Campus Ministry Letter: Could You Get the Door, Please?

I recently received a distress call from an alum who is a student at a local college. His world seemed to be collapsing – stress and anxiety over grades, family, and social life . . . everything was becoming too much for him to handle. He asked if I could come over to talk with him, much like I had done so many times while he was a student here at BSM. I continually tell the kids here at school that I will always be here for them, so keeping true to this promise, I set a time when I would meet up with him.

After dealing with my own stress and anxiety in trying to find a place to park, I walked across the campus to his dorm. As I was walking up to the entrance, I met one of his friends to whom I had been introduced earlier in the year. He was heading out to work but thankfully let me in. Although it's been quite some time since my own college days, dorm life really hasn't changed that much. I came to his room and knocked . . . and knocked . . . and knocked! His friend had said that he had just seen him, so I knew he was home. After literally banging on the door and getting no answer, I finally tried the door and found that it was open. I went in and saw Jack (not his real name, of course) sitting at his desk. He looked up and seemed startled to see me, removing the earbuds that had prevented him from hearing my knocks.

I wasn't sure how private he wanted our conversation to be, but he said he was okay with going to a small coffee shop near campus. We talked for hours about all that was going on in his life. I said very little but simply listened, which I felt was what he truly needed – just to be heard by someone who cared about him and to also listen to himself. At one point in the conversation, I asked about his relationship with God, a relationship that I knew had brought him through some difficult times in the past. At that question, he looked out the window of the coffee shop and seemed to be miles away. "I guess I've just been too busy. I was so good at reading the Bible you gave me . . . praying and going to church . . . it's been a long time! I'm not even sure where to begin!"

We talked about those feelings – about making room for God . . . about letting God into his life. I told him this story:

William Holman Hunt was an English artist in the mid 19th Century. One of his greatest works was a painting of Jesus knocking on a door that was overgrown with weeds and vines, seeming long unopened. The painting was entitled "The Light of the World."

When the painting was first put on exhibition, art critics questioned Hunt, saying that he had forgotten to put some type of handle on the door. "The door is impossible to open, Hunt. There is no way in!" His

response: “I forgot nothing, my friends. This is the door to the human heart, and it can only be opened from the inside.”



I told Jack that he simply needed to take out his earbuds every now and then so that he could hear Jesus knocking. He smiled in agreement. “If you simply take the time and open your heart, Jack, you will be amazed at the difference.”

I have been checking in with Jack often over the past few weeks, and he is doing so much better. Earbuds out, ready to listen with an open heart! I used this story recently at an all school prayer service, sharing the same message, a message that is so important for all of us to remember as we hurry through our days. My prayer for all of us – not only during this Season of Lent but during all the seasons of our lives – is that our hearts be always open, never closed or overgrown, free of any obstacles that might keep God out. May we always be open to God – open to God’s love and to all that we are being called to become. “Someone’s knocking. Could you get the door, please?”

Love and Prayers,
Mike Jeremiah
Campus Minister