

What Toothpaste & Movies Have to Teach Us About Increasing our Faith

Toothpaste

There's a commercial that announces, "**If you're not whitening, you're yellowing.**"

Have you seen it?

I stared at the words the first time they popped up and wondered, "Really? What about staying the same?" (Of course I went and stood in front of the mirror examining my own pearly whites *ivorys* for the next ten minutes.)

Movies

It reminds me of that scene in *The Shawshank Redemption*. Red and Andy are sitting alone in the yard dreaming about what life would be like in Mexico -- a place where the ocean "has no memory." Andy says that he wants to buy an old boat and start fishing. He wants to live on the beach and forget about Shawshank.

After Red chides him for spending too much time thinking about such hopeless dreams, Andy sucks in his breath and declares, "**Either get busy living, or get busy dying.**" And when he gets up and walks away, you suck in your own breath worried for his life behind those condemning bars. *You know something's getting busy...you're just not sure what it will be.*

Jesus

Years ago my friend Lyndsey once proclaimed, "**You're either growing closer in your relationship with the Lord, or you're falling farther away.**"

I sat there, probably furrowing my brow and looking much like I did through calculus, pondering whether that could really be true. After all, ***must we always be growing? Isn't there something to be said for...marinating??***

Is there a "staying the same" when it comes to our faith walk?

As I get older and continue to grow and mature in my faith, I'm starting to realize that **growth is necessary**. No one wants stunted growth in their child, and no one wants the dates to end once the marriage is official. Likewise our relationship with Jesus **should and must continue to**

mature after we first say "yes" to him.

It is so easy to become complacent in our comfortable world. We don't have to worry about [our church being destroyed](#). We don't have to worry about [being attacked](#). We don't have to worry [going to prison or facing a death penalty for our faith](#).

And suddenly, almost before we realize what's going on, "following Jesus" is reduced down to a box to check; a movement to join. Our lives remain unchanged, our hearts barely moved.

Is that really all it means to follow Christ? And perhaps just as important, is that a compelling picture for non-believers?

Christ's warning

In Matthew 15:8, Jesus throws the crowd under the bus when he says, "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me."

Could that be me today? Could it be you?

- Have I become luke-warm?
- Have I decided that what I already know about Jesus is enough?
- ...That the flannel-graphs from Sunday School will carry me through life's storms?
- That the Bible is irrelevant and not worthy of serious study?
- If I were a Christian in China or Iran..*would I be arrested because my life shows that I am a disciple of Christ?*

I pray that you and I would be prompted by toothpaste and movies this week, realizing that life in Jesus means *increasing* in our faith -- not staying the same. **May we join with the apostles in saying to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"** (Lk 17:5).