

I shared with my daughter, Tara about my recent birthday dinner experience. While out to dinner I experienced an unexpected emotion. I was taken to a very upscale restaurant on 59th street by a good friend. She did a wonderful job in planning the evening, since she was use to upscale restaurants. I must admit, the last upscale restaurant I dined at was one she took me to months earlier, prior to that, decades ago.

When the waiter came to the table, my friend asked him to explain the menu to me, her exact words; "he needs help with his order."

No big deal, right? Friends, I felt intimidated. Pride in another suit. I became visibly uncomfortable, which in turn made her visibly uncomfortable.

The waiter was polite enough, but I knew my tone could have been warmer. I just didn't know what to do with my 'uncomfortableness'.

It became a complicated first half hour. So I decided to be transparent; to explain what I was experiencing. Pastors are not used to explaining matters like this, however, I confessed, full disclosure. I said that I was intimidated and that I felt emasculated by her telling another man that I needed his help.

She responded. Pastor Westbrook, that's what waiters do. Isn't it? My response, a sheepish, "yes".

There in this very upscale restaurant, surrounded by heathens, I was faced with confronting my walls. I wanted to ask, Lord why now? Why here? Why me?

Most of our walls are self constructed, emotional in nature, and destructive if not removed. I was straight up intimidated, and couldn't find an emotional exit. I somehow knew I wouldn't have taken one, even if I could. I wanted to explain the battles I have. I wanted her to see my fierce fight against pride; against insecurity. I wanted her to know; maybe it could be cathartic, if I came clean. I mean saints, I completely fessed up. "Yeah, I was intimidated, and I felt like I was the only "African American" in a restaurant surrounded by Klansman; and to top that off, I left home that evening, and forgot to get dressed. Yep, I felt naked.

Why, because I am use to being in control. When I read the menu with names of foods I couldn't pronounce, although the English translation was neatly under the Italian names, I felt lost.

And when she asked the waiter, who was nothing but professional, to help me, telling him that I needed his help to order, (which I did), I responded poorly.

Will I go back there? You bet your last penny I will. Do I regret going there? Not for one moment.

Life for me these days is about finding out different things about myself. If you're with someone who is caring, someone who is understanding, as I was, you learn from it.

Once I told my friend everything I was experiencing, beloved, that weight lifted immediately. It just left! I praise God I don't stutter anymore. That would have been a scene I may have never recovered from.

God is great! I received a great text from my friend this morning.

"He, who kneels before God, can stand before anyone."

Would you believe I almost got angry all over again?
Who is she to suggest I don't kneel? That I don't pray? Just kidding. It blessed my heart.

God rocks!

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