

Conner Toups Essay

All throughout my life I have been shown mercy, but there is one particular instance that speaks to me the most. Pushing the restart button at this moment would have definitely saved me from dire consequences. In the years since this incident occurred, I have certainly grown into a much stronger person and a person that understands how foolish certain choices are.

In my eighth grade year at Holy Cross School in New Orleans, Louisiana I wasn't the most popular or well-liked kid in my class. Of course I had a few friends here and there, but for the most part I still hadn't settled in at school. It was my second year at Holy Cross and I still was trying to adjust to the environment I was completely foreign to. This was also my first year riding the bus to school in the mornings and back in the afternoons to my bus-stop. One day in March, I was on my way home from school on the bus after just having P.E. class. A classmate of mine was sitting next to me and he was sticking his middle finger out to the drivers on the side of the bus as a joke. Being an immature eighth grader, I thought it would be cool if I did it too and maybe I'd find a close friend to help my transition into school go a little more smoothly. Just as the bus was crossing over the Greater New Orleans Bridge (GNO), I decided to stick my middle finger up to a person in a car alongside the bus. The driver then proceeded to drive up to the bus driver and follow the bus all the way until we got to our bus stop. My heart was racing a million miles a second, and it was then when I truly realized that what I did was wrong and not a good way to try and make friends. Once the bus had come to a stop, my bus driver got off to talk to the man and then he came back on and started to ask who did it. When he started to walk through to the back of the bus, I was shaking and scared out of my mind. I then decided it was time to fess up, and so I told him that I was the one who did it. He then allowed the rest of the kids to get off the bus and he kept me on for a moment, telling me that I should tell the

disciplinarian tomorrow what happened. I went home and was completely distraught on what I was to do. I pondered, “What if I tell them and I get suspended?” or “What if I don’t tell them and then I end up getting expelled?” I got to school the next morning and decided I was going to go to the office at lunch and explain what happened. During my second period class, both of the disciplinarians showed up and pulled me out of class. They proceeded to tell me that the man who I showed the middle finger to was an under-cover police officer and his two year old child was in the back seat. My heart was nearly broken in half when I heard that and I knew I had to ask for forgiveness for doing that. I was sent back to class with two Saturday-School detentions and when I got home, I called the man to express how truly sorry I was for doing that to him and his son. Thankfully, he understood completely that I didn’t mean to be so rude to him and that I was just acting like a foolish child. To this day, I wish that I could go back and hit a restart button.

After that incident my idea of mercy completely shifted. I thought that mercy was just something that you received from God after confession, but I then realized it was something much more. This man had no clue who I was and had no idea what my background was and he still showed me mercy. This instance taught me that mercy isn’t just something you can get from God, but it is something you can receive only when you’re truly sorry for what you’ve done and that it can come from someone other than God. After realizing that someone could forgive me for such an awful act, I finally started to grasp the concept of mercy. Ever since that incident I have come to a better understanding of just how important mercy is in life and that without it, there would never be any peace.