

JULIE'S STORY-GLIMPSES OF GOD IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Chocolate

SCRIPTURE STUDY

Romans 7:24-25
Romans 5:21
Romans 8:13

PRAYER FOCUS

Dear Jesus,
I long to be surrendered to You
and find You to be my highest
joy. Help me not be tempted to
place other things above You, but
to live joyously in Your presence
and in Your will.
In Jesus' Name,
Amen



GOOD TO THE LAST DROP

I love chocolate, but chocolate does not love me. This gooey, gorgeous food of the gods is now off limits. Cocoa attacks my central nervous system and causes blisters all over my mouth and nose. It also makes me as hyper as a hamster. My heart is broken and my tummy is sad. Last Saturday I had such a horrific day that I threw caution to the wind and downed three Snickers just for spite. Everywhere I look there are brownies, Oreos, hot fudge sundaes and cocoa puffs. Fudge, my “forbidden fruit” is no longer my friend.

My love affair with all things cocoa started in my childhood. The “Polar Bear” ice cream palace was just blocks from my house. Cars were parked in front its glass and aluminum door like worshippers bowing down to the god of sugar. Children would spill from the cars like ants running lickety-split for a banana split. This was before the days of blizzards and brownie sundaes. These were the glorious days of hand-cranked freezers and peach pieces the size of your fist in frozen heavy cream. This was before the days of lowfat, low sugar, low anything. We licked the dasher and clotted our arteries unhindered by the food and drug administration.

Polar Bear did not carry thirty-one flavors. Kathy, my little sister, and I were thrilled to have five choices because they were fresh, creamy and dreamy. My favorite was rocky road. I was not sure why it was named after pavement, but the marshmallows were squishy and the pecans were luscious. We would lazily sit on the hood of our car and watch the pilgrimage of family after family paying homage to the icy goodness.

I could only have a single dip, so I made it last by carefully squiggling my tongue around the perimeter of the sugar cone. Then, at just the right moment, I would plunge the last few drops down to the cone crevice. We would mourn the loss of the all-to-soon return to our home, where pudding would be our only salvation until the next Saturday evening.

Sins are like fudgesicles. They taste wonderful at first, but they are not good for us. We are attracted to them, enticed by their delectable pleasures. If you think sin is always easy to resist, you haven't lived very long. Sin is often fun and tasty—at least at first. We are tempted everywhere we look. Illicit sex is advocated by the gorgeous and successful. Drugs dull our pain. And pride makes us feel powerful.

Why should we look away? Why not indulge? Eve caved in when she saw the tasty fruit in the Garden. However, the aftertaste of sin is nasty, and its results bring spiritual death. Instead of feeling satisfied, we feel frustrated, isolated and damaged. The 'turkish delight' that Edmond enjoyed in C.S. Lewis' tale "The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe" brought him under the spell of the White Witch. So sin can only bring heartache and bondage.

“Wretched man that I am. But who can deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to god through Jesus Christ our Lord!” Romans 7:24-25

The only way we can be free from sin's grasp is to cry to God for the manna of heaven. His manna completely satisfies—and there is always enough.

“But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 5:20-21

“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.” Romans 8:1-3

- Have you ever had the experience that you felt helplessly embroiled in a sinful habit or attitude? What does God promise in Romans 7:24-25? What does being “dead to sin” look like?

- Sin and grace are contrasted in Romans chapter five. Think of one example where God can take an area of your life that you are vulnerable to sin and provide you just enough grace to overcome its influence. Meditate on how grace can impact your life and protect you from sin. Give thanks to God for His grace-gift.

- Paul describes two laws at work in Romans 8. One is the law of the Spirit of life and one is the law of sin and death. Imagine yourself imprisoned, in bondage. Now picture Jesus, taking off His robe as judge, declaring you to be forgiven, and kneeling beside you to pray for you. Picture Him unlocking your chains and setting you free!