

Don't miss the moment

One of my colleagues saw me walking through the hallway and motioned me toward his door.

"You gotta see this," he said.

When I got to his door I saw that he was pointing to his computer.

My stomach dropped a little. I'm never interested in looking at what other people think is interesting on their computers. It's usually a video of cats set to music or a mashup of news anchors whose broadcasts are edited to sound like they're singing a rap song. It's even worse if it's video of one of their kids or grandkids singing "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star." Seen it. Don't need to see it again. Life's too short.

"What's up?" I tried to feign politeness.

"It's a clip of when my wife and I took our grandkids to Disneyland."

I'm one of the only people I know who doesn't like Disneyland. But friendship is friendship. I pulled a chair up to his desk.

The video showed my friend and his wife walking through the entrance of the happiest place on earth. My friend was holding their 8-month-old granddaughter. Off camera I could hear the father of the baby say, "Let's get a photo of you three with the castle in the background."

The grandparents turned toward the son-in-law and posed. The video, being taken by their daughter, kept rolling.

"Okay, hold still," the off-camera voice said. "Smile everyone! No wait. I need to turn the camera on."

My friend, his wife and the grandbaby waited. Posing.



"Okay, I think I've got it now," the voice said. "Smile real big now! Wait, there's some shadow on your faces. Let me turn the flash on."

The posing continued.

The video showed my friend's face harden into a forced smile. He and his wife could barely hide their frustration that this wasn't happening fast enough. While they stood, with now artificial smiles that resembled grimaces, the video also picked up their audio, and captured what the two of them thought was a private conversation about the incompetence of the photographer.

Here's what else the video showed: While my friend and his wife focused on becoming statues in a wax museum, waiting for the expected thing to happen, and while the photographer was audibly on the verge of a meltdown because he couldn't get his camera to work, the baby turned to my friend's face and started touching it with her tiny hands. We could hear those beautiful baby vowels, oos and aaas, while she touched his face. The baby smiled and even leaned in to put her mouth on my friend's cheek. Then the baby turned and stroked her grandmother's face.

And my friend missed it because he was too busy posing, trying to fulfill someone else's expectations.

"Look at all the love I missed," he said to me. "The love that came to us unannounced and unexpected and undeserved. It was there for us, but we missed it."

It was a love they didn't initiate, and it was there whether they recognized it or not.

"What is essential is

to know that the Christian life is mostly what is being done to you, not what you are doing," said Eugene Peterson, pastor, scholar and author of *The Message* translation of the Bible. "You don't begin the spiritual life, the Holy Spirit does. And it began a long time ago. It was his idea before it was yours."

Our everyday activities provide us with ample opportunity to see the activity of God—if we pay attention. It's all around us, in the ordinary, everyday experience of life. Jesus used even mud to help a man see.

"We are not here to show something to God," said Robert Benson, an author specializing in prayer, silence and spirituality. "We are here because God—who wants to be completely known—has something to show us."

Maybe even at Disneyland.



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