

The Beauty of Holiness

Holy, set apart, perfect, dedicated, complete. God is Holy. We don't completely understand what that means, but He is perfect and complete. When we are seeking Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and have humbled ourselves and set ourselves apart to serve Him rather than ourselves, we are holy, as He is Holy. Of course we can't really be like Him, but we can be filled with His Holy Spirit, so that we are not our own, but are acting as He would have us act.

So, Holiness, Wholeness, Holistic all seem to have the same root word. This idea of the entirety of something, considering the whole, not just the parts, or even one part seems to be the central theme. God is three in one, He is God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. He created us to be whole in the sense of mind, soul, body and spirit, because He commands us to worship Him with all of those parts, not just one or two. The New Testament also spends a fair amount of time dispelling heresies in the early church which related to worship in spirit only, but not in the body, or following meaningless body disciplines without faith or worship in the spirit. Thus, we are commanded to worship with our whole selves and to approach every aspect of our lives with every part of ourselves. This means we can't compartmentalize different parts of our lives to be "spiritual" and "secular". We also can't justify things that pull us away from our relationship with God as being things that aren't mentioned in the Bible, so they are just our "normal" life, which is different than our "church" life.

This disconnect of course affects our spiritual life, but we may not realize how much it affects our physical and mental health. We find ourselves stressed, lacking sleep, eating crazy things at crazy times and feeling a sense of lack of purpose in our lives. This begins a downward spiral of trying to make ourselves feel better physically and mentally by reaching out to more of what put us in that state to begin with, which is our "secular" lives. The obvious solution would be to stop, take a pause, look critically at all of our life and evaluate what we are doing and why we are doing it. But who has time to do that? When my computer goes crazy, or anything that runs with a computer, the first thing you always do is "reboot", or turn it off, let it set a minute, then turn it back on. For some magic reason this works most of the time. What would happen if we tried that with our lives?

Well, in 2020, many of us had to do that whether we liked it or not. Our crazy lives were forcibly shut down. Everything ground to a screeching halt. No school, no movies, no libraries, no museums, no attractions, NO SPORTS at any level, nothing involving group gatherings. What will come of the "reboot"? Right now, I can't say because it hasn't been turned back on yet. We are still in the turn off stage. I am seeing some interesting things. People are being forced to rely on the internet for everything and ironically, what was a distraction from actual social interaction before is the foundation of it now. No one can function or connect without a computer or phone. What was an obsession before is the only option for education, many work places and even church. The once succulent fruit is now the forced necessity. I wonder if the taste for it will wear off, and after people can mingle freely again, if our habits will be profoundly changed.

Funny memes sprinkle the internet about people rediscovering family members after having to disconnect from sports or entertainment. People are suddenly discovering they can actually cook, even those that never had before. The excuse of not having time is gone. Many prepared foods are sold out in the stores, so people are rediscovering a dusty room in the home that has something in it besides just a microwave and a fridge. The bonus that many may not have realized yet, is that not only does it save them money, give them some personal satisfaction from creating a meal and give them a chance to sit down and connect as a family, but it also may make them healthier. People are eating on regular

schedules and eating actual meals rather than just snacks grabbed on the go. There is no school or sports practices to run to, so perhaps some are actually getting regular sleep. Simple things like a regular schedule, balanced meals and adequate sleep can affect people in ways no one has really thought about.

The Center for Disease Control has thoroughly educated us on washing our hands, distancing ourselves from others and properly sanitizing everything. However, what is noticeably absent from all their literature is how to build up one's health so one is not as likely to contract a disease or if one does contract it, to have much milder symptoms due to overall good health. Inadvertently, they are helping us do this by taking away everything that keeps us in the constant run cycle. If people learn during this re-boot, to slow down, enjoy their families, share meals, get adequate sleep, and stay home when they don't feel well, until they do feel well (even if it takes a week or two), maybe it will improve our nation.

Maybe people who rediscover they have families and people who care about them will start to care themselves. Maybe they will want to be pleasant and enjoy their lives and share their enjoyment with others. Maybe they will be able to see the positives in life, rather than the negatives. Maybe they will start to see things in terms of the wholeness of life, not the fragments that don't fit together and make life stressed and jagged.

I am happy that my life is little changed right now. Spring is beginning. Baby goats are being born, flowers are starting to poke up through the dead leaves in the flower beds. The sun angle is getting higher, the days are getting longer. I have tiny plants starting inside in peat pots, which will be delicious vegetables later in the summer. The chickens are producing more eggs, I have planted tiny seeds in a raised bed in my greenhouse which will give me early greens and radishes. Spring is the season of hope. Nothing can take that away. Soon I will have baby chicks and everything will really get going. The frogs are starting to sing!! The birds have returned from down south. I hope this year people who have never noticed these things will for the first time. The outdoors is not closed. God's whole world is open to be explored. I hope people will start to recognize the beauty of the wholeness of the world God has created and given to us to enjoy. I hope people will start to enjoy the beauty of actual relationships with one another that are not just one dimensional. I hope people will realize they are only whole when they experience life in its fullness, not in fragmented, stressed, hurried and rushed compartments. Take time to be still, listen, and experience the fullness of the life you have.