

What Is Your Centerpiece?

“My indoctrination into the Animal House began in the eighth grade.”—Hal Rosser

Hal’s teen and college years were like many of ours—no academic motivation and no ambition beyond having fun. In his case, however, drinking became the centerpiece of the “fun.”

After college, and getting serious about a career, Hal joined Citicorp where he achieved meteoric success over the ensuing twenty years. In 1995, he left Citicorp to start a mid-market private equity firm with two Citicorp colleagues.

Hal’s was a business “success story.” Hal’s drinking had persisted heavily throughout that whole period. Alcoholism could have destroyed his career and marriage. But he had a humiliating awakening the night of the closing party for his new firm. Imagine passing out in front of your peers, partners and investors; being dumped into a limo with a new junior associate; getting sick all over him on the way home; stumbling up the stairs at home at 3:00 AM; and lying to your wife about your condition.

In Hal’s case, that was the last night he ever drank. He woke up the next morning and said, “I can’t do this anymore.” Others have said the same thing but have been unable to stop their destructive habits. So what was different in Hal’s case? He would tell you that it was his wife, Rita. Knowing that her husband was in trouble, despite outward appearances to the contrary, she had been faithfully and silently praying for him for eight years. Who knows what would have happened to Hal, his marriage and his career if Rita hadn’t been standing in for him before the Lord while he was unable and unwilling to do that for himself?

Hal went to see a pastor friend the next day. He told him that any time in his life he had ever done anything he regretted, it was alcohol related. The pastor said “you have an easy decision,” and it was. Rita took him to a church service shortly thereafter. Hal gave his life to Christ. He traded in his dependence on alcohol for dependence on Christ. Hal has gone on to live a productive life based on that relationship. He is a completely different man today than he was then. He is certainly a different man than he would have become if Christ hadn’t become his Centerpiece.

Most of us don’t have the kind of crisis-moment that Hal had—one which drives us to our knees and demands that we change or continue to spiral downward. Some of us don’t have wives who see us in trouble and pray for us. Without Christ as our Centerpiece, it is usually the case that unproductive, unattractive habits and attributes become more prominent over time and our lives become smaller and less meaningful—and we don’t even realize it is happening.

It doesn’t need to be that way—and it doesn’t require an epiphany moment (such as Hal’s) to take God more seriously; to turn our attention to Him; and to begin living our lives with Him rather than around Him or despite Him.

- Have you ever been faced with an epiphany moment and decision point like Hal’s?
- How has God replaced bad habits with His priorities and attributes in your life over the years?

Click on the link to watch Hal’s 8 minute story

<https://vimeo.com/350586538>