

I TALKED MYSELF OUT OF IT

On Monday morning I drove my daughter back to university. Usually, I carry her suitcase into the main door of her campus, give her a big hug goodbye, and make a quick stop at the bathroom before driving back to Brantford. This past Monday I decided to take her suitcase up to her room and help her quickly unpack because we arrived a bit later than usual. When somebody parks at her university and plans to stay for any considerable time they must pay on the Honk mobile app. I knew I would be only ten to fifteen minutes, so I decided to take a chance and not pay for a parking voucher because the minimum time is an entire hour. In all of my visits to the university I have only encountered a parking attendant once, so I felt the odds were on my side.

When I came down from my daughter's room, I took a quick glance outside and did not see a ticket on my car. Nature called, so I thought it would be safe to visit the bathroom before leaving. When I came outside, I spotted the parking attendant standing by my vehicle about to write me up for an infraction. He must have just started the process when I said to him, "**You caught me!**" I explained to him that I had just dropped my daughter off from Brantford and went in quickly to use the bathroom before my return trip. Yes, I omitted taking 15 extra minutes to help my daughter unpack. Thankfully the parking attendant showed my bladder some grace in this situation. He told me, "**Don't worry about it. You got to do what you got to do.**" With that he walked off and I realized I had just successfully talked myself out of a parking ticket.

It is funny how this incident got me thinking back to a time 42 years earlier when I talked myself out of a ticket. I was 17 or 18 at the time, and I remember parking the car on Darling Street at a parking meter. I am pretty sure I put in a dime or quarter, but the time ran out before I got back to my car. When I returned to my car, I stumbled upon a by-law enforcement officer writing me up. I tried to talk myself out of that ticket, but I was not successful. I wonder if the difference this past Monday had to do with me being a better talker since becoming a pastor or was it because I failed to blame my bladder back then.

I am sure we have all had experiences of trying to talk ourselves out of situations. Sometimes these situations involve conversations with others like in my case on Monday, but other times we are talking just to ourselves to get out of doing something. I am guilty at times of talking myself out of doing something. This was the case with me wanting to begin to exercise and work out again. It seems far off, but tennis season is just a few short months away.

My daughter has remained in great shape since tennis season ended working out at the gym at least 4-5 days a week. I, however, have been exercising too much on my reclining sleep chair. I made myself a resolution to start working out on a regular basis starting in the new year. I talked myself out of starting until January 25, 2026. I have been pretty consistent in sticking to this routine since, but there are some days I can talk myself out of doing it.

Something else that we can talk ourselves out of doing is the spiritual things that we need to be doing in order to draw closer to the Lord. How easy it is for us to sometimes talk ourselves out of:

Going to church on a Sunday because we are tired or too busy,

- Taking time during the day to pray or do a devotional even though we know the benefit of doing so,
- Helping somebody we know in a time of need because it may cause us too much inconvenience,
- Serving God because we think His timing is not convenient.

It can become very easy for us to talk ourselves out of these and other things that God desires for us to do in order to grow in our walk with Him. One of the books in the New Testament that encourages us not to talk ourselves out of growing in our faith but rather to strive instead to become more mature is Hebrews. We read in **Hebrews 6:1: So let us stop going over the basic teachings about Christ again and again. Let us go on instead and become mature in our understanding.**

In order to grow and mature in our faith, we must not forget the basic teachings about Christ, but we must also **be committed** to moving forward in our understanding of Him and His truths so that we will mature as Christians. It can be easy to talk ourselves out of doing the things necessary to mature in our faith. Let's make sure this is not what we are doing. Instead let us focus on talking to Jesus. We will find our faith becoming more mature as a result.

I was pretty pleased that I talked myself out of the parking ticket. I was so pleased that I decided to reward myself with a Tim Hortons coffee on the way home and call my daughter. When I hung up from talking with her, I was also pretty pleased I had an idea for this week's message.

Keep safe and God bless,

Pastor Dean