



May 2003

*And the Word (Jesus) became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory,
the glory as of only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14).*

The Prism of God

My wife Joy is like a little girl as she gasps with joy at all the glistening colors from her crystals hanging in the window. Joy recently found an article "The Prism of God," and is sharing this article along with crystals as gifts. I hope this newsletter is a kind of crystal gift for you reflecting beautiful truths. And here is the article for you (*by Milt Rodriguez from www.therebuilders.org*):

In Christ (the Word), the Father is communicating Himself through human flesh. You could say that the Lord's humanity was a kind of prism the Father used to show for His glory. The Father's glory is like pure, white light. Contained within the light are all the colors. The light is too pure and bright for us to see any of the colors when we look directly upon it. But when we look through the prism, the white light is broken down and then displays the many colored aspects of the white light. The glory, wisdom, grace, truth, power, and love of the Father are all displayed through Christ. He displays the fullness of the Father. We can only see the many colors (aspects or attributes) of the Father because we are viewing them through the humanity of Jesus Christ. Christ has made the Father attainable to us! Now we won't fall dead if we look at Him. Now we can see His glory! He also wants to display His glory through our humanity as well! His purpose is that through us, the Church, the many splendored God would be displayed.

As I think back on the past month in relation to this article "The Prism of God," I realize I have witnessed the glory of God in many different aspects. Most of these aspects have been through Joy. Here are just a few other examples.

(1) I saw a friend realize he could minister to boys at an orphanage by uniquely reflecting God's unconditional acceptance to these boys. (2) I saw people's joy as we taught Jesus through a GraceLife Conference at Brevard Community Church. (3) I received a letter from a friend in prison testifying of his living out of the truths we taught through a GraceLife Conference a couple of years ago. (4) I met with a lady who has a tender heart to minister grace and freedom to people. (5) I met with a lady who has a vision to minister through a woman's retreat home. (6) I saw a friend be encouraged by my friends at Grace Life International in Charlotte. (7) I witnessed the joyful participation of two people being trained through Christ Life Ministries. I could go on and on.

And all of us, including those noted above, have difficult times, for sure. However, God's glory even outshines those times! God is so gracious to allow us to see His glory in our lives and in the lives of others. And when we behold His glory, we are transformed from this inside-out to His likeness (2 Corinthians 3:18). I am learning that God's glory is more displayed not so much in what people do, but in their countenance...in who they are...actually in who God is through them.

All of us are programmed by the world to be so performance-oriented that we are often tempted to relate to God based only on what He does for us...His performance. Many years ago, A. W. Tozer wrote, "Popular fundamentalist theology has emphasized the utility of the cross rather than the beauty (glory) of the One who died on it. The saved man's relation to Christ has been made contractual instead of personal. The work of Christ has been stressed until it has eclipsed the Person of Christ. Substitution has been allowed to supercede identification. What He did for me seems to be more important than what He is to me."

Even our prayers can often focus only on what God can do for us. A friend at Grace Life International says that there is a greater prayer: "Lord, I want to know you." It is true that we first come to Christ based on what He did for us by grace on the cross in forgiving our sins. However, God then calls us to grow in His grace to "know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings" (Philippians 3:10). Christ Life Ministries exists to encourage people to grow in knowing Jesus personally through their new identities in Christ and through "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27).

GRACE NOTE

There is a popular saying in some churches that a person is "on fire for the Lord." This focuses on a person's performance which fizzles out. God calls people to be "on fire with the Lord." This focuses on a person's identity in Christ which is eternal.

Update on Joy. Joy is still weak...she currently can only do about an hour or less of light activities inside the house each day. And there still is some lingering pain in her back as she continues to heal. Joy recently started physical therapy in the local YMCA pool three days a week. Although the physical therapy tires her out a lot, it is just what she needs to tenderly redevelop some strength. The doctors are still pleased with her slow but sure progress. It has been, and will be for a while yet, a long process for Joy, and at times it really wears her down emotionally and physically. Her deepest healing occurs as she “gasps with joy” in response to the “prism” of people who reflect God’s love and compassion.

Next GraceLife Conference in Simpsonville, SC
Friday evening July 25 and Saturday July 26, 2003

You can read my article “Commitment Made Perfect in Weakness” at

<http://www.eternitynow.org/5.htm#gibg-commitment.shtml>.