

Chapter 11



REFLECTIONS OF A HUMBLE SPIRIT

Matthew 18:3-4

“I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

Humility Defined

When we view society as it exists today and compare it historically to yesterday, it appears that mankind has truly crossed every abyss and elevated itself to unimaginable heights; or so it seems. Given the information highway with its latest technological developments, the ability to travel throughout the world, along with the advanced scientific research on how the human body functions, one would think a perfect, infinite society has been born; or has it?

Thus, in the process of drawing a conclusion as to the accuracy of these statements, one must define the word eternity as being infinite; duration without beginning or end. Therefore, without calling on all the master minds in this world, it is clearly obvious that these developments and discoveries by mankind do not fit within the definition of the word, eternity. All these things are material and will disappear when each of us takes our final breath of air; which is a reality for all mankind.

Further, in Matthew, Jesus compares our earthly lives to the grass of the field which is here today and gone tomorrow. However, after being warned by Him that life on this earth lasts only a moment, He follows by opening the door of opportunity for choosing eternal life. This offer to live forever also is accompanied with a complete instructional guide called, The Holy Bible; His Word.

In Isaiah 66:2, we all are told explicitly what behavior God values with these words: “This is the one I esteem; he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at My word.”

Our Heavenly Father, with these words, is sending a clear message on the importance of living a life filled with humility, behavior built on a modest sense of one's own importance. Pure and simply, this means our daily lives will reflect an unassuming, unpretentious attitude, without egotism, boastfulness, or vanity. Our behavior will send a clear message to others through actions that life is not about self or things of this world, but God, instead. It will be abundantly clear to others that God is the center of our universe with the goal of our journey being based on His destiny for our lives. This means that we will fall to our knees in heart felt obedience to our Heavenly Father.

Philippians 2: 8 shows us that Jesus set a clear example for His children to follow through His own actions of humility. Paul describes the actions of Jesus by stating: “And being found in appearance as man, He humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross.”

After internalizing God's desire for us to live a humble life followed by a clear focus on the definition, most of us question our abilities to comply. However, before we succumb to defeat, it is important to point out that when we spend each day trying to humble ourselves the Holy Spirit will react to our openness as an invitation to dwell in our hearts and minds. Thus, acting as our Holy Counselor, he will teach us even greater humility which will develop within our souls the ability to bear with one another in love.

Consequently, it has been noted that Christians who are devoted to being a servant to others will have hearts and minds fueled by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. They will be the least judgmental of their brothers and the most willing to meet life's toughest challenges. They will be filled to overflowing with a faith that smiles and a belief that all things are possible in Christ Jesus.

Thus, it is believed there is no greater gift that adults can teach the children of tomorrow than demonstrating loving actions to others through a humble walk. This was a lesson well learned throughout the writer's childhood due to the manner in which her parents displayed these behaviors. Her earthly father, a country minister for over 60 years, left behind a poem containing such rich words

of humility that it is worth sharing with all.

My Home

It may look tattered worn and ragged
This place where we abide
No frivolous joy or gaiety
To warrant our happy pride.

You may search this wide world over
All under heaven's vast dome
In all earths joy and splendor
You'll find no place like home.

Without the costly velvet rugs,
No gold or carpets fine
Walls simply painted with white and gray
In that humble home of mine.

A place where we can meet with God
And all His blessings share
A place where love shall rule supreme
Through peace, joy and prayer

You may search this wide world over
And no matter where'er you roam
In all earths beauty bright and fair
You'll find no place like home.

(Written by : Reverend Payton Smyer)

Mary Josephine Pascall and my earthly father had in common, a modest sense of self importance and shared all their blessings with others in need. Early in life, both started hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit offering guidance for each step of their earthly journeys. They also accepted the scripture from Philipians 2:13: "For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose."

Therefore, when they were on their knees with faces lifted toward the heavens, they were praying in unison, “Here I am Lord, the child You created for Your purpose. Though I've fallen short because of self will, I believe You love me. Although your voice is not always clear to my sinful ears, and confuses me, I vow to follow You everyday of my life. You are the Way, Truth, and my Light for all eternity. Amen.”

As Mary's life has unfolded on the pages of this book, it is apparent that, although left an orphan at age three, she proceeded to climb the highest hills and face the darkest valleys of her life with a faith that smiled. The recognition early on that her Father, Almighty God, was the Great Creator of her life filled her with a sense of direction and purpose beyond measure.

Thus, Mary dared to be different in the face of segregation; a time in history that forced restrictions on every part of her being. She soared like an eagle above the ordinary ideas and sameness that were acceptable in the eyes of society. On this journey where deviating from the norm meant learning from mistakes and admitting to shortcomings alone, she courageously lifted her arms to the light and moved forward one small step at a time.

Consequently, there were places where she found herself walking in what appeared to be barren waste land, producing only violent shudders deep within her being; a time when the season of hope and promise belonged in the past. As she fought her way toward hope, cobwebs like gossamer veils appeared to dim the light causing her to stumble and fall; groping her way toward an answer. There all around her was a cold fog of confusion, doubt and fear.

However, her saving grace each time was the self realization that nothing was too big or impossible for her God. Through the act of humility, Mary felt the indwelling of the Holy Spirit with such force that she often found it necessary to pull her car to the side of the road and listen with full attention. No matter her circumstances, He was always there patiently waiting for her to focus and calm her senses.

Over time, God poured His divine love into every fiber of Mary's being; causing her to open her spirit like a budding rose lifting its velvet crimson petals toward the open sky. As Mary's loving Father carefully molded her into a vessel of love,

it was apparent that He cared more about who she was as a person than where her feet were walking at the moment. Fortunately, our gracious God in all His wisdom knew that once He molded her into the person He desired, everything else would fall into place.

Thus, as the seasons of Mary's life unfolded, God's blessings of love poured from her heart into the lives of old and young alike. Whether at work or play, God used her gentle touch to minister to others in need; regardless of age, gender or race. Our amazing Heavenly Father's plan of forming Mary into His vessel of love gracefully flowed into the destiny He had planned for her earthly journey long before she was born.

As a result, Mary's mission mirrored the Apostle Paul when in 1 Corinthians 9:19 he said, "Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible."

God Chooses The Common

Many times when individuals read in the Bible about the mighty people God used for service in His kingdom, they fail to relate it to their own personal lives. The perception of the giants in the Old Testament such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and David are viewed as vastly different from people today; drawing no relationship to self. Yet, when you focus closely on each person, even though chosen by God for specific reasons, every one of them sinned in the eyes of their Father. Yet, the common thread that wove itself through all their lives was the respect and loyalty they displayed toward God. No matter how far off course in thought or action, they bowed with great humility at the throne of God.

In other words, they were human beings just like each of us, making mistakes on their journeys. They, like all of us, forgot at times that life was not about them, but being obedient to God, instead. There were times in their lives when they tried to handle things on their own rather than pray and listen to what God wanted them to do at the moment. Today, like then, we must ask ourselves how many times our Father has patiently watched us fumble around being independent, having all the answers, knowing we were not only on the wrong path, but in a totally unrelated location. Yet, He was still there when we finally figured out we were lost and without hope.

Mary openly admits to being imperfect like the giants described in the Old Testament and paving the highway of life with one mistake after another. She will say, "Honey, the Lord never left my side even when I was sure all the right answers came from my own head instead of His. I was living life loudly, without thought toward the consequences. I thought I was so cute until I found myself down and out, sitting in a ditch. But do you know what child? The good Lord never left me. His hand was always reaching for mine!"

Still Kicking At Age 91

When Mary enters a crowded room, she is fully cognizant that, by far, at age 91 she is usually the oldest person present. Sometimes when remembering the friends and loved ones long departed, admittedly, it causes a strange feeling to descend upon her entire being. After all, she finds herself the only living soul belonging to a generation that has already bade their farewells; a lonely position, indeed.

Today, when Mary addresses the reason for being among the last in her generation to depart this earth, she will say, "I'm here and I don't regret it! I am certain beyond a shadow of doubt there is something else for me to do. I don't know what it is yet but my Father has the answer. We live. We die. We go to heaven or hell. It is in God's time, not ours. We go when he wants us and where He wants us; all in His time. I don't grieve about anyone now for it is the will of God they are gone. The thing for me to do is to get myself ready and God will take care of the rest. His will be done."

My Precious Child

As Mary sits in meditation, looking out toward the woods behind the nursing home, she appears peaceful and resolved. Each morning as the first rays of sunlight announce the beginning of yet another day in her 91 years of living, she greets it with joy and a promise to do her best until time for her departure. Using the one hand that still works, she turns to a scripture in the Bible that causes a gentle smile to cross her face in hopeful expectation of things to come. With her low crisp voice she reads from 2 Timothy 4: 7-8: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on

that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for His appearing.”

Throughout Mary's journey, God has never taken His eyes off her coming and going. At the beginning, He found a most uncommon choice as a loving parent for a three year old orphan girl; an adoptive mother who had been Mary's landlord. When it was time to find her a soul mate, Grant was there with love to assign the name “Madam Queen” which fit her personality like a glove. Then when God had filled Mary's entire being with love, she poured it out freely into the hearts of children of every race and color; who then nicknamed her their “Aunt Jo.” Last, when in the sunset of her years, wearing a body severely affected from a stroke, her fellow residents at the nursing home changed her name to “Mama Jo”; a perfect title for this season of wisdom.

Thus, from the beginning of her journey forward, God acted as a loving Father, never letting her out of His sight. He had designed a destiny built for Mary based on love and guided her every step of the way toward achieving this goal. He still knows her better than she knows herself and has eyes that never leave the calendar of her life.

As a result, it isn't any wonder that Mary faces each day with such confidence. All that is required for her to witness the depth of His love is to read the following verse from Psalm 116: 15: “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.” This scripture fully assures Mary that her Heavenly Father has carefully chosen the time He will call her into His presence.

In conclusion, it is the writer's belief that when Mary Josephine Pascall enters the Pearly Gates, a warm crystal clear voice of authority will greet her by saying, “Welcome to your eternal home “My Precious Child”; a name He assigned to her from birth.

Last, as the curtain closes on the final chapter of Mary Josephine Pascall's earthly journey, the richness and depth of each season act as an inspiration for all God's children. When you the reader ponder the highs and lows of a life well lived, it will be obvious that through it all, Mary's humble spirit allowed God's love to serve as the energy source that fueled her with endurance and courage to face unimaginable conflicts and yet dream unthinkable thoughts for a brighter tomorrow. In doing so, Mary is leaving behind enormous footsteps for others to follow; each shaped by a humble spirit.

Without question, the resounding message she would like to leave as a guide for each of us to use on our walk with God is, **“WITHOUT LOVE, YOU'RE JUST A BALL IN HIGH GRASS!”** AMEN!



MARY THE PRAYER WARRIOR COMMUNING WITH GOD; A COMMON OCCURANCE THAT SERVES AS A WITNESS TO ALL MANKIND.



“Without Love, You're Just A Ball In High Grass” from Sunset Embers Collection