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Upper Classman

MSU Honor Code: “As a Mississippi State University student, I will conduct myself with honor and integrity at all times. I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor will I accept the actions of those who do.”

From Three Little Words to a Brilliant Future

After reading Ashley Rhodes-Courter's book, "Three Little Words: A Memoir," the words that Ashley used were very different from the words that I originally expected. When I first glanced at the title of this book, many expectations of those words came to mind. For example, I originally thought that those words would be "I love you," but after reading what the true words were, I realized that the words were special and influential to Ashley because it began a new journey in her life.

Ashley's three little words were "I guess so." Those words began a new lifetime of change in her life because she was officially adopted by a family that chose her. Her words of uncertainty at the time of her adoption just scratch the surface of what she was really feeling inside. At this point in her life, she had been bounced around from foster home to foster home. Some were good and some were horrid. Her story is similar to so many others in the United States. According to childwelfare.gov, there was an "estimated 415,129 children in foster care on September 30, 2014" (Child). The number was down from the number of foster children in 2005 (Child). This number is very sizeable when it comes to the amount of lives facing difficult times. Hopefully, most of these children experienced good families while they were in this difficult period of their lives. On Ashley's adoption day, I can gather from the text that Ashley was reflecting on the trouble in her life between her mother and foster care, and I bet she was wondering what troubles could be in store for her in the future. For example, in *Three Little Words: A Memoir*, Ashley says, "They wanted me to move on to another life, but I was ready to call the whole thing off" (222). Ashley did not know what was ahead of her, so although hesitant, she was willing to start this new chapter in her life based on her three little words.

The little three words that would be significant in my life would be "by God's grace."

Looking back over my twenty-one years on this earth, I really do not know where I would be without the grace of God. Grace is receiving something that I do not deserve, and I have received so many blessings in my lifetime that I do not deserve. In a huge contrast to Ashley's story, I have been blessed with a caring and devoted, biological parents who have provided for my every physical need since my birth. My parents have also been there for me in the times when I have needed encouragement, and it is important to know that my parents are just one of the thousands of blessings that I have encountered in my life. In thinking about these blessings, a song comes to mind. Contemporary Christian singer and songwriter, Colton Dixon, wrote the chorus that sums up the story of my life in his song, "Through All of It." He wrote, "I have won, and I have lost. I got it right sometimes but sometimes I did not. Life's been a journey. I've seen joy. I've seen regret. Oh and You have been my God through all of it" (Dixon). I relate to this song so much because it is only "by God's grace" that I am a student here at Mississippi State University fulfilling my dream to one day become a dentist to provide oral healthcare to the great people of Mississippi. I truly am what I am because of God's blessings on me.

In conclusion, it is remarkable the power that three little words can have on a human life. Whether those words are expressed reflecting on a life lived, or they are expressed starting a new beginning in life, words are so powerful. While it is true that mine and Ashley's stories are very different in terms of background, the future is bright in terms of where we can go and the people that we can impact. She is devoting her life to speaking about her story, and she is also passionately fighting for foster children and the challenges that they face. I want to spend the rest of my life providing oral care to people, but also, I want to be a friend and a confidant to them because I long to make a difference in the lives of people on an everyday basis. By doing what we are called to do in life, we can do our share in making our world a better place!

Works Cited

Child Welfare Information Gateway. *Foster care statistics 2014*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Children's Bureau, 2016. Web. 2 November 3, 2016.

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Rhodes-Courter, Ashley. *Three Little Words: A Memoir*. Simon & Schuster, 2008.