

The Lure Of What I Don't Have: A Confession

It's been twenty months...[twenty months](#)...since I've really let myself trip, stumble, and generally get all out of sorts over stupid things.

Well, let's be honest: it's been twenty months since I've decided to *tell* you about it.

This Lent I gave up shopping at three of my favorite places: Costco [where each item deposited in your cart is about \$10], Target [where you want to spend about \$10 but easily dole out \$210], and the mall [where you skip the math and get out the plastic].

Five weeks later, I think all this non-shopping has started to catch up with me. I fear I may have developed a few ticks and eye twitches during this off-season, something that has only worsened as I peruse the latest Crate & Barrel catalog and faithfully dog ear every-other-page [as if I really *could* buy all these things if I wanted, but it's just a matter of locating my purse that's stopping me].

Sheez.

I'll admit it: I look around and still love this house, but I'm starting to see the flaws more than the smile lines. I'm wishing for new countertops...and an ice maker in a fridge with a little more consistency than the slacker we have now. I can imagine a new backsplash with glossy subway tiles like you see on [Dear Genevieve](#). I can effortlessly imagine away our stained carpet and replace it with the gleam of wall-to-wall hickory floors.

I know this discontent is shallow and worthless and completely without perspective. I know that the "Finley Pendant Lamp" I'd like above our dining room table isn't going to make me happy, give me a flat stomach, make me funnier, or help me be a better friend. [*Although I would like to argue that it would make our dinners a lot more stylish*].

So why this lure? Why so many dog-eared pages?

I think I'm fooled into believing that if I own the Stoneware Potluck Bakers in "Paprika, Turquoise, and Yellow" that I'll actually bake tasty dinners. And possibly be invited to potlucks.

I'm fooled into thinking that if I have the vases on page 18, I really will make more of an effort to arrange cut flowers *weekly*. Maybe even start a garden.

I'm drawn into this world of order, cleanliness, and new possibilities--as though an office desk equals a book contract or a chaise lounge equals the freedom to...*lounge*.

I'm drawn into thinking that these things would give me what I want and what I think I need.

And so this cycle of mental wrestling and pseudo-shopping bring me back to Lent--back to the reason I'm not shopping and back to the reason why I shouldn't even be *looking* at catalogs: because during this season of preparation, I need to work on my heart. **Work on desires that aren't evil or sinful in themselves, but that give birth to so much more than I want floating around in my brain.**

Balancing these things and staying twitch-free is something I'll probably never master. For some it's food and others it's cigarettes and still others, alcohol. For me, this year, it's Crate & Barrel.

But always, there's the promise of grace. And this Lent, I'm realizing just how much I need it.

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What are you learning about yourself this Lent? How are you being stretched or changed?