



Of Seeds and Flowers



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BETWEEN A ROCK AND HARDPLACE

On the first day of class the professor stood behind his desk on which a large open mouth Mason jar was placed. He bent under the desk and came up with a bucket of rocks. He filled the Mason jar with the rocks and then asked the students; *"Is the jar full?"* The students quickly responded, *"Yes"*.

Then he bent under the desk and came up with a box of gravel and poured the gravel into the jar around the rocks until the jar was filled and asked, *"Is the jar full?"* Again the students responded, *"Yes"*.

The professor again reached under his desk and came up with a box of sand and poured it in and around the rocks and gravel. Again he asked the students, *"Is the jar full?"* Now, cautiously, the students replied, *"Yes"*.

The professor went under the desk and brought up a jar of water and poured the water into the jar and asked the same question of the students; *"Now, is the jar full?"* Not to be fooled again, the students said, *"Probably not"*.

Under the desk again, and the professor brought up a cup of sugar and slowly poured it into the jar. The sugar melted into the water and disappeared. *"Is the jar full, the professor asked for the last time?"* The students were silent.

The professor then asked, *"Why did I go through this whole demonstration?"* *"What was I trying to prove?"*

One student replied, *"No matter how busy you are there is always time to fit in one more task"*. Another student said, *"When you think you have finished an assignment always go over it several times to be sure you have correctly finished your work."*

After three or four other suggestions the professor said, *"No, none of your answers are correct."* *"The message of this demonstration is simply: "If you don't put the big rocks into the jar first, you will never get them in at all."*

And so the real question for you and me is: *What are the big "rocks" in our lives?* What are the things that we must **first** put into our "life jar" in order to be able to get them in at all? What are the biggest things, the **most important things** that we absolutely must fit into our lives so that our lives are **properly ordered**?

Some suggestions:

First: GOD. He/She must go in first. "Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the **Lord alone!** Therefore you shall love the Lord, your God, with **all your heart** and with **all your soul**, and with **all your strength**. Take to heart these words which I enjoin on you today. Drill them into your children. Speak of them at home and abroad, whether you are busy or at rest." Deut. 6: 4-7.

Second: Your **husband or wife**. **NEVER, EVER** let your career become more important than your **vocation!!!!!!**
Husband, wife, mother, father, brother, sister, etc. - **FIRST, ALWAYS!**

Third: Your **children, their spouses, your grandchildren**.

Fourth: Your **job**.

Fifth: All other good works and activities.

When RIGHT ORDER is ignored in our lives everything and everyone suffers.

"It's not so much the things you know that hurt you, as the things you "Know" that ain't so." - Will Rogers

A DROP OF RAIN

A man went to a barber shop to get a haircut and a shave. As always, they began to have a lively conversation. They talked about many things and various subjects. Suddenly, they touched on the subject of God and the barber said: " Sorry, but I don't believe that God exists."

"Why do you say that?" asked the man in the chair.

The barber replied, "Well, it's easy, you just have to go into the street to realize that God doesn't exist. If God existed, would there be so many sick people? Would there be abandoned children? If God existed, there would be no suffering nor pain. I can't think of loving a God who permits any of these things."

The man in the barber chair stopped for a moment to think. He didn't want to start an argument. The barber finished his haircut and the client left the barber shop. Just after he left the barber shop he saw a man in the street with a long hair and beard. Clearly, it had been a long time since he had a haircut and shave. He looked very unkempt.

Then the man went back to the barber shop and he said to the barber, "You know what? Barbers do not exist."

"How can you say they don't exist?" asked the barber. "Well I am here and I am a barber."

"No!" the man responded, "Barbers don't exist because if they did there would be no people with long hair and a beard like that man walking in the street."

The barber thought for a moment and replied, "Ah, barbers do exist, what happens is that people like the man on the street do not come to me."

"Exactly!"- affirmed the man. "That's the point. God does exist, what happens is people don't go to Him, trust Him, accept Him and the power of His transforming Spirit. Maybe, that's why there's so much pain and suffering in the world."

GOD IS THE ULTIMATE REALITY THAT UPHOLDS ALL REALITY.

A group of travelers were crossing the desert. They stopped at an oasis and pitched camp for the night. About halfway through the night they had an angel visit the camp. Everyone was so excited. They expected a message from the angel that would change their lives and maybe the world.

The angel spoke: "*Pick up some small rocks and pebbles and fill your knapsack. This time tomorrow night some of you will be very happy and some of you will be sad.*" There was much disappointment and discouragement over the message.

Reluctantly, some of the travelers put some stones into their sacks, some filled their sacks and some, totally dejected, did nothing.

The next night, as they pitched camp, they emptied their sacks. The people who filled their sacks with rocks found that the rocks had turned to diamonds and were very happy. The people who half filled their sacks were disappointed and less happy and those who did nothing were very sad.

Life is made up of tiny things done over and over. Little acts of kindness, compassion and generosity. - unconditional love! Seldom do we encounter great events or life changing moments. "Little by little we grow." Meister Eckhart. Don't miss filling your sack with those little acts of kindness that will furnish your home for all eternity.

"There are no great things; only **SMALL THINGS DONE WITH GREAT LOVE.**" Mother Teresa

VISION AND REALITY

"All that is necessary for evil triumph is for good people to do nothing." Edmund Burke

2018 is the 19th anniversary of Columbine. High school students and teachers are walking out, protesting school violence. **Just a thought: -100%** of school shooters have been bullied by their fellow students and were deeply involved in violent video games. It is **easy** to walk out and protest and **FEEL GOOD FOR 15 MINUTES BUT NOT SO EASY TO STOP BULLYING AND PLAYING VIOLENT VIDEO GAMES**. Why not be a **CHANGE AGENT NOW** and do something that can **DO NOW** that gives **immediate results**? Why not **boycott and protest** violent video games? When you point a finger of blame at someone else, three fingers are pointing right back at yourself.

In the high school where I taught for 32 years, by accident, I found, in the 1953 Year Book, a picture of **THE RIFLE CLUB**, sporting their 22 rifles. -twelve boys and two girls. The students **brought rifles to school stored them in their lockers. IMAGINE!!!** They used **live ammunition** to compete with other schools. **Imagine!! WHAT CHANGED???**

Billy Graham's Prayer For Our Nation 'Heavenly Father, we come before you today to ask your forgiveness and to seek your direction and guidance. We know Your Word says, 'Woe to those who call evil good,' but that is exactly what we have done. We have exploited the poor and called it the **lottery**. We have rewarded laziness and called it **welfare**. We have killed our unborn and called it **choice**. We have shot policemen and abortionists and called it **justifiable**. We have neglected to discipline our children and called it **building self esteem**. We have abused power, ruined reputations, built debt and called it **politics**. We have been misled by the media and called it **reporting**. We have coveted our neighbor's possessions and called it **ambition**. We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it **freedom of expression**. We have pretended to care for children and called it **liberation and career building**. We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our forefathers and called it **enlightenment**. Search us, Oh God, and know our hearts today; cleanse us from every sin and set us free. Amen!

One evening a madman carrying a lantern came running into the town square screaming, "*I seek God, I seek God.*" The people in the square were quite amused because they were unbelievers. "*Is He lost?*" asks one. "*Has He strayed like a small child?*" asks another. "*Is He hiding?*" "*Is He afraid of us?*" "*Has He emigrated to another country?*"

The madman answered, "*I'll tell you where God has gone. **We killed Him. We all killed Him.***" Then the madman became silent and they looked on in surprise. He waited for a few minutes then, in anger and frustration, he smashed his lantern into the ground and shouted, "**I came too early.**"

"These are my **final principles** and, if you don't like them, **I've got others.**" Groucho Marx

The real question is not, "Who are you"? but "**Whose are you**"? We belong to God. Our ultimate identity is in Him, **the Ultimate Reality that upholds ALL reality**. We need to pray over and over: "Abba,(Daddy in Hebrew) Father, I belong to you"!

Jesus said to Mary Magdalene in the garden of the Resurrection: "I am ascending to **MY Father and YOUR Father**, to **MY God and YOUR God**". WOW!!! Jesus' Father and God is **OUR'S** as well! We hold such treasures!! -and hold them too lightly!! **Make this real in your life and the world will change!** Have you ever wondered about the wonderful things that never happened in your life because you were not prepared to receive them? Watch out for that moment of grace!!!

Test yourselves to see whether you are living in faith; examine yourselves. Perhaps you yourselves do not realize that Christ Jesus is in you -unless, of course, you have failed the test." 2 Cor. 13: 5.



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SPEAKING SOFTLY

An older African American woman was standing on the side of an Alabama highway trying to endure a lashing rainstorm. Her car had broken down and she desperately needed a ride. Soaking wet, she decided to flag down the next car. A young white man stopped to help her, generally unheard of in those conflict-filled 1960s. The man took her to safety, helped her get assistance and put her into a taxicab. She seemed to be in a big hurry, but wrote down his address and thanked him. Seven days went by and a knock came on the man's door. To his surprise, a giant console color TV was delivered to his home. A special note was attached. It read: Thank you so much for assisting me on the highway the other night. The rain drenched not only my clothes, but also my spirits. Then you came along. Because of you, I was able to make it to my dying husband's bedside just before he passed away. God bless you for helping me and unselfishly serving others."

Sincerely, Mrs. Nat King Cole

One of the tasks assigned to Christians is to raise the level of the consciousness of the society in which they live. Jesus did it with the Pharisees, Romans and Jewish leaders, Augustine did it, Thomas More did it in Henry VII's England, Dietrich Bonhoeffer in Nazi Germany, Martin Luther King and Cesar Chavez in the U. S., Desmond Tutu in South Africa, Dorothy Day in the Bronx, Mother Teresa did it for the poor, the Little Sisters of the Poor and Pope Francis are doing it. If you don't fulfill this mission, as Jesus said, **"Even the stones will cry out."**

'I would like to buy \$3.00 worth of God please, not enough to explode my soul or disturb my sleep, but enough to equal a warm cup of milk or a snooze in the sunshine. I don't want enough of HIM to make me love a black man or tithe my paycheck or pray for an hour a day, or confront the actions of the media, bad leaders or institutions. I want ecstasy, not transformation. I want the warmth of the womb, not a new birth. I want a pound of the eternal in a paper sack, **just \$3.00 worth of God, please."** William Rees

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