

1st Day of Summer Ramblings: 2020

New arrivals to an early morning coffee shop group: They invite you to “join them” and you do. However, you soon figure out it is a lot like going to church, i.e., “you are welcome to sit anywhere.” It is not long after until you realize the seat you occupy has an invisible name plate attached. Some folks take it with a grain of salt (which we will comment on momentarily), with a “well, it is just this once. I will arrive earlier next time and re-establish my place in the greater scheme of things.” To others it is a disruption in their Feng Shui (Chinese: 風水), i.e., traditional practice originating from ancient China, which claims to use energy forces to harmonize individuals with their surrounding environment). Taking the practice to a greater height, each participant begins to arrive earlier and earlier, until both parties are standing at the door anxiously awaiting the turning of the lock signaling the opening of the establishment. Who gets to go in first? Well, the one who arrived first, and so pops the weasel.

So, what about the “grain of salt”? When an individual first arrives at a well established gathering, it is like a grain of salt, i.e., one grain of salt will go undetected by the consumer (I know, I know, someone will affirm otherwise, yada, yada, yada). However, if you add a grain of salt everyday it is just a matter of time until the original healthy meal is over-seasoned, and your blood pressure is high. Once you come to the realization of what has happened, great strength of self-control is essential to return to the original “lack of seasoning:” kind of like sin, one granule at a time.

When the affects of sin are considered, it is well established that beginning something is a whole lot easier than stopping. The body can assimilate whatever is required. I heard tell, “If you eat something ten times you will develop a liking” (here is one of those exceptions: unseasoned Brussels Sprouts).

Maybe you have experienced this in your life: peer pressure may have motivated you to inhale a good bit of smoke into your lungs. The first few times the throat and lungs rebel, then over an extended period of time, the body develops a need. Then the day comes when you are ready to “quit.” Well, the mind may say quit, but the body says, “Not so fast!” and so goes the story.

People, and we are all people, when left to the natural man, have battled with the “just this once” scenario: “I can quit anytime I’m ready.” The problem is that folks are not ready until the habit has been well seated, so to speak. It will take self-control. Self-control requires priorities, i.e., love this more than that: “Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good” (Rom. 12:9). Thus, “Great peace have they that love thy law; And they have no occasion of stumbling” (Psa. 119:165).

What does this have to do with the coffee shop, the Feng Shui, or finding a new place to sit when assembling with the brethren? Probably nothing: just cut back on the salt and chose your habits well. ret