



Floss Daily

like going to the dentist. I even try new dentists just to hear them say, “Wow, you have really lovely teeth.” Because it’s true. I do. They may not be perfectly straight or brilliantly white, but I never wore braces, and I don’t have a single cavity, cap or root canal. Just a beautiful set of pearly whites.

I must admit it’s mostly genetics and good fortune that have given me such a positive dental experience. Although I brush twice a day and go to the dentist twice a year, I have been negligent in one area—I have been a random and intermittent flosser. Every hygienist I’ve ever had has, after only a few minutes of peering inside my mouth, posed this painful question. “Do you floss?”

I squirm for a bit, mention how tightly packed my teeth are, how the floss shreds and snags, how I’m a really good brusher... and then as she continues to stare at me blankly, I admit, “Well, okay, not really.” After which, as a form of penance, I succumb to 30 torturous minutes of scraping, scratching and clawing as plaque is scoured from my teeth.

One day, as I lay at the mercy of a particularly conscientious hygienist, I thought, *Really, why don’t I just floss?*

As if she were reading my mind, she removed her latex-clad hands from my mouth, and announced, “Do I have a floss for you!” I stared up through the blinding light, mouth gaping in awe, as this masked angel of dentistry introduced me to *Glide*.

Glide was amazing. It slipped through my tightest molars without snagging. So, with my little sample in tow, I started flossing more regularly. But then the sample ran out. A day passed, and then another, and another. Flossing became a distant memory.

Then one day I found myself trudging down the aisles of Costco, and lo and behold, a minty green multipack of *Glide* was sitting there right beside the peanut butter. I bought it. Right then and there I realized I could no longer be a random flosser. Bulk purchases at Costco require commitment. It

only takes 21 *days* to make a habit, and I had enough floss for 21 *years*.

I can now say I floss every single day. In fact, I can’t fall asleep without flossing or I feel stuff growing between my teeth! When I try to recall life before flossing, the feeling is so awful I have to run to the bathroom, pull out a little minty green *Glide* and slip a thread between my back right molars. *Ahhh, that’s the way it should be.* I’m a “born again” flosser.

Before I committed myself, flossing was something I rarely did because it was difficult, time-consuming and just plain uncomfortable. But once it became a habit, it became something I couldn’t do without.

And I started thinking, *what if I made a habit out of spiritual flossing?* Letting God be that thin thread that gets into the tight places of my life and lifts out the decay, the things that are supposed to be washed away, but instead are sticking to me and threatening to damage and destroy.

I spiritually floss occasionally—usually around Easter—asking God to search my heart, know me, remove anything that is not of him. Then I keep my fingers crossed that it won’t hurt too much when he points things out. *But what if I asked that daily?* Each morning, before my feet hit the floor, and in the evening before my head hit the pillow. If I asked God to root out judgmentalism, bitterness, greed and pride before they ever got a chance to stick in the deep crevices of my soul? It seems it would be much easier to remove muck that had recently attached itself, than that which was embedded and eating through the enamel of my spiritual armor.

Fortunately, God offers grace, and I’d rather have grace today than a root canal tomorrow. So, beyond just asking for my daily bread, I’ve begun to ask him to grab his floss and search doggedly for debris that threatens the integrity of my soul. It may not be a comfortable thing to do, but it promises so much more than just a pretty smile. □

—Susan Reedy

I spiritually floss occasionally... asking God to search my heart, know me, remove anything that is not of him.