



I Am My Own Bully

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Recently I had a nightmare of sorts.

It was 1:40 am. I woke up from a nightmare of sorts. I was running from a young man who was chasing me down to beat me. He trapped me behind a building with a bat in his hands. He was moments away from pulverizing me when I turned around to appeal to him – “when are you going to let me be your friend?” I looked into his face and it was me at 11 years of age. I was the bully.

I laid in bed perplexed and then it came to me. At 11-years of age a family member, by their admission, tried to kill me. The face on the boy, me, was out of a picture the local paper took with both of my arms in casts.

After I got up, I came down to my office to sort it out. Just for the habit of it, I opened my emails – only to discover a precious friend stating confirmation of the dream itself. I immediately thought – I AM my own bully.

Allow me to share a powerful story.

By the time I got to high school, I was fearful beyond words could describe. My twin brothers and eldest sister were seniors. Rejection continued by my classmates but this time, I had my siblings to protect me. In fact, I was accepted into a few senior activities on a regular basis, which was a “no-no” in this school. There was a sophomore, who we will call “Mr. G,” who took it upon himself to make my life miserable – keep in mind that each time that he did, my brothers would often come to my defense. Little did I realize at the time that my siblings would be graduating that year and I would have to fend for myself once they were gone. That is exactly what happened. The next year I was stuffed and locked in lockers, beat up more times than I can remember and teased

relentlessly. One experience stands out above the rest – one afternoon I looked out the study hall window and watched the football team attempt to put my car on its roof. I went and got the principal and to that, he said, *boys will be boys*.

Another moment that is hard to forget is on a particular Saturday night, I went cruising with my buddies (fellow rock band members) in “Mr. G’s town.” Sure enough, he and a couple of his cronies began following us as usual. I told my friend to stop the car, let me get out, take the beating, so we could enjoy the remainder of the evening. We stopped, I got out and yes Mr. G (drunk) began beating me. This time I immediately sensed it was different. He beat me so adversely, that his friends told him to stop because he was killing me. My mother taught me a principle regarding facing your enemy, take the beating, turn the other cheek, ask them if they are done and never walk away from a fight. Well, on this evening, as in all the previous beatings, I did exactly that but this time he had beat me so severely that I had become temporally blind & delusional. With major open wounds, being covered in blood, I searched for him in my blindness, following his abusive voice, I found him and asked him if he was finished. With that, he hit me one more time, his buddies pulled him off me and off they went. To this day I bear scar tissue in my ribcage reminding of this evening.

The next morning, I told my mother what happened. She was quick in her response, *“this is why I call you ‘my little Joseph.’”*

After Mr. G’s graduates, my senior year was almost rejection free. After I graduated and found a job, I get a knock at my apartment door on a Sunday morning. I open the door and guess who was standing there? That’s right, Mr. G and his best friend. Thinking this was the day he was going to finish me off, I did the right thing and invited him in. He proceeded by asking me where I got such strength to face him throughout all the beatings and have the gall to ask if I was finished. I told him he wouldn’t believe me even if I told him. He demanded that I give him the reason – so I did. I told him that I had a born-again experience when I was 16 years of age and I learned through the Bible that born-again Christians are required to turn the other cheek and attempt to turn their enemies into friends. His reply? Well, it shocked me a bit – he said, *“You are more of a man than I will ever be.”* He then took me to lunch and told me I was welcome in “his town” anytime. Since I had a hard time believing him, I did exactly that. The next weekend I drove over to “his town,” walked into the bar that his family-owned and ordered a drink. The entire bar began harassing me in a manner I had become quite accustomed. Mr. G got up on a chair and announced loudly, *“If anyone ever lays a hand on Steve in the future, they will have me to deal with.”* I remain amazed to this day, and weepy, this happened. That was the last day I have memories of being harassed by my school peers.

Not long ago, one of Mr. G’s friends told me that Mr. G gave his life to Christ shortly after that Sunday reconciliation. Today Mr. G is known in his community as a Christian

leader. I am a bit emotional in saying this but if all those beatings were for his salvation – then every ounce of pain & suffering was worth it!

Here is my new revelation regarding my dream.

Here I am 64 years of age, just now making one of the most important discoveries in my life. Buried deep in my flesh, a covert patterned began to grow – obviously without me knowing it. I adopted a new flesh pattern of becoming my own bully. Worse yet. I integrated this bully mentality into my Christian walk. It manifested itself in bullying people into accepting my worldview. Don't get me wrong. I did this in a Christianized fashion that put the blame and guilt onto the listener. This method of madness is what keeps me from this recent revelation.

I am not known for being a man who extends grace as my first response. I typically resort to correction and admonishment. Today I realize, my Christianized way of pushing people is nothing less than bullying them. The irony became, I am my own bully. My flesh literally adopted the method of harm that affected me to most in my childhood.

Satan, you are a liar AND I am already free from your not so hidden deception!

I am still grieved over this reality. I now believe that many of my actions toward others had a bully mentality. For this, if I offended any of my readers by this deplorable act, I humbly seek your forgiveness. Today I realize this is the reason I push people. My flesh continues to run from this bully – me. It is certainly the reason why “gracing” people is so difficult.

In conclusion. The Lord made it clear to me that my style of preaching, teaching and writing must remain potent, strong, immovable, and forthright – but from here on out, it needs to be seasoned with Grace.

I would appreciate your input on this confession.