

Melva's Corner

Experiencing Dark Days?



Tapping the Source of Power

Central Truth: Spiritual growth is an ongoing transition from bondage to freedom in prayer and in every other aspect of life.

Countless have been the times that I have heard (and probably said) something to the effect: "This is the darkest day of my life."

For starters, the "dark day" is a profoundly good thing. It is an ongoing spiritual process in which we are liberated from attachments and compulsions and empowered to live more freely. Of course, this doesn't mean that the darkness isn't painful — for loss and grief do bring pain. The good news is that in obscurity and uncertainty — two realities most Christians do everything to avoid — God is present. And not only is he present, God eventually brings about a dawn; a dawn that is characterized by liberation of love, deepening of faith, gratitude and awareness of our union with Him.

To guide us toward this union with God — to the love we most desire — we must be taken where we could not and would not go on our own. And though the 'perceived' darkness can be quite troublesome and frustrating, it is when we cannot chart our own course that we become vulnerable to God's protection and the darkness can even become a guiding light.

Thankfully, though the "darkness" is healing and liberating and humbling, it is not an end in and of itself. It is rather an ongoing transition from bondage to freedom in prayer and in every other aspect of life. In other words, one of the greatest fruits that comes from the "darkness" experience is the Spirit's nudge — which sometimes feels like a "yank" — to receive the offer of contemplative prayer as a way of life. Of course, in our fast-paced, busy, compulsive society, few willingly choose contemplation, much less silence. But as life comes to a stop — whether through loss, fatigue, failed expectations or a gnawing sense that life is meaningless — God, through the "darkness," calls us to relinquish our idolatries and see that He is closer to us than we think.

As we — or others we love — go through the dark days, two questions seem especially appropriate: "Do you really want to go back to the way things were?" and "What then do you most deeply desire?" It is through those challenging times that you can affirm that it is indeed when life seems darkest and silent, that you begin to experience how close the love of Christ really is and how our ultimate vocation in life is to share this love with the world!

Scriptural References:

"I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection! But I keep working toward that day when I will finally be all that Christ Jesus saved me for and wants me to be. No, dear brothers and sisters, I am still not all I should be, but I am focusing all my energies on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I strain to reach the end of the race and receive the prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us up to heaven . . . You who are mature Christians will agree on these things." (Philippians 3:12-15 NLT)