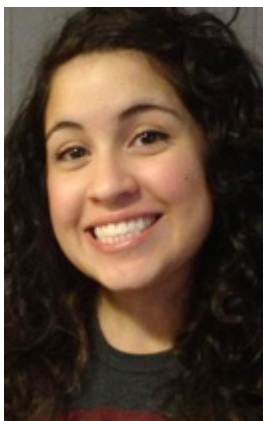


SFA: Conquering fears and seeing God at work

February 17, 2015

While sitting in an on-campus Starbucks at Stephen F. Austin State University with a friend, I saw Melissa a few tables away. Melissa is a friend who happens to be atheist, and she attended our Coffee and Doughnuts ministry on campus last semester.



Kirstie Kibbel didn't want to leave my friend Gracie alone at our table, so I decided wait awhile and then stop by Melissa's table to visit when we got ready to leave. I thought I had plenty of time, since Melissa looked like she was settled in to spend quite some time at the coffee shop.

Imagine my alarm when I saw Melissa begin to put away her books, gather her things, stand and begin to walk away. I felt the opportunity slipping between my fingers. The students in charge of orchestrating Coffee and Doughnuts had told me Melissa and her friend, Ashley, hadn't been at Coffee and Doughnuts this semester. So, I wasn't sure when I would see her again.

I knew what I had to do—yell across the coffee shop to get her attention. For some, this is a simple feat. For me, it caused my stomach to churn and

my palms to sweat. I didn't have much time to think about what I should do, because she was almost getting too far away to hear. I cupped my hands around my mouth and yelled her name. She turned, smiled and waved.

I knew I had to go talk to her. I told Gracie I would be back in a second, and then I got up and went over to Melissa. She told me both she and Ashley wouldn't be able to attend Coffee and Doughnuts this semester because of their work schedule.

Discouraged

I felt discouraged. I had prayed and prayed for a way to build a friendship with Melissa and Ashley. Now, the avenue the Lord had provided to build that friendship had been taken away. I saw a chance to further our friendship by asking if I could give her my phone number. She said "yes." I walked away, excited to hear from her, and then it dawned on me. I gave her my number and didn't get hers. Maybe she'd never contact me. Our friendship rested in Melissa's hands, with the decision to text me or not. I felt defeated in a way, but still grateful to the Lord for the opportunity and courage to reach out.

I went about my usual evening activities, only to hear a "ding" sound from my pocket. I checked my phone, and it was a message: "Hey this is Melissa from Coffee and Donuts!" My hands flew up in victory, and I praised the Lord.

God is greater

God reminded me of a couple of things that evening. First, be obedient, even if you think you will look like a fool. Second, God is full of surprises. I thought the fate of my friendship with Melissa and Ashley rested in the hands of Melissa but, of course, God reminded me he is greater and bigger. I didn't think I could yell across a crowded Starbucks.

I was afraid Melissa would never text the weird girl who yelled her name in a crowded campus coffee shop. But the Lord revealed himself. He has been so present since the beginning. The Lord is good, and he desires to share that with us. And he wants us—his children—to share it with the people around us.

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