

Moon and Water (Reflections)

Picture, if you will, a clear moonlit sky. With this image, envision a calm lake, taking notice of the reflection of the moon on the calm waters. As you look at the moon and the water, you see the reflection immediately. Toss a stone into the water and observe the ripples it creates. Be sure to take note that even though the water is now turbulent, the reflection does not change.

It has occurred to me that this is a perfect analogy as to how we are to reflect the image and likeness of God! Just as the water reflects the moon, we should reflect the character and nature of God. In our daily lives, there will be trouble, unexpected events, sorrow; in short, all the things that trouble our human existence can and will occur. Just as the stone tossed into the body of water creates ripples, the rock of unexpected or unfortunate experiences ripples our minds with anxiety and discontent. We must endeavor to remember even though the water ripples, the reflection remains constant. Our daily troubles do not change who God is!

1st Corinthians 10:13 says, *"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."*

This scripture clearly states that God will not "suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able." So if tribulations come, you have the Word of God to rely on to carry you through. If this is so, why do so many of us break under pressure? It is because you focus on the ripples and not the reflection. When you focus on the stone and the waves, it causes you to make unfortunate and uninformed decisions. The first unfortunate decision is that **YOU** decide that whatever you are facing is too much for you. Once you have made this decision, you are in direct opposition to God's Word. Once you are in opposition to God's Word, every decision that you make is uninformed. The decisions are uninformed because you have cut yourself out from the source of all knowledge.

God has given us the ability to reason, and with such power, we are capable of so many things. Beasts of the field and all animals have not this ability. They only possess the ability to act instinctively, discerning only the immediate situation, and once there is a resolution, they move on to the next immediate circumstance. We, on the other hand, can reconcile past events, contemplate future possibilities, and make decisions in the present accordingly. To use this power of reason correctly, we must stay connected to our fuel source, the Word of God! To do otherwise would be akin to receiving a brand new car but without the means to fuel it. This brand new auto will be virtually useless without gasoline. In like manner, our ability to reason is futile without being connected to God.

To be connected to God is to exercise the fruit of the Spirit. According to **Galatians 5:22-23**, *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."* Bushido, the warriors' way of feudal Japan, expresses these same traits; Rectitude or justice, courage, benevolence, politeness, honor, loyalty, and self-control. God has given all the tools we need to face any circumstance; our only hindrance is ourselves. Our first act is to eliminate our overblown sense of self or ego! Remember that the old man is dead and raised a new creature in Christ. **Matthew 16:25**, *"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."* You have been "born again," and you must recognize and live in that reality.

Whenever you encounter a situation, consider the faculty that you have to deal with it; if you meet a rude person, remember longsuffering or patience. Retain temperance/self-control when you have a desire to spend money on a luxury item at the expense of necessities. Remember righteousness/justice and courage when you see injustice on any level and dare to act. When the turbulent ripples of life engulf you, remember faith, the faith you have in God. Pursue peace with all men with benevolence(love) and politeness(meekness). These are the virtues that will keep you connected with God. Without such virtues, you will lower yourselves to that of the animals by abandoning the use of reason. Remember that your mental attitude determines your physical expression. It is imperative to govern your thoughts as they are a precursor to action. For an action to take place, it had to germinate in mind first, and **YOU** must give consent to that thought. This process of thinking is another example where the virtue of temperance/self-control is useful; you can consent or withhold consent from every thought that comes into your mind.

Honor/Honesty is of paramount importance, for without it, we can do nothing. First, start by being brutally honest with and about yourself. To change your behavior, you must recognize the need for change. Examine yourself daily and cut away all the parts that don't reflect the fruit of the Spirit. Develop a personal plan to improve in an area every day. Journal your progress so that you may measure your success. In the world of business, there is a saying, "what gets measured, gets managed."

Keep in mind always that this is a journey, not a destination!

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