

General Topics :: Whatever is admirable...

Whatever is admirable... - posted by roadsign (), on: 2008/5/15 7:11

During the night the Lord drew me towards this thought:

Finally, ,  
 whatever is true,  
 whatever is noble,  
 whatever is right,  
 whatever is pure,  
 whatever is lovely,  
 whatever is admirable  
 —if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

The Lord seems to be cautioning me to guard my mind, to leave a big “space” for Jesus and the goodness of God in my thought life. Perhaps this is a helpful word for us all. Let’s admit, we cannot keep our mind centered in two “spaces” at once. By nature we (certainly me!) can easily be tempted to dwell on the negative. There’s plenty around —always visible to the natural eye. It doesn’t help that some of my friends and relatives love to forward me “warnings” and “news” about this bad thing and that bad thing. Just how much bad stuff do I need to know!!!

Oh, sure, some thoughts seem godly, even spiritual, but they can subtly pull us from the peace and joy Christ has promised us. For example, dwelling on the sin in the world and the church may feel like a true burden for revival. But, on the other hand, such a focus can also become a subtle form of modern ascetism (self-inflicted punishment)—a sinister gratification in afflicting our minds with thoughts that drag us down and make us angry and cynical. This may feel right, but be nothing more than a form of self-justification.

Whatever you have learned  
 or received  
 or heard from me,  
 or seen in me  
 —put it into practice.

And the God of peace will be with you. Phil. 4:8

Paul, who was deeply aware of the bad things going on in his society, the church, and against him personally, was able to keep his heart and mind fixed on Jesus.

How did he do that?  
 How did that affect him?  
 How could such a focus affect those around us — the saved, the unsaved?

What are some verses that express Paul’s Christ-focused mind?  
 Ex: What/whom were his prayers centered on?

May God help us to put into practice what we have learned, received, and seen through the apostle Paul.

Diane

**Re: Whatever is admirable..., on: 2008/5/15 7:17**

Amen, Lord help me in this, I have failed so much.

**Re: Whatever is admirable... - posted by ChrisJD (), on: 2008/5/16 21:46**

Diane,

I appreciate what you brought up here!

One of my co-workers told me today about an experience he had years ago when he had laser surgery performed on one of his eyes. He described the light that he saw as so intense! More than anything you could imagine it seemed. So bright. I was really struck by how he suggested the experience was not only physically startling but even mentally.

I asked him about laser light and he tried to describe what he understood about it: that it was distinct from visible light in that the wavelengths of the light in laser light are highly uniform and that this gives it tremendous power. He said that it is also called *coherent light* in a technical sense(maybe someone can correct any of this if it is wrong).

I thought this was just remarkable though.

It made me think of the Lord Jesus, and how God is in so many ways referred to as Light. And how this laser light was so powerful and intense because of uniformity. It made me think of the intensity of the Light of God, how great it must be!

Well, maybe this in some way speaks to the question you had asked about the Apostle Paul, and how was it that he was able to maintain his focus upon the Lord?

I thought about how he was first blinded by the light he had seen.

Chris

**Re: - posted by broclint (), on: 2008/5/17 1:05**

Quote:  
-----Diane: Paul, who was deeply aware of the bad things going on in his society, the church, and against him personally, was able to keep his heart and mind fixed on Jesus.

How did he do that?  
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How could such a focus affect those around us -- the saved, the unsaved?  
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Quote:  
-----Chris: It made me think of the Lord Jesus, and how God is in so many ways referred to as Light. And how this laser light was so powerful and intense because of uniformity. It made me think of the intensity of the Light of God, how great it must be!

Well, maybe this in some way speaks to the question you had asked about the Apostle Paul, and how was it that he was able to maintain his focus up

on the Lord?  
-----

Matthew 4:16 (KJV) 16The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

James 1:17 (NKJV) 17Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

1 Timothy 6: 15b "He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.

Beautiful thread,

I have often thought about all the political chaos all the way from Jerusalem to Rome during Paul's ministry, not to mention all the rampant immorality, idolatry, slavery, needs for reform in prisons, and in society and all the rest, but the reality of Paul's perspective... not just a platitude, but the reality of focusing upon "things above, not on the things on the earth".

And his message was a constant "rejoice in the Lord" regardless or should I say hardly regarding at all, present circumstances, or at least personal circumstances... not living in the "shadows", but not yet in the presence of that unapproachable light, still pressing toward, and no doubt never for one moment forgetting that blinding light that shined in such a startling and awakening way into his former darkness. Amazing... He was sitting in darkness and could not see spiritually and then when he saw, he became blind to all the darkness, and never recovered. May God do so for each of us.

Single minded indeed, narrow minded even... "this one thing I do..." and yet

1 Corinthians 10:33 (KJV) 33Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

So much to learn from one so full of heavenly light!

Clint

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2008/5/17 7:39**

Quote:

----- all the political chaos all the way from Jerusalem to Rome  
-----

There is a close parallel in my little town right now - nasty political controversy over an old inn. Some wish it to be restored to its former grandeur, but others wish it torn down. The municipality has erected a huge unsightly fence around it including "Danger Keep Out" warning signs. Fierce clashes have crippled the proceedings in court. Townsfolk are upset because this unsightly town "center piece" has been devaluing our property. The issue has been casting a dark shadow.

And yet there is a lady in town who has made something beautiful from the controversy.

Cindy is a painter, and dear Christian friend. Last year she painted a picture of the old Inn and printed it on Christmas cards. Joseph and Mary on a Donkey are placed in the foreground. The painting is an imaginative blend of biblical, heritage, and modern! The fence clearly portrays "No room at the Inn".

One day another town-lady, Mary, a writer of historical narratives was inspired by the painting and wrote an imaginative

short story called, "Room at the Inn". In it she weaves hints of the Bible story with familiar aspects of life and community. Cindy's nativity painting is on the cover. Although Mary only ever intended her book to be gifts for family and friends, it has turned into a much coveted item - thanks to the kind cooperation of area merchants. It is in its third printing; and now I am working on an article about it for the paper.

In the story, mystical and miraculous occurrences oversee a travelling young couple, and one blustery winter night, the wife births her son in that old inn. The book closes with her whispering words: "We won't be able to tell anybody". Her husband replies, "Maybe not, but like Mary, we will treasure everything that happened here and ponder it in our hearts."

You see, it is possible to experience good, and make good out of the ravaging sins of the world. But, often we first have to learn to quietly treasure God's goodness in our hearts.

Diane

**Re: - posted by rowdy2 (), on: 2008/5/17 8:21**

Reply to Chris.

Chris I would like to add my thoughts to what you said

In order for a laser to become powerful enough to cause fusion and produce enough power to run the world, the laser's light has to be amplified many times and the combination of many lasers are capable through amplification to produce fusion with out harmful emissions and by products, but the problem now being addressed is that the lasers can only be fired once or twice a day and in order for the technology to be commercially applicable it would need to fire many times a second.

I said all that to say this. We too are lights to those that live in outer darkness and to reach them our light shines brightest and is seen and felt in desolate places when we combine and amplify our light's on any forum or given opportunity.

Many speakers are obstructionist and claim a superior knowledge and are not willing to admit they are given only in part the knowledge that transcends all earthly wisdom.

True wisdom is a blessing from our Father and not flesh and bone and it can be projected brightest by the unified body of Christ Jesus. . .

Eddie

**Re: Avoid the sensational - posted by roadsign (), on: 2008/5/19 7:07**

I got thinking, what if I were living in ancient Ephesus and had the same freedom I have now - to write about any happenings I wish to for the local paper. I could write about the glories of the great temple of the goddess Artemis - that cultural, religious and commercial centerpiece which was making Ephesus wealthy and famous. Of course, I would cover the riot, alleged to have been instigated by a small band of social nonconformists.

However, I probably would not have known anything about the event in Acts 20:1 - the outcome of the riot, that private moment where Paul encourages the disciples and then goes off to travel throughout Macedonia, encouraging saints along the way. That is not newsworthy content.

Thankfully the Bible was not written by media reporters, but by those who had been inspired with the very heart of God. That made for a different kind of writing. The various narratives, etc are cast from the perspective of God's eternal plan for humankind. And that is good news! Even the prophetic judgment accounts were crowned with the splendor of God's mercy. When Paul wrote his epistle to the Ephesians, that same ancient hope was foremost on his mind. This verse was no postscript:

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. Eph. 1:7-10

The Bible is replete with remarkable accounts of God's goodness. Most of those stories would never make it into the m

edia today — and didn't then back then. Many of them are about private, quiet events - outside the public eye, such as Joseph being prepared in prison, Moses and the burning bush, Elijah and the raising of the Sunammite woman's dead son, the transfiguration, etc. Jesus never tried to publicize himself before the masses. It wasn't God's way.

Today, we cannot easily see what God is doing in hearts, privately, quietly. And maybe that is the way he desires it. There are many dangers to public disclosure of the treasures of God: They tend to get enshrined. We enshrine testimonies, events, past blessings. The disciples wanted to enshrine the glory of the Transfiguration in man-made tents. Or we use God's gifts to gratify desire for power and significance - like in Ephesus where for some, the power to cast out demons became more attractive than the Lord Jesus himself. (See Acts 19)

May we, like Mary and so many other humble servants of God, learn to treasure the blessings of God in our hearts, and resist the temptation to go after the sensational.

Diane

**Re: Whatever is admirable... - posted by Zionshield (), on: 2008/5/21 21:04**

Thank you, Diane. This has been helpful to me in my battle for the mind these past few days.

My wife has been reading the little pamphlet, "Battle for the Mind" by Jessie Penn-Lewis. Very helpful also.

**Re:, on: 2008/5/21 21:21**

Quote:

roadsign wrote:

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. Eph. 1:7-10

May we, like Mary and so many other humble servants of God, learn to treasure the blessings of God in our hearts, and resist the temptation to go after the sensational.

Diane

Amen on all the content of the post and this in particular.

**Re: Whatever is admirable... - posted by ChrisJD (), on: 2008/5/22 19:27**

Hi everyone,

For some reason the music to Jesu, Joy of man's desiring by J.S. Bach came to mind and I thought of this thread. I decided to see if I could find it on cyberrhymnal and found this...

Jesu, joy of man's desiring,  
Holy wisdom, love most bright;  
Drawn by Thee, our souls aspiring  
Soar to uncreated light.  
Word of God, our flesh that fashioned,  
With the fire of life impassioned,

Striving still to truth unknown,  
Soaring, dying round Thy throne.

Through the way where hope is guiding,  
Hark, what peaceful music rings;  
Where the flock, in Thee confiding,  
Drink of joy from deathless springs.  
Theirs is beauty's fairest pleasure;  
Theirs is wisdom's holiest treasure.  
Thou dost ever lead Thine own  
In the love of joys unknown.

<http://www.cyberhymnal.org/htm/j/e/jesujomd.htm>

I don't think this is the same music but wanted to share it anyway. I did find some free versions of the music on-line searching by the title.

**Re: Whatever is admirable..., on: 2008/5/22 19:55**

The Lord Jesus often withdrew "to a lonely place", to commune with his Father. Why? I believe for the exact reason of the spirit of your post.

In ministry, attack can be continuous, and very straining on the mind, body and spirit. Being a mother with constant nurturing, activity and service; responsibilities that never go away, and constant giving of yourself, can even be more stressful.

I have used these analogies because they are similarly related, They are both ministry of equal importance, and pressure. In this world, our attackers are the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, and they never go away, no never.

We must overcome them. When we take our eyes of trust off of Jesus, and direct them to our struggles, the state of the church, or our wife or husband, or friend who betrayed us, our sickness, or **ourselves**, we lose. Every time...Our natures will always betray us. It is a bottomless pit, for our redemption does not lay there.

When Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, he gave us a model for prayer, and overcoming. Yet, the trek began again, the next day.....

The lesson is that we must always walk by faith looking to Jesus, the Finisher, and spare no expense to attain and maintain that relationship, even if it means leaving the bustle and commitments, to spend Sabbath devotions to Him alone.

"That I may know Him, and the fellowship of His sufferings....." Sitting at his feet.

**Re: The Naked God or the Clothed God - posted by roadsign (), on: 2008/5/24 19:15**

The following excerpt by Martin Luther relates to this topic, I believe:

Have mercy on me O God according to your steadfast love. According to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgression. Ps. 51:1

David is talking to the God of his Fathers, the God who promised. The people of Israel did not have a God who was viewed absolutely. Human weakness cannot help being crushed by the majesty of the absolute God, as scripture reminds us over and over. Let no one, therefore, interpret David as speaking with the absolute God. He is speaking with God as he is dressed and clothed in his word and promises.

When speaking of God we cannot exclude Christ whom God promised to Abraham and the patriarchs. We must take hold of this God - not naked, but clothed as revealed in his word. Otherwise certain despair will crush us.

This distinction must always be made between the prophets who speak with God and the pagans. Pagans speak with God outside of his word and promise, according to the thoughts of their hearts. But the prophets speak with God as he is clothed and revealed in his promises and word. This God - clothed in such a kind appearance and dressed in his promises - this God we can grasp and look at with joy and trust.

The absolute God, on the other hand is like an iron wall against which we cannot bump without destroying ourselves. Therefore Satan is busy day and night making us run to the naked God so that we can forget his promises and blessings shown in Christ and think about God and the judgment of God.

But David speaks with the God of his fathers, with the God whose promises he knows and whose mercy and grace he has felt. He could depend on God's promises as he prayed because the promises include Christ.

We thank you that you have clothed yourself in word and promise. We pray that you would help us in our thinking not to clamor after the absolute God - you in your naked power, but help us to seek you as you have revealed yourself in your promise, spoken of by the prophets, the apostles and confessed by the church.

Amen, so be it!

Quote:

----- The lesson is that we must always walk by faith looking to Jesus,  
-----

**Re: - posted by ChrisJD (), on: 2008/5/24 23:07**

Diane,

"David is talking to the God of his Fathers, the God who promised."

This stood out to me on the train ride home tonight...

"O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness of the LORD."

- Micah 6:5(KJV)

Seems to really fit here. Balak wanted to curse them, but

"...God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they *are* blessed."

- Numbers 22:12(KJV)

Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2008/5/28 6:27

Quote:

----- We must take hold of this God - not naked, but clothed as revealed in his word. Otherwise certain despair will crush us.  
-----

An experience yesterday reminded me of the need to heed these words by Luther.

While walking home, I came across two preschool boys in the street. Even though it was a chilly day, the younger one was barefoot and in shorts. He was crying, obviously because he had injured his toe which had a flap of skin hanging from it. The older boy was trying to drag him home.

I quickly realized that something was terribly wrong with this picture: No adult was in sight. So I approached them, asked a few questions, checked the bleeding toe, and then picked up the crying child. I asked the older boy to direct me to their house.

The house was a good-sized block away. In the driveway was a car with the trunk open. The older boy said, "Just leave him in the trunk". I said, "No", he needs to go into the house and get a bandaid for his toe. I was soon to find out why the boy had made such an absurd suggestion.

When I let the boys through the door, I could see a young man (Dad, I assume) at the top of the stairs. But instead of running down to the crying child, as any concerned parent would, he remained distant, and showed no empathy or warmth.

As I walked away (with no "Thank you") I could hear Dad blasting the boys for wandering off. It suddenly occurred to me that I had led those boys right into the hands of a "naked, vengeful god" - an authority whose first and foremost desire was judgment and punishment - mainly by withholding tender mercies. No doubt that's why the 4 y.o. suggested the car trunk. It was safer.

True, the boys had foolishly wandered off, and got hurt as a result. But isn't it that way for sinners too. They have wandered far from Home, and many are suffering the consequences of life in the "far country" - wounded hearts, grief, sorrow, broken relationships, and so forth. And yet, what is far more grievous, is the fact that these sinners have no concept of a compassionate God who awaits them, one who wants more than anything to have them come Home to him where they can receive his love, forgiveness, and healing. No wonder sinners resort to the "car trunks" in the world - those means that may feel safer than judgment. However, those devices merely shield them from the blessed hope.

What kind of God do others see portrayed through us? Oh, sure, we may articulate the doctrines of redemption with great eloquence. But the God that emanates from our being is the one that is real to us day by day, moment by moment. And that is the one others will see.

Diane

Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2008/5/28 6:34

Quote:

----- When we take our eyes of trust off of Jesus, and direct them to our struggles, the state of the church, or our wife or husband, or friend who betrayed us, our sickness, or ourselves, we lose. Every time...Our natures will always betray us. It is a bottomless pit, for our redemption does not lay there.  
-----

BrotherTom, your words cannot be underscored enough! I find it a perpetual temptation to gaze more intently at my/our/their inadequacies than upon the mighty love and mercy of God through Christ. This is such a grievous sin - because it dulls the Image that ought to be reflected through me.



Quote:

----- that ye may know the righteousness of the LORD."

Quote:

----- Drink of joy...

Chris, your posts remind me of the value of strengthening one another with the message of hope as portrayed in the Word and in song - such as Bach's "Jesu Joy".

Of course, there is nothing like example - and you have been a consistent good example here in SI.

Diane

**Re: the one others will see - posted by ChrisJD (), on: 2008/5/31 8:03**

Hi everyone.

Dear Diane,

What a story. Thank you for sharing it!

It seems to me that there is a principle in the scripture: that we become like whatever we worship. Or set before us, or gaze upon.

Or also, that we should be carefull of what we put before us, to do the same.

Remember for instance how Jacob got his flock in Genesis 30? I do not understand this story altogether, or even very much, but it stands out how he put the rods before their eyes.

Or remember how David writes

"I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes..."

Or how the Psalmist says

"Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity..."

By eyes, could'nt this mean our natural eyes or the eyes of our heart and mind?

In the second commandment it says we are not to make any graven images... That is, **we** are not to make them **unto ourselves**.

But, isn't it true that God has made images of a sort... That is, weren't we made in His image?

And didn't He even command that there should be *cherubims of gold, of beaten work* to be placed at either end of the Mercy Seat upon the ark of the Covenant(see Exodus 25:18)?

And weren't these things that were in Heaven?

The second commandment says then, that **we** are not to make graven images **unto ourselves**.

We are not to make an image for ourselves, **to worship**.

In Psalm 45 it says

"Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he *is* thy Lord; and worship thou him."

- Psalm 45:10-11(KJV)

*...and worship thou him*

Do you know, that according to Strong's, this word translated worship here, is the same word that in Exodus 20 and verse 5 is rendered in the KJV *bow down thyself*?

When Moses met the Lord at Horeb and he asked Him what he should tell the children of Israel, if they asked what His name was, it says that the Lord replied

"And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."

- Exodus 3:14(KJV)

Names can be descriptive of who or what we are. Or they can communicate such to others. But what could God point to, here, in sending Moses to a people that were captives in a land where many gods were worshiped? What could God point to, in order to give an adequate representation of Himself, or to say for instance, that He was like this...or like that? Wh

at in all of creation, what created thing could adequately represent God? To them?

What could God point to, to show any of us for that matter? How can God, Who is so infinite, so transcendent, so beyond anything created, how can He be made known to us, in a full and adequate way?

John the Apostle of Christ, in introducing us to Christ in the Gospel record, says

*...and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

Moses had asked God also, to show him His glory. And God had said to him

"...Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live."

- Exodus 33:20(KJV)

And John also says that no man has seen God. But he says

"the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*."

- John 1:18(KJV)

*...he hath declared him*

What Moses could only see the hinder part of, is seen in Christ Jesus.

The Lord Jesus told Phillip

**he that hath seen me hath seen the Father**

In the book of Hebrews He is called *...the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.*

We were forbidden to make an image unto ourselves, to worship. But of the King in Psalm 45 it says

"...and worship thou him"

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord."

- 2Corinthians 3:18(KJV)

**Re: More on the "naked" God - posted by roadsign (), on: 2008/6/2 12:23**

Quote:

-----What a story. Thank you for sharing it!  
-----

But I forgot to top it off with my main point! Â– from LutherÂ’s meditation:

"Satan is busy day and night making us run to the naked God so that we can forget his promises and blessings shown in Christ and think about God and the judgment of God."

Just as I took two distressed children to a Â“naked godÂ” so to speak, we might inadvertently do the same thing Â– present sinners to a cold, distant God who is stingy with mercy. How might this happen? I think that the answer relates to ChrisÂ’s comment:

Quote:

----- The second commandment says then, that we are not to make graven images unto ourselves.  
-----

Might I suggest that one of the most insidious temptations is to carve out for ourselves a life that attempts to appease a naked God: It is a life of works and self-effort. It keeps us from seeing God through the blessed hope of Christ. It is a self-focused life.

Quote:

----- We are not to make an image for ourselves, to worship.  
-----

If we know only a naked God, then we will make our Â“selfÂ” into an idol.

If we worship a naked God that is the kind of God that will emanate from us. We will put pressure on others, including ourselves, to Â“shape upÂ” Â– to do better in order to avoid divine wrath. We will be critical. We will become behaviour-focused, legalistic. We either become proud of our achievement or we become discouraged over our failures. Either way, we foster a self-absorbed kind of life. Christ is not the center.

But above all, we will be unable to lead others to the God of promise.

“Whatever is admirable... This is Christ and our blessed hope through him.

What kind of God enters your mind most readily? That is the God you worship.

“Grace be with you” Col. 4:18

Diane

**Re: mercy and truth - posted by ChrisJD (), on: 2008/6/2 21:38**

Diane,

I thought of how God presented Himself to Moses in Exodus 34:5-7.

But how can mercy and truth meet together?

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

- John 1:14(KJV)

**Re: Whatever is lovely.... - posted by roadsign (), on: 2008/6/11 14:23**

“ Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the gloom that you have. 1 Pet. 3:15

Did you catch my misquote? (“Gloom” should read as “hope”). My error here reminds me that God does not require us to give account to others for our negativity, but instead, for our hope – that is a hope experienced and expressed through deep inner joy. This joy emanates from us and draws the attention of others. But, oh, there are so many forces that block us from living in that joy.

Today a friend came over to fellowship with me over tea. During our chatting we confessed to each other our struggle with negativity. She then began to pray that God would cut off all sources of negativity from us – be it generational habit we learned early in life, or any influence from sources around us or within us. As she was praying I “saw” what seemed to be a glorious river of joy flowing deep down under the surface of the earth. I “saw” what were like many roots straining to reach the river, but never quite able to get there. I pleaded with God to show us the barriers to the river of joy.

Then suddenly our prayers became flooded over with all kinds of "inner truths" (Ps. 51) as if God shone the floodlights on dark spots in our hearts. There was, first and foremost, the desire to be in control; then there were various fears. There was simply our own unwillingness. (Why, good Christians aren't supposed to be happy!) We became aware of the constant nagging voices on our conscience that put ungodly demands on us from ourselves and from others to try to change circumstances or people. Then there was the idolatrous desire to be useful for God – as if our happiness depended on our productivity as Christians. This illusive dream leaves us perpetually feeling like we are falling short. A habit of putting constant pressure on ourselves gives us a hopeless and gloomy outlook. It also causes us to do likewise to others: we put pressure on them - the very thing that repels them.

My friend has plenty of reason to be gloomy: She is married to an alcoholic. Today she realized that she didn't have to live with gloom. She could chose to be happy in Christ – with the joy of the LORD – regardless of her circumstances.

Funny, we had begun by praying that GOD himself would remove our negativity. In the end, it was clear that he had thrown the ball back into our court. He has already offered to us his river of joy, and it is our decision to chose it or to reject it. We don't have to stay gloomy or negative, cynical or critical. But we need God's enabling.

The prophet Habakkuk CHOSE to make this decision too:

#### Habakkuk Declares His Confidence

When the fig tree does not bud,  
and there are no grapes on the vines;  
when the olive trees do not produce,  
and the fields yield no crops;  
when the sheep disappear from the pen,  
and there are no cattle in the stalls,

I will rejoice because of the LORD;  
I will be happy because of the God who delivers me!

The sovereign LORD is my source of strength.  
He gives me the agility of a deer;  
he enables me to negotiate the rugged terrain. Hab. 3:16-19 NET Bible

Habakuk reminds us that the prophetic mandate is neither that of whitewashing the flimsy "walls" in our world (Ez 13:10,11) NOR that of blackwashing them.

Quote:  
----- But how can mercy and truth meet together?  
-----

Maybe we find the answer in the "river of joy".

Quote:  
----- we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father ...full of grace and truth."  
-----

Diane

Re: - posted by tjservant (), on: 2008/6/13 8:53

Quote:  
-----What kind of God do others see portrayed through us? Oh, sure, we may articulate the doctrines of redemption with great eloquence. But the God that emanates from our being is the one that is real to us day by day, moment by moment. And that is the one others will see.  
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Thank you for this Diane. It has spoken to me on many levels. What kind of God radiates from us while we are on this site? The world is watching. Thanks again for posting your insights. I needed it.