

COLLOQUY

A CONVERSATION WITH GUTENBERG COLLEGE



Summer 2024

2 Independence of Mind
-Chris Swanson

4 Exegesis, Love, and
Suffering
-Eliot Grasso

6 Graduate Talks
-James Hall
-Emma Hollmann
-Emily Grose



COLLOQUY

A CONVERSATION WITH GUTENBERG COLLEGE

SUMMER 2024 • VOLUME 6, NUMBER 4

Editor Robby Julian

Colloquy Team Eliot Grasso, Brian Julian, Chris Swanson

Cover Art Erin Greco (Class of 2010)

Other Photography Will Dowdy (Class of 2023), Erin Greco (Class of 2010)

Layout Robby Julian

Proofreaders Bob Blanchard, Karen Peters (Class of 2012), Kay Smith

Colloquy [kol-uh-kwee] is published quarterly by Gutenberg College.



Gutenberg College offers an outstanding four-year liberal arts education in the Great Books tradition in an environment respectful of biblical Christianity.

President Chris Swanson, Ph.D.

Vice President Eliot Grasso, Ph.D.

Academic Dean Thomas (Charley) Dewberry, Ph.D.

Website gutenberg.edu

© 2024 Gutenberg College, Inc.

Permission to reprint in whole or in part is hereby granted, provided the following credit line is used: Reprinted by permission from **Colloquy**, a publication of Gutenberg College, gutenberg.edu.

Subscription free upon request.

Visit gutenberg.edu/colloquy to subscribe.

Gutenberg is supported primarily through individual, tax-exempt contributions.



Independence of Mind

By President Chris Swanson

Americans have always seen independence as one of our primary virtues and strengths. Emerson’s essay “Self-Reliance” was, for over a hundred years, a must-read for every educated person. The maverick, the entrepreneur, the genius, and the self-made man—those are the American heroes. Current stories and movies are replete with underdogs who fight against the odds. We praise and admire anyone who is self-sufficient or stands against the status quo. Independence is obviously revered, but in that “spirit of independence,” let us explore this American value and ask if the reverence is always warranted. Perhaps there are some forms of independence worthy of censure instead of praise.

“Independence” is one of those words, like “freedom,” that carries incredibly positive connotations but can mean opposite things depending on what we are independent *from*. For example, contrast independence from *morality* with independence from *sin*. “Independence of mind” is similarly equivocal. Like freedom of action, independence of mind is neither good nor bad in and of itself. Independence of mind is good when we are independent from false and bad beliefs and bad when we are independent from true and good ones. In the rest of this essay, I shall take independence of mind to mean the ability to discern the true from the false and the good from the bad. Thus to be independent of mind does not mean that we reject the status quo for the sake of exerting independence but that we reject the “world.” In the words of Paul, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed

by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:2, NASB).

The Problem

Independence of mind is, unfortunately, not so easy to achieve. In a strict sense, it is *impossible* to be independent of everything. To think and communicate, we depend on shared language, ideas, culture, and values. Without them, we would be helpless, infantile. To be truly and fully independent of all past ideas would mean we could have no ideas at all.

It is normal and appropriate to adopt a language and a set of ideas from previous generations and depend on them. That is how we were built. Children are sponges for information. They hunger for it and delight in it. Our minds are very much dependent on a whole host of beliefs and modes of thought we have received—often uncritically—from parents, friends, and the wider culture. Because of the way we learn, our most basic beliefs are most often tacit and unacknowledged. They appear to us simply as “the way things are,” and we cannot fathom any other way of being or thinking. Thus we are in a double bind. Not only are we deeply dependent on our inherited beliefs, but we are also largely unaware of them.

Of course, all is well and good if the beliefs and culture we have inherited are good and true. If our parents’ generation was wise and without reproach, and if we accept their wisdom and authority, then we will be independent of the bad and the false. But we must humbly admit that both our heritage and our culture

contain false beliefs and worldliness at a very fundamental level. Consider a comparison between medieval and current views. Today, due to American utilitarian ethics that values maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain, people see the coexistence of a good God and suffering and evil as a major stumbling block. The medieval world had no problem with this. In medieval times, chastity before marriage was of supreme value. Today it is all but abandoned. These are fundamental differences about important issues, and they can't both be right.

Still, most of us believe in our bones that we do have it right. But with regard to that belief, the Bible is most insistent that we do not. Consider Israel. If ever there was a culture that had a chance to be righteous, it was Israel. But even the Israelites, who were guided and taught directly by God, became worldly: "Then the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Baals, and they forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed themselves down to them; thus they provoked the LORD to anger" (Judges 2:11-12). And they did this not once but over and over again. The Israelites were surrounded by polytheism, and they absorbed it. The sad fact is that human beings and human culture, in all times and places, need redemption.

How are we to navigate our inevitable inheritance of flawed beliefs and values? How can we renew our minds and avoid conformity with the world?

At the heart of the problem is sin, ours and our culture's. And we must look to God to find redemption and sanctification. He must transform our hearts to want what He wants and to seek the truth. He will guide us to Himself despite our rebellion. But we play our part in that process, in the journey that He takes us on. We must uncover those beliefs, habits, and desires that are of the world. We must strive for wisdom and discernment. We must strive for independence of mind.

That striving can be directed in three different directions. We can strive to understand God—who He is and what He wants. We can strive to understand our

culture and the many beliefs that it has handed down to distinguish between the holy and unholy. And we can strive to understand ourselves and what motivates us so that we might repent and seek mercy.

God

If independence of mind is discerning the good from the bad, we must start with understanding God, the ultimate good. He has given us a foundation for understanding Him in the Bible, especially in the life and teaching of Jesus. Although we often learn about God through teaching and reading books, those sources are based on His revelation. Reading and studying the Bible, then, is a key way to obtain independence of mind.

But the Bible is very hard to read and understand. There is no book in all history that has been read as carefully as the Bible. But there is also no book in all history with more differing interpretations and modes of interpretation. As Christians, part of our cultural inheritance is the variety of doctrines and church traditions. We are dependent upon our church tradition and teaching. Now, traditions are indeed an important part of our understanding and can be very helpful, but no tradition is infallible. In all of our traditions, seeds of the world have been planted and have grown up. Therefore, part of our job of seeking God is to build skills to be excellent readers of the Bible who understand context and genre and can discern the strengths and weaknesses of our traditions. To read and interpret the Bible using the lens of our tradition is a common and understandable practice, but it does not allow us to critique our tradition. We straddle the tension of being dependent on our forebears and yet independent as well. This important tension is an inevitable part of life.

To become excellent readers requires practice and guidance, like any skill. One way to gain skill in the art of careful and close reading is to practice reading other difficult books for which we have no lens. Working with others in a book group or a discussion is also a great way to improve our reading since we get input from others on our thoughts. Whatever means we find, we should always remember to try to read God's Word according to the intentions of the bibli-

cal authors so that we may better understand Him and His ways.

Culture

A second way to gain independence of mind is to explore and understand the culture we live in. Like water in the fish's tank, culture is part of the background of our lives that we do not think about. It forms the tacit assumptions that frame our thoughts, actions, questions, and observations. To take our assumptions from tacit to articulate requires work.

One way to reveal our own assumptions is by comparison. Other cultures and subcultures differ from ours, and by obtaining an understanding of them, we can make a comparison. If we are willing to be self-reflective, we can find not only the glaring defects in other cultures (which is easy) but also those in our own (which is hard).

Another way to reveal our cultural assumptions is to examine where they came from. There is a long conversation about the big ideas of life: Who is God? What is man? How shall we live together? That "Great Conversation" is full of winding and crossing paths with ruts and dead ends. But those paths extend into our beliefs today, infiltrating our lives like polytheism did in ancient Israel. The Israelites believed in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but they also believed in the other gods. We, like them, make idols of things like economics, politics, and technology, which all have long and complex histories. By examining our past, we see our current ideas in context. We recognize that our cultural assumptions are one set among many. We can find the reasons why our culture turned here and doubled back there. We can discern better whether our beliefs that follow those of the past are going in the right or wrong direction.

Another tool is to look at the consistency of cultural perspectives. Consider some examples. Marxism promises freedom from economic oppression imposed by rich industrialists and has led to economic oppression imposed by the state. Many in our culture say that ethics are a matter of personal choice but also claim that denying personal choice is universally unethical. Perhaps closer to home, many see technologically driven

(Continued on page 4)

Independence of Mind

Continued from page 3

economic growth as a path to better living but don't connect technological development to elevated levels of anxiety, isolation, and drug use. Taking an honest and clear-eyed look at the consistency of our own culture can help us on the path to discerning the true and the false, to independence of mind.

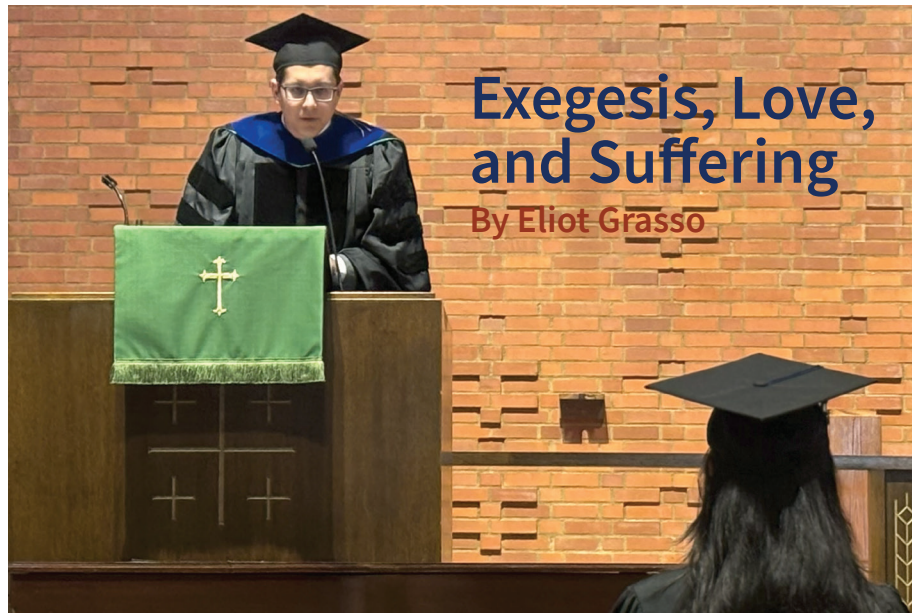
The Self

The third way to strive for independence of mind is to examine ourselves. This is by far the most difficult of the three—not with regard to intellect but with regard to will. While the intellect is useful in understanding the Bible and our culture, it is our desires that impede our examination of ourselves.

Consider the great thinkers of the past who wrote the enduring works of Western civilization. They were brilliant men and women who penetrated into the ideas of their time and offered deep insights on the big questions of life. But for all of their insight, many of them pursued the false over the true because they did not *want* the path of faith. The path of faith requires humility, self sacrifice, and reverence for God. By contrast, the path of the world, which has been trodden by many of the great thinkers, values grandeur and making a mark. They may have achieved some form of independence, but, to the extent it was independence *from* God, it was actually slavery to the world. We may be striving to understand the Bible and striving to understand our culture, but the last step of seeking independence from our sin is the hardest and most critical. We must desire to see our own failures and *want* to follow the right path. We must throw ourselves on the mercy of God to free us from the slavery of sin by looking inward in repentance. We must want to follow that path to the exclusion of all others.

Conclusion

Independence of mind is of great worth—as long as we are seeking to be independent of the false and the bad. It requires great effort over a lifetime. It is not for the weak willed, for we will encounter innumerable wrong turns, enticements, and persuasions. It takes skills



Vice president and tutor Dr. Eliot Grasso presented this address at the Gutenberg College Commencement on June 14, 2024.

...

The seniors have invited me to speak to them on this occasion, their graduation from Gutenberg College. It has been a great joy and a tremendous privilege to be able to participate in their education and in their lives. I want to take this time to draw some connections between three important aspects of their time at Gutenberg: exegesis, love, and suffering.

What is exegesis?

Exegesis is the art of interpretation. Interpretation is a skill whose aim is to make sense of things and figure out what is true. As such, interpretation is fundamental to how we live. All of our words and actions flow out of our interpreta-


tion of the world—what we think is true about it and why. It takes courage to change our own minds and fortitude to not blindly follow the crowd.

Such a path may seem daunting, but there is good news. What marks the believer is not how far one gets on the path but rather that one follows it. Rooting out all of our false notions, bad habits, and misunderstandings is not possible. It takes the Spirit of God working in us to open our eyes and hearts, helping us to humbly reflect on our beliefs. God's grace is not reserved for the intellectual or for those who have right doctrine. Just the opposite. It is for those who want

and seek Him. To follow that path, we need help. We can encourage each other, work together in the quest, study the Bible together and explore our cultural history, and hold each other accountable in friendship.

The world is a complex place full of complex people. Many pieces must be assessed in our process of figuring out what is true. Interpretation is a skill that requires a tremendous amount of practice. Every situation may involve patterns that are familiar to us, but ultimately each situation and person is slightly different. We use the skill of interpretation to figure out how to proceed in complex situations.

Ultimately, one's interpretation rests on one's assumptions and moral commitments. If God is a fact, I will interpret reality one way. If He is a fiction, I will interpret it another. If man is merely an animal, I will proceed in one fashion. If man bears the image of God, I will proceed in another. If pleasure is the standard of goodness, I will proceed thusly. If good-

My favorite saying of Søren Kierkegaard is "Hardship *is* the road." Kierkegaard meant that hardships are not obstacles to overcome along the road to get to the destination. Instead, enduring hardships in faith is the essence of what it means to be a Christian. In the same way, our striving for independence is not for the sake of "arriving." It *is* the road. 

ness is something higher than mere pleasure, I will proceed otherwise. Without secure existential moorings, we can drift in a sea of propaganda, lies, and other forms of nonsense. With secure moorings, we can use the art of interpretation to help us see who we are, why we are here, and how to live. If we accept that the Bible is true and that Jesus is the Christ, this framework will be essential in grounding us in our interpretational endeavor.

What does exegesis have to do with love?

Jesus speaks much about love in the New Testament. To Him, love is not an emotion, a sign of affection, or a passing notion. To Jesus, love is an existential commitment. He says that there is no greater love than to pour out one's life for one's friend. He says that if you love Him, you will do as He says. He says that the world will know His disciples by how they love one another. When Jesus says that the greatest commandments are that we should love the Lord our God and love our neighbor as ourselves, He is saying that love is a *choice*—a commitment that we make to God and to one another.

Loving is not a casual commitment. It takes everything we have. To love is to pour out your life for the ultimate good of someone else. It is a totalizing mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual action. It is daily and perpetual. And if we commit well to doing as Jesus asks, we will be transformed in the process.

If love is sacrificial, then love is also difficult. Imagine how a soldier in the trenches of World War I might throw himself on a grenade to save a beloved comrade. Imagine how a mother rises night after night to care for her child. Love will take everything you have and then some.

So what does exegesis have to do with love? To truly love another person takes thoughtful engagement. It requires interpretation—exegesis. Because every situation and every person is different, one must become skilled at reading people and situations in order to decide how to proceed in a loving way. In one instance, love might demand a three-hour conversation. In another, total silence. In one instance, rebuke. In another, encouragement.

What complicates our interpretation as we endeavor to love is suffering, which I will now address.

What does love have to do with suffering?

Suffering is inevitable in life. Every human person is assigned to this reality involuntarily. Likewise, every human person undergoes suffering involuntarily—physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual pain that is out of our control. It is often more than we want and occasionally more than we can stand.

The Jesus who asks us to love our neighbor is the same Jesus who asks us to take up our cross and follow Him. Jesus tells us that following Him will be hard and that this life will be difficult. In asking us to love our neighbor, Jesus is aware that life is going to be hard and that we will encounter suffering. He knows that we will struggle with our sinfulness and limitations. He knows that He is asking us to do an incredibly difficult thing. But the truth is that life was never going to be a choice between hard and easy. No. Life, as it turns out, is really only a choice between hard and hard-and-good. To love in the midst of our suffering is difficult. To love others often creates suffering. To sacrifice one's life for the ultimate good of another—an ultimate good that is unobtainable in this life—creates its own form of suffering. To watch a loved one struggle and suffer creates suffering within ourselves.

The question isn't "How do we avoid suffering?" for suffering is unavoidable. Rather, the question is "How will we respond to our suffering?" How we respond to our suffering will be a result of how we interpret it; what we think our suffering *means* will profoundly impact how we interact with it. Kierkegaard has a few things to say about suffering in *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses and Practice in Christianity*:

Now existence has turned the screws as tight as it can tighten the screws on a human being; to live under or to endure life under this pressure is what we call with emphasis: to exist as a human being.¹ To be a human being, to live in this world, is to be tested...² [H]e who believes God contrary to the understanding is strengthened in the inner being. For him the spiritual trial served as a strengthening in the inner

being; he learned that most beautiful thing of all, the most blessed—that God loves him, because the one God tests He loves.³ The person who learned what he learned from what he suffered, and learned the good from what he suffered, gained not only the best learning but what is much more—the best instructor—and the person who learns from God is strengthened in the inner being.⁴ [T]he person who loved God and in this love learned to love people was strengthened in the inner being.⁵

The world says that your suffering is meaningless. This will only be true if you refuse to learn what your suffering was designed to teach you.

One thing our suffering can teach us is how to love. In our suffering, we face pain, uncertainty, and profound questions. If we are willing to face into these difficulties and search for God, we can learn a lot about how to love. If we are willing to reflect, we can learn that our neighbor and our enemy suffer as we do; that they are worthy of care, kindness, and charity. We can learn in practicing love that we, too, are worthy of love.

It was through suffering that Jesus demonstrated His great love for us on the cross. "Pick up your cross and follow me," He says. He knows what He is asking. He is asking us to pick up an instrument that is designed to destroy the body so that we may put to death what is dead in us and come to life in Him. Jesus does not promise that in following Him we shall escape suffering. Jesus promises that in following Him we shall not be destroyed.

When we pick up our cross and follow Jesus, we are trekking through the barren wilds of this mad world and following Him into the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of God where every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. And under His good and merciful Lordship, Jesus promises to wipe the tear from every eye.

In a sense, the Kingdom of God blooms in every heart that wants to belong to it, and even now the Holy Spirit comforts us in our frailty as we wearily but faithfully move toward God. Yet in another sense, the Kingdom of God is not yet here upon the earth, and until it is, the people of God have good work to do as we strive

(Continued on page 6)

and love as best we can. Our suffering, though it will be difficult, is essential to our transformation as human beings, to our becoming what we are designed to become. Father Zosima in Dostoevsky's novel *The Brothers Karamazov* puts it like this:

Brothers, do not be afraid of men's sin, love man also in his sin, for this likeness of God's love is the height of love on earth. Love all of God's creation, both the whole of it and every grain of sand. [...] If you love each thing, you will perceive the mystery of God in things. Once you have perceived it, you will begin tirelessly to perceive more and more of it every day. And you will come at last to love the whole world with an entire, universal love. [...] Brothers, love is a teacher, but one must know how to acquire it, for it is difficult to acquire, it is dearly bought, by long work over a long time, for one ought to love not for a chance moment but for all time.⁶

What does exegesis have to do with love and suffering?

Exegesis can do more than help us to understand difficult books. Exegesis is a skill we can use to learn how to love, how to suffer, and how to live.

For the past four years you have practiced this skill intensively. A Gutenberg degree means that you are ready to practice on your own. By studying the course of Western Civilization and the ideas that have shaped it, you can now see how human nature impacts the world. There are patterns. The impact is not random, and it is not haphazard. Though interpretation is hard work, done often in hard circumstances, you can discover the truth if you have a humble heart and draw near to God.

Life is a test, but we can draw encouragement from Kierkegaard when he says, "The one God loves He tests." God tests you, therefore He loves you. How you respond to the tests of life will depend on your exegesis—how you make sense of reality, how you interpret it.

Love your neighbor as you love yourself, for you are worthy of love and so is everyone else. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and

The Academic

By James Hall



Welcome. My class is made up of three people. Therefore, we're going to talk about our Gutenberg experience from three different angles. I will begin with the academic angle. Emma will discuss the personal angle. And Emily will describe the spiritual.

At Gutenberg, we read so many different authors. We read Marx. We read Hayek. We read Schumacher. We read Mill. Each of these authors is trying to come to truth, trying to understand reality. But each of them fails. None of them succeeds in fully describing reality. At least, I don't think so. I haven't run across an author yet whose picture fully makes sense to me.

So what benefit do we get from reading all of these disparate opinions? First, reading an opinion that disagrees with your own challenges you and forces you to defend your beliefs, which leads to them becoming stronger. That's definitely a part of the reason we read so many differing authors.

Reading all these authors also helps us to view the flow of history. If we start with Aristotle and his highly flawed view of physics, we can better understand the medieval view of the cosmos. So reading these disparate opinions can help us understand the history of ideas better, which helps us see how we got here. That's a second reason we read all these authors.

strength, for He is good and true and faithful beyond measure. Love your enemies whether or not you understand them. Seek their good, and honor their God-given humanity. This path will be incredibly difficult, but it is what we are designed for.

End Notes:

¹Kierkegaard, Søren. *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna

But last year when I was reading Karl Marx, I discovered a third reason that we read all of these authors—namely, that each idea we read about has a human origin. Marx really is getting at a problem in his world. I thought I would disagree with Marx completely. And reading him, I did. But then in class, we discussed his context. We learned that Marx saw the people around him being treated horribly by the factory owners, the bourgeoisie. And he wanted to help them. He saw a problem, and the best answer he could come up with was that capitalism was the problem. He's not wrong. There are some inherent dangers to capitalism that he recognized—for instance, the tendency toward greed. He just didn't see all of the terrible atrocities that would be committed in the name of socialism later. In his mind, he was fixing the problem of suffering that he saw.

One of the main things I learned from Gutenberg is that ideas have a human origin. Marx didn't set out to make people's lives worse. He gave his best answer to a problem, and it didn't turn out so well. But reading him and understanding his situation has given me appreciation for his attempt. And this method carries over when I'm talking to real, live people with whom I disagree. They don't hold their beliefs because they're stupid or because they don't want what's best. It behooves me to try to understand *the why* of what they believe—why they think it is the truth. Because there is a why. Ideas don't live in a bubble. There's always a human attached to them. And Gutenberg has taught me to look for the human, not just the idea.

H. Hong (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 191.

²Kierkegaard, Søren, *Practice in Christianity*, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 183.

³*Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*, 98; ⁴*Ibid*, 95; ⁵*Ibid*, 94.

⁶Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *The Brothers Karamazov*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2002), 318-19.

The Personal

By Emma Hollmann



James talked about academic lessons that he learned at Gutenberg, and I'm here to talk to you about the personal lessons that I learned at Gutenberg.

The academic side of Gutenberg feels like a disguise for the arguably more important personal side of Gutenberg where we learn what it means to be a human living and interacting with other humans on this journey of discovery. But while the rigorous academic inquiry has been important and impactful on my

life, there has been an even more meaningful side of my experience: the interactions with the people around me—both inside and outside of classes. I've had the opportunity to learn from the great minds and great hearts among the faculty and from my amazing friends. They've taught me how to listen and how to speak; how to love and how to be loved; and above all, what a faithful, Christian life looks like.

I am the kind of person who would rather sit down and have conversations with friends than do my homework. Some of my best conversations have been while putting off my work for a little longer. I've had the opportunity to listen to people in their joys and in their sorrows and to interact about big ideas

that we've all had to confront while being here at Gutenberg.

Since freshman year, I've kept a note on my phone of significant conversations that I've had with the people around me. Some have been silly and lighthearted, and some have been sincere and heavy. I think this is a statement of how important time with those around me has been. I haven't wanted to forget the wisdom or the laughter.

None of this is to say that I won't be keeping my books and notes from school or that I won't continue to engage with the topics and ideas that we explored. I will. But there's this other, personal element to Gutenberg that has also taught me incredible things that I wanted to share with you.



The Spiritual

By Emily Grose



The biggest spiritual lesson that I have learned at Gutenberg is the importance of being earnest. Now, there are two things that you should know about me before I continue: the first is that I applied to Gutenberg because I had a lot of questions about the religion that I grew up with, and Gutenberg offered itself as a place to think about those questions. The second is that I love to laugh and make jokes.

I mention the first thing, the questions, because I think the answers to those questions will fundamentally shape my life, so I want to try and find what I think are true answers. I mention the second thing, the joking, because it hinders me from the first.

See, I do love a good joke, but I do not particularly love jokes that come at the expense of another person—especially when that person is myself. Of course, being the butt of the joke happens to everyone, and usually it's not that big of a deal, and we can laugh at ourselves too, shrug it off, and move on. In some cases, however, being the butt of the joke hurts a lot.

For example: I was at a coffee shop the other day, very tragically without my headphones, so I heard two guys chatting behind me. At some point their conversation turned to religion—during which one of them mentioned some particulars of a conversation he had with somebody else, and the other remarked, “Are you serious right now? They *actually* believe that?” And they snickered and laughed at this person's apparent stupidity. They didn't mean “I can't believe this person believes this; it's a dangerous way to think and it concerns me.” It was merely a joke to them. It hurt to imagine that other person, who was being sarcastically ridiculed behind her back for an opinion that she probably held in good faith. Do you know that what you said in earnest has been turned into fodder for a coffee shop meet-up?

I have had some conversations with people where I say what I really think about a spiritual matter, and I have been met with snickers and sarcastic responses that ring in my ears as “Hahaha, Emily. That was a funny bit. Now be serious, and say what you really think.” Then, my brain blows it out of proportion, and what I hear is not only “what you have said I consider a joke” but also “I can't believe you actually think that—I think that *you* are a joke.”

My reaction to this spiral is to pridefully recoil, withdraw, and think that I

will not be fodder for anyone's laughter. I will give you nothing so that you will never laugh at me. Gutenberg has taught me, however, that although hiding may be of temporary comfort, it is the worst thing to do if I ever want to achieve the first thing—to find answers to seriously held spiritual questions.

No matter how I answer, someone might ridicule me behind my back. The thought of that won't ever become particularly pleasant, but that is OK—because I've learned that in all the ways which matter, earnestness defeats sarcasm, every time.

My past four years here have raised more spiritual questions than they have answered, but they have also given me the will to continue this process of asking. Gutenberg has not only taught me the importance of being earnest but also the importance of meeting another person's earnestness with the dignifying respect of taking her seriously, even if I cannot initially believe what she is saying—and that is no laughing matter.

So on behalf of the Gutenberg college class of 2024, I would like to *earnestly* say to our teachers and classmates: thank you very much; it has been an honor to be your students, classmates, and friends. We will sorely miss you all.



COLLOQUY SUMMER 2024



1883 University Street
Eugene, OR 97403
541.683.5141 | office@gutenberg.edu
gutenberg.edu

Return Service Requested

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
EUGENE, OREGON
PERMIT NO. 594

We are happy to share the good news that Gutenberg's accreditation has been renewed for another ten years! This is our second ten-year reaffirmation and an important milestone for Gutenberg College.

Join the conversation!
Apply for Fall 2024 at
gutenberg.edu/admissions



gutenberg.edu/edcon

Independent thinking isn't easy. We face pressure from all sides: pressure from our culture, pressure from our peers, pressure from our own desires and drives. When we try to step back from these influences, to gain perspective and make decisions that are truly ours, we still need something to stand on. This year's EDCON will explore what it means to think independently from these pressures—while still being anchored in biblical truth—and how to pass these lessons to the next generation.



**EDCON
Speakers**



Amanda Butler
Classical Conversations



Andrea Lipinski
CiRCE Institute



Davies Owens
BaseCamp Live



Eliot Grasso
Gutenberg College



Chris Swanson
Gutenberg College