

THE PULSE OF SPIRIT



EMISSARIES
OF DIVINE LIGHT

DEALING WITH DISTRACTIONS

SEPTEMBER 9, 2013

When I consider the abundance and the beauty of this world—the evidence of constant generation, life moving through trees, through birds, through animals, through insects, through people, through the whole continuum of creation, I cannot help but give deep and humble thanks. What a pleasure it is to realize that it's all mine to own and steward in the name of the Creator and to do that with everyone else who has the same perspective.

As there is an awakening to that responsibility, the realization of what our human capacities are for, what the whole of creation is for—to give glory to the Creator—there is response from those capacities and from that creation to the deepest calling of my heart, which is the calling of the Creator. There is a collective calling together in various ways, in various places, of those who share that realization, that together we might allow the full glory of the Creator to be present with His creation.

Sometimes the invitation to provide that presence in my world can be specific and clear and large, and often others hear and respond to that same invitation and we find ourselves participating in a creative endeavor together that is very generative and satisfying. At other times, usually much more often, the invitation is less discernible. The seemingly less noteworthy events of everyday life don't seem to carry the same grand potential for creation, and opportunities can be missed for that same revelation of the Creator—just in smaller, but no less important, ways. Big, small; grand, ordinary—they're all part of the continuum of creation. They're all part of the spectrum of opportunity to create beauty, to create what's accurate and true, to give evidence of the Creator.

I think there's no greater pleasure, no deeper fulfillment than to respond wholeheartedly to the invitation to be of service in that way—in the small things, in the big things, in the joyous things, in the uncomfortable things. It's all part of the same continuum. It's all part of that flow of life, which is ours to steward, which is ours to magnify and build on, into which we bring our own particular essences, our own unique creativity. Wonderful things happen when we do that.

There's a portion of Psalm 1 from the Bible that says this:

*Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners,
nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.*

But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

*And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his
leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*

(Psalm 1:1-3)

That describes most poetically the attitude of one who will represent and express “the law of the Lord,” no matter what.

In the flow of life that's described by the term *the law of the Lord*, in the continuum of opportunity, things arise that can become distractions. I can get distracted from the glory that is present, persuade myself that this issue over here is so important that I really have to grapple with this thing, and when I do I lose sight of the glory that's unfolding. I have come to the conclusion that living a glorious life has something to do with wisely managing distraction. The true state is always present; it never goes away. The only reason that I might experience that it's not there is because I'm distracted from it—I'm doing something else, I'm looking in a different direction, when actually whatever it is that I'm allowing myself to be distracted by is really part of the same flow. I have just believed that I needed to extract it from that flow in order to take care of it. As something removed from the larger context of the unfolding creative process, it does become a distraction.

If the issue is not separated out but maintained in the flow, in the larger context of what it is that's unfolding, even though it may seem to be disparate or contrary to what I think should be present, it can become an integral part of a larger creative outworking. What might have held me out of participation in the creative process becomes the very thing through which I can engage. Any experience of separation can be a reminder that there's a chance to come back into alignment with what we know is true. We can steward what's at hand and, at the same time, create a resonance that will move into the future and assist us to deal with other potential distractions in creative ways.

There will always be distractions that emerge in our lives—financial or health challenges, exciting new relationships, projects that take a lot of our attention—all of which could either be distractions from a life centered in primary purpose, the “law of the Lord,” or could be included in the ongoing flow as particular creative opportunities for further transformation.

There's a phrase in the Bible, “from glory unto glory,” which evokes for me the awareness of how our lives could be and, I believe, were designed to be. When things occur that feel anything but glorious, that's a perfect time to do whatever it takes to remember that there's so much more going on than just what has taken our attention. The flow of life continues and, if we are not totally taken up by our immediate

circumstance, there are gifts that will come—we just have to provide space in our consciousness for them to emerge.

Many years ago a close friend sent me part of a Yeats poem that describes in evocative terms the possibility of experiencing the glory of life in most unexpected ways when there's openness to it:

*My fiftieth year had come and gone,
I sat, a solitary man,
In a crowded London shop,
An open book, an empty cup
On the marble table-top.
While on the shop and street I gazed
My body of a sudden blazed;
And twenty minutes more or less
It seemed, so great my happiness
That I was blessed and could bless.*

(from Vacillation, by William Butler Yeats)

What a priceless gift, to rediscover that place where we actually belong all the time—that there are occasions and reminders that come to us that make it easier to get back into that joy of being blessed by life and, in turn, to be able to bless our worlds. Our part of the deal is to ensure that what might be distractions are always held in a larger context and seen for what they are—creative opportunities to expand and clarify our conscious participation in the life that is to be uniquely lived by each of us.

*Phil Richardson
prichardson@emnet.org*

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100 Sunrise Ranch Road ♦ Loveland, CO 80538
970.679.4200 phone 970.679.4248 fax