

In my travels, I often met people along the road or in the villages that I visited. Usually I found a way to introduce the glory of God and His Son into our conversations. Many times, though, the people had difficulty seeing that glory because of the weight of lingering personal sadness (through the loss of loved ones) or struggles in their lives. Even with my own ability to see God's glory, I was often at a loss to think about how to improve the view of others. But part of my mission was to encourage those who have such difficulty<sup>1</sup>.

I felt compassion for those, as I suffered from similar blindness at times myself. In one particular instance, as I worked with people in the village to serve them and possibly interest them in the Kingdom, I could tell that the overall idea did not resonate in the heart of a woman of my acquaintance. She just claimed that she could not really see it. And so we began a discussion that went back and forth about the issues of whether God actually existed, and if so, how He dealt with us.

She had lost some of the people who she cared for very deeply, and could not perceive God's glory shining through her suffering and struggles, her personal pain and loss<sup>2</sup>. The woman clearly agreed with Goodness as a way to live, and followed that principle, but did not get the personification of it in terms of a relationship.

I shared with her that there are many distractions causing us to be blinded<sup>3</sup> from that glory. We have difficulty focusing on the Good. We have to realize that there is an adversary that is continually throwing up barriers and attacks<sup>4</sup> against us to divert our attention<sup>5</sup>. It is as though a pall of smoke made it difficult to see.

Jesus had to deal very directly with such distractions, as the devil tempted him very aggressively. And when the crowds pressed Him too much, He would climb a mountain to get away for a while<sup>6</sup>. He did not let these distractions affect His behavior – He remained perfect by the power of God.

The reality of death is one of the greatest obstacles in our belief in and faith in God. But death and loss must be reconciled with God's plan; especially for those who have lost loved ones (especially those gone "too soon"). God has difficulty with this as well, especially in the case of His Son. I knew of cases where people endured great hardships and could still see God<sup>7</sup>. Jesus' story of the Prodigal Son illustrates that as well<sup>8</sup>.

We may have problems worshipping God, and perhaps even believing in Him, because of our personal struggles, or loss, or pain. We may not be able to see the glory of the sun, either, when it temporally is hidden behind the clouds. In spite of our sorrow, we must recognize true love when we see it<sup>9</sup>. In fact, we look through the cross to the magnificent light<sup>10</sup>. And our communion with Him is like a lens that allows us to properly focus on that glory, and with proper filtering to optimize that view.

My friend the art teacher could not always enable her students to see the beauty (or glory) of art, so she understood the problem in a little different perspective. She also dealt with some that did not have a great capacity for understanding, and she did not reject them for that. We talked about how God can look at us in the same way in His great mercy.

If we had no struggles, we might not "need" God, but we should still be in awe of Him through His creation and worship Him<sup>11</sup>. Once we grasp the magnitude of His glory, we would find fulfillment in being in His presence<sup>12</sup>.

The good news (gospel) is that God understands us completely. He sees how we struggle to get through the maze of life, or to keep our heads above water in the deluge that sometimes seeks to overpower us<sup>13</sup>. We may have problems worshipping God, and perhaps even believing in Him, because of our personal struggles, or loss, or pain. I often pray that God will have mercy on us in our ignorance<sup>14</sup>, and in not being able to see God's glory through our own struggles and suffering. I also pray that we can keep our faith strong so that we can "endure to the end"<sup>15</sup>.

1. Hebrews 10:24
2. Everyone is fighting their own demons, and we do not necessarily know what they are.
3. In 2 Corinthians 4:4, Paul wrote: "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." Even those of us who are believers sometimes get blinded as well.
4. God sees the darts Satan throws at us. See the defense to these darts in Ephesians 6
5. Think about trying to catch a ball when a myriad of other objects are being thrown at you (or flying around you).
6. Luke 6:12, John 6:15, and others where He went with some of His disciples
7. Randy Alcorn talks about Holocaust survivors that came to Christ, were able to see God's glory. Also, "Those who don't suffer much think suffering should keep people from God, while many who suffer a great deal turn to God, not from him." If God Is Good: Faith in the Midst of Suffering and Evil; Alcorn, Randy; p.102

8. Luke 15:11-32; The Prodigal Son was able to see the glory of his father, and home, and he faced humiliation and starvation – and determined to make his way back as a lowly servant.

**Error! Bookmark not defined.** 1 Timothy 1:13-14

9. John 3:16

10. “There’s an aphorism repeated often in the writings of the medieval church: per crucem ad lucem, through the cross to the light. ... God’s love is refracted (diffraction pattern) through the cross, which often makes it hard to see or recognize.” Prayer in the Night: For Those Who Work or Watch or Weep; Warren, Tish Harrison; p.170;

11. Ps 19:1; “the heavens declare the glory of God” (we should be able to see Him), and Isaiah 6:3; “the whole earth is full of His glory”

12. Psalm 27:4; “One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.”

13. see Psalm 69:2, 15; Psalm 88:17; Psalm 124:4

14. 1 Timothy 1:13-14

15. see Matthew 10:22 and 24:13 (KJV)

© Copyright 2025, Heard Lowry