understanding of science to show the reasonableness of biblical faith.

The article also encourages atheists to get Christians "in the habit of questioning their own faith." Once again, that is a great suggestion for Christians. Jesus often used questions to teach biblical truths. I have found that getting people to question what they believe and why they believe it to be a very effective witnessing tool.

The article is a reminder that Christians aren't the only ones in the world working to convert others. Atheists and apologists for other religions are also working to convert the hearts and minds of Christians. We should be prepared, but also learn some lessons from others about how to win people to Jesus Christ.

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# "Help Me Change From Gay to Straight"

**Hello Sue,**

**I am from Australia and I read your add about how you can help**

**me to change from being gay to being straight.**

**Can you help me please?**

I'm not sure what you meant about "reading my add" since I don't have any advertisements of any kind, but I have written about homosexuality on Probe.org and www.livehope.org. My understanding about how true and lasting change can occur in people is all about a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, who starts the process of setting things right when we put our trust and faith in Him and start the hard work of surrendering to Him. Daily. As a new way of life. Then change happens, all kind of change, because the fruit of the new life we receive from God is Christlikeness in us.

Some people who trust in Jesus discover that as they grow spiritually, receiving His great love and obeying the principles in His word the Bible, old wounds are healed, unmet needs are met through community with God's people, and they are led into new ways of seeing life, themselves, other people, and God Himself. They discover that they are changing, and they can finish growing up, which includes changing the way they think about people of the same sex and people of the opposite sex. They can develop attractions for the opposite sex. Or even just one person of the opposite sex.

There are no exercises for this kind of change. It is a result of a new orientation of submitting one's will to Jesus as boss (or Lord) of one's life, following Him and trusting in Him. The change that comes is the same as learning to move beyond self-centeredness to compassion and a desire to love and serve others. Or learning to move beyond anger to forgiveness. Or learning to move beyond fear and anxiety to the peace of trusting that a loving God is in control. These changes are all reflections of emotional and spiritual maturity and God's work inside us to make us like His Son.

Some people who walk in intimacy with Jesus never develop

attractions for the opposite sex. There are several reasons for this, but the important thing is that God's intention for our lives is far bigger and far more important than sexual attractions. Nonetheless, when God sets all things right, that includes rightly relating to both our own gender and the opposite sex—whether that process comes close to completion in this life or the next.

So, to answer your question, I would point you to Jesus. Not to religion—to Jesus Himself, which includes dynamic relationships with His people, those of us who truly know Him and are living in yieldedness and submission to Him. I would also invite you to investigate the free, confidential online support group for those dealing with unwanted homosexuality at Living Hope Ministries, www.livehope.org.

Thanks for writing.

Sue Bohlin

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# Olympic-Sized "I Infections"

*Feb. 11, 2014*

As the 2014 Olympics continue to unfold, televised by the NBC sports team, anchorman Bob Costa's very public battle with a nasty eye infection continues to be as hot a topic of conversation as which Americans are winning medals. Now both eyes are red, swollen, and painful-looking. As they say here in Texas, bless his heart!

If the spiritual dimension of life were made visible in the

physical realm, most of us would be walking around looking like Bob Costa. His eyeball is inflamed and infected, interfering with his vision and affecting the way people see him. It's a startling picture of our warped and diseased perception through which we experience life. No one is immune, since all of us have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23), and all of us live in a fallen world. We all have a spiritual eye infection.

It's really an "I infection."

We're stupidly, pathologically self-centered and self-absorbed. Our life theme song is "It's All About MEEEEEEEE!" Everything and everyone is evaluated in terms of how it benefits us or costs us. Adding insult to injury, this "I infection" is not only ugly, but it stinks to high heaven. Some people's "I infection" comes from a vaunted sense of entitlement. They were showered with excessive parental adoration, believing that every successful trip to the bathroom deserved a round of applause, that they were owed a celebratory party and gifts for turning another year older, that they should receive a trophy for showing up to games.

Others' "I infection" comes from the desperate fear that at their core, they really don't matter and there's nothing there anyway. They are plagued by a shame that colors all of life in the kind of emotional gunk that blurs Bob Costa's eyes. Everything feels sticky and painful and gross. It just hurts to live.

Still others experience an "I infection" fueled by unhealed wounds that continue to fester and cause pain. It's like walking around with an arrow stuck in your heart, and it doesn't take much for life experiences to brush up against the arrow and cause a fresh wave of pain to an old wound. So they live life in a defensive mode, trying to protect themselves from the relentless presence of unfinished, undealt-with pain.

No matter what the cause of our “I infection,” the cure is the same: we need to come to Jesus, in the humility of abject need and dependence on Him. The “I infection” of selfishness is the symptom of a heart that God calls deceitful above all things and desperately wicked (Jer. 17:9). This kind of heart is incurably diseased-we need a heart transplant. Fortunately, God’s really good at that. He promises in Ezekiel 36:26 to give us a new heart and put a new spirit in us, which He does the moment we trust in Jesus to save us from our sins and our sin-diseased hearts.

When the person with a sense of entitlement develops an attitude of gratitude, disciplining herself to give thanks for the abundant showering of blessings and gifts from Jesus, her now-thankful heart clears up the ugly “I infection.”

When a person infected with shame comes to Jesus, His loving acceptance and grace heals the “I infection” and allows him to see himself as beloved and valuable.

When the ones with unhealed wounds come to Jesus, giving Him access to the places of the heart that hurt and ooze, He pours His love into the wounds as they are exposed to the light by telling their story and then forgiving the ones who caused the wounds. Jesus heals their “I infection” through grieving and forgiving.

Bob Costa may have an eye infection. What’s your “I infection” that you need to take to Jesus?

This blog post originally appeared at
blogs.bible.org/tapestry/sue_bohlin/oiympic-sized_i_infections

# The Problem With Heart Bombs

In August 2012, a construction crew in Munich, Germany discovered an unexploded bomb from WWII. Munitions experts weren't able to defuse it, so they evacuated 3000 residents and detonated the 550-pound bomb.

This was just one of tens of thousands of unexploded bombs that were dropped over Germany during the war and eventually buried, all of them posing a threat.



Bomb exploded in Munich

When construction crews start building, they need to identify buried bombs and deal with them before they explode and cause all kinds of chaos, havoc and pain.

The problem, you see, is that bombs don't go away. They go off.

And that's why it's a good idea to cooperate with the Holy Spirit, inviting Him to shine His light of truth on the unexploded bombs in our hearts and minds: unresolved conflict, unexpressed grief and pain, unconfessed unforgiveness.

A couple of my friends sustained hurtful childhood traumas. No one helped them process the pain and shock of abuse, bringing it out into the light and speaking healing truth to them. Their emotional pain generated anger and frustration that always simmered just under the surface. Triggered by situations, words, or body language that vividly reminded them of how they felt as children, they would explode in rage, destroying relationships and jobs. As they exposed their

“bombs” to the Holy Spirit, He defused them with truth: It wasn’t their fault. It wasn’t right. And His tender compassion ministered grace that brought healing to their hearts.

Another friend was raised in a cult. Evil people in what she called a dark circle planted “bombs” in her young mind—threats of certain hurt and danger if she ever dared to believe in Jesus and connect with Him as a Christian. The unexploded bombs consisted of promises that they would come find her and hurt her, and lies about the true God and about the power of Satan. When she did become a Christ-follower, she dared to invite Him to deal with her bombs. He defused them with the truth that He had conquered Satan and his demons at the cross, disarming them, making a public spectacle of them, and triumphing over them (Col. 2:15).

Yet another friend was mercilessly bullied every single day of her school career. The abusive ridicule and insults she took, day after day, planted bombs in her heart: lies that she was worthless, lesser-than, unloved. When she gets overwhelmed, the bombs can explode into throwing things and even her cat. She is finally facing the need to grieve her still-buried pain and eventually forgive those who bullied her. Grieving and forgiving will defuse my friend’s bombs, but as of today, she sits on a ticking bomb every day of her life.

Some have pushed back against the idea of counseling or recovery ministry, citing Paul: “[B]ut one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead” (Phil. 3:13). But the “what lies behind” is his list of spiritual credentials, not issues of his past. Instead, consider what David wrote in Ps. 139:23-24, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.”

Paraphrased, we might pray, “God, what unexploded bombs are in my heart? Please show me, so You can defuse them and heal my

heart.”

*[I am indebted to the wisdom of my pastor, Todd Wagner, for his tweetable, quotable word of wisdom on bombs.]*

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