



PB&J

Today I am on day 55 of a 60 day juice fast. Everyone that knows what I am doing always ask what I am learning along the way. It seems like the one constant theme that God keeps showing me is peanut butter and jelly. PB&J is one of my favorite things in the whole world. I could eat it for every meal. I don't care if its crunchy or creamy peanut butter or if its grape, strawberry or any other kind of jelly. It's all good. On their own, peanut butter and jelly are good, but together, they are unbelievable. There's nothing like it anywhere. When you put those 2 ingredients between a couple of slices of bread, it's going to be good. Now God has not been taking me down a road of not eating for 50 days constantly telling me that I love food, I already know that. This is a very different lesson.

God has been teaching me about the folks he's put around me in my life, especially my wife. I am the peanut butter and she is my jelly. We don't make each other complete, but we definitely complement each other. In Genesis 2, it says that she is bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh. We are ONE, tag team, unified. There's a Hebrew word, echad which basically talks about oneness. Now we obviously didn't wake up and were just PB&J one day, it takes time. Just like the real peanut butter, there's a lot that goes into making something good. Peanut butter starts at a farm where farmers plant, water and harvest peanuts, then it goes to a factory where is crushed and mixed and stirred up. Eventually, it heads to the store where it is stocked and sold. Similar to jelly, there's a farm or orchard where the ingredients are planted, watered and grown. From there, it's made into sweetness and carried off to sell. This is a long process of decisions, choices, and hard work.

So what is peanut butter and jelly? Love and respect. Ephesians 5:22-24 says, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. This does not by any means say that a woman should cower down to her husband or that a man should rule over his wife with fear or complete control. In order for a wife to submit to her husband, she must respect him. I am still a big believer that respect is something that is earned. Ephesians 5:25 goes on to say, "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." That's true love. That's also being willing to lay down your life for another. Complete and total selfless love. We are a team.

Now, Jen and I are pretty different. Alone we are ok, but together, I think we're pretty awesome. Jen is serious, she's a reader, she's a talker, she's an introvert, she loves to be at home and take a nap. I love to joke, I'm anything but a reader, I'm a listener, I'm an extrovert, I love to be on the go. Peanut butter and Jelly. We laugh together, cry together, serve together, suffer together, fight together, love together. We are one. Together. We get up and put on the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18). We put on the shield, helmet, sword, breastplate, belt of truth, and the shoes. Now there are days when we have to help each other get dressed or remind each other to put on certain aspects of our armor, but that's ok, because we are a team. We fight together. Notice that the armor does not talk about covering the back. We are not supposed to run away. The armor protects the front. We are made to stand together, side by side and fight together. Kickin' butt and takin names. Jen's Granddaddy used to always say, "not one, not two, but the whole crew." Where we go, we go together. If you are trying to live and make decisions like you're on your own, eventually you will be on your own.

PB&J is also truth and grace. John 1:17 says, "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." Everyone needs both. We all need to speak the truth and have the truth spoken to us. Sometimes truth is welcome, and sometimes it hurts! A lot of time, in the flesh, the truth is the last thing I want to hear. A lot of times I have the ability to speak the truth but I'm not always the most graceful. Jen has grace, is grace, and can show some grace. And in those few times when she doesn't seem to show that appropriate amount of grace, somehow, God allows me to show it. It's amazing how we can balance each other out. We're peanut butter and jelly!

One awesome thing about a peanut butter & jelly sandwich is that once you make spread that creamy and sweet goodness on separate pieces and then put it together, it can never be taken apart and cleanly separated again. There's always a little bit of peanut butter in the jelly and jelly in the peanut butter. No matter how hard you try, you cannot pick it all out. You can try, but you're going to make a bigger mess. Once that peanut butter combines with that jelly, you've got to just keep it together to make the greatest taste on the planet. This whole peanut butter and jelly deal goes so far beyond marriage, invading relationships with friends, business partners, customers, anyone who the Lord has brought into our lives to share life together. When we live life, we must weave Jesus all throughout life. It cannot be pulled apart. We have to run together with our community toward the one that loves and cares for us. We must constantly point each other to JESUS. He is the one that we listen to and need for survival.

For Jen and I, we are married. We both wear wedding rings, but our marriage doesn't hinge on the ring. The wedding ring doesn't change our hearts, Jesus changes our hearts. He keeps on doing this every day. My advice to my kids or anyone else I meet is to start early on letting him change your life. Stop "looking for love in all the wrong places." Love is not in empty pleasures or earthly treasures. If you're looking for love in bars, or golf courses, board rooms or whatever, that's like looking for peanut butter in all the wrong stores. Listen to the Father. Let him lead you to that perfect combination of peanut butter and jelly.

Like I mentioned before, Jen and I don't complete each other, we complement each other. We do have bread that wraps around us and that makes us complete. You can call this white bread, lite bread, wonder bread or whatever, but it is God. He keeps us together. He makes us whole. We cannot be pulled apart. People and things around us can try, and it hurts when they do, but we are stuck together. Moving forward together. Held together by the one true holy and living God who loves and cares for us deeply.

Love God. Love people.

If you need a bible please let us know at 390-2211 or [gabe@gracekleincommunity.com](mailto:gabe@gracekleincommunity.com)

***"Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God" - Hebrews 13:16***