The Tabernacle, a delightful place to discover an alternative and divine answers to life. It is a sacred space where intimacy occurs with the Creator God according to His prescribed way.

*Mrs. Stubbs, I have not been totally honest with you.*

So began a private conversation with a student.

I thought he was going to tell me that he cheated on a test.

But no.

*Mrs. Stubbs, I am addicted to pornography.*

It felt like someone had punched me in the gut. That I had the presence of mind not to react wrongly, was a miracle. I asked him to tell me about it, told him I would pray over the weekend and talk with him on Monday.

I was so upset. I grieved to the core of my being to see this young man who so wanted to do the right thing, be chained by this addiction. I inwardly raged at the person who introduced him to pornography at a young age. Mostly, I felt powerless to help him. I so needed clarity of mind to overcome my raging emotions to gain a redemptive strategy to help him.

The only place where I knew I could go to, was in my devotional pattern of the sacred space I call, the Tabernacle.

Ignoring my feelings, I engaged with each aspect of it – from the entrance gate progressively into the Holy Place - until I had a divine encounter with the loving God, who affirmed my emotions yet gave me a clear mental picture of what to do to help. I knew that as a woman, I could not help him, but that his champion was his football coach who ran interference for me.

Meanwhile, I changed the way I helped him succeed in my class. I wondered how I could teach him history when the mental images competed for his attention. I asked him if there ever was a time he did not think about pornography; his response: *while playing football*. Subsequently, he took his tests with me after school while throwing the football across the room. I would throw him the football asking him the test question, and he answered while throwing the ball back. This strategy for his success occurred during a divine download in my ‘Tabernacle devotions’.

 We all need a safe space to ‘own’ our emotions, a sacred space where we approach a God who loves us, knows that we make mistakes, yet appreciates our feeble attempts to do the right thing, offering His strength for our weakness

 When I first learned about the Tabernacle, I dismissed it as ‘a Jewish thing’ only, full of dry rituals. My eyes glazed over - boring. But I decided to see if my life-with-God would change if I ‘practiced’ the Tabernacle pattern every day.

 As I began to ‘live in’ the scriptures about the Tabernacle, I discovered its richness. It became the pattern for my personal devotional life, my sacred space. And I began to see that God wove the pattern of the Tabernacle not just on earth but also in heaven, from Genesis to Revelation. What the children of Israel experienced in real life; I learn to engage with metaphorically.

 By way of the Tabernacle, we are invited to take a break. God’s invitation to rest allows us to live counter culturally, outside of the rat race. “Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don’t become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. …. God brings the best out of you...”[[1]](#footnote-1). This invitation goes beyond a superficial existence into a meaningful life; to refocus our attention from the two-dimensionalities of culture to the full orbed three-dimensional life with God.

 The Tabernacle provides a pattern for us to feel deeply human, and by engaging with it, we turn our attention away from the culture that devalues us by helping us fix our attention on God who dignifies each of us. We choose to pay attention and consequently enjoy a place of true safety.

 The Tabernacle gives us the space to be real without recrimination, giving us the wherewithal to make the changes in thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors we so desperately need and want. We get to “Step out of the traffic! Take a long, loving look at … High God, … above everything.”[[2]](#footnote-2) This sounds like an invitation to delightfulness.

While the children of Israel were in the wilderness, Moses spent 40 days with God on Mount Sinai. As he descended, he was confronted by people who were worshipping a golden calf. He was so angry and grieved as he entered the Tent of Meeting, (the precursor to the Tabernacle). Like I metaphorically did with my student.

It was in the Tent, he experienced God as a friend.[[3]](#footnote-3) The Tabernacle gives us the same permission to feel deeply as we respond not just to what we see around us, but also in ourselves. Giving us the opportunity for expressing those emotions, so that we don’t become morbidly fixated allowing them to fester into psychological or physical ill health.

 This then becomes an invitation to hope. Engaging with the Tabernacle gives us the perspective we need to not become enchanted with the false enticements of human lusts and helps us escape the thinness of self-deception by helping us to focus on what is important while giving us the fortitude to stay the course on the ‘long obedience in the same direction’ because we get a taste of life as it really is. It gives us an alternate perspective as we go about our ordinary, everyday lives.

(From the Introduction of *An Invitation to Delight, with God in the Tabernacle*.)

1. Romans 12:1-2, *The Message* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Psalms 45:8-10, *The Message*. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Exodus 33 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)