

REFLECTIONS

April 30, 2006

**Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is
given for the common good.**

1 Corinthians 12:7

A Special Recipe

My back went out a few months ago. During the recovery, each day some of my flexibility returned and now it feels pretty normal. It still stiffens at night or when I stay in one position too long, and age suggests that I may not fully recover to the state of my youth. Nevertheless, I need to get myself in shape—lose weight, stretch muscles, and build strength. At least I need to balance the strength that I have.

Balance the strength that I have—is there a sermon in that statement? God has given me strengths. I am talking about giftedness. What makes me unique is the balance of my gifts—a cup of this, a tablespoon of that, and a dash of something else. I am the product of a special recipe, not only special, but unique. God’s recipe for me has purpose and I mess up the flavor if I allow the ingredients to become imbalanced. When you boil the water down too low, the soup becomes too salty. If you add too much water back, the soup is not salty enough. Balance of the ingredients—the recipe God intended—makes the flavor just right.

But the mixture is not a simple one. In order to balance the ingredients I need to understand what that special recipe is. In recent years, I have been striving to understand how God made me, to discover my gifts and ways to use them. I have also worked to use those blessings in proper balance.

Then there is also the matter of keeping ingredients out that don’t belong. Those are the ingredients that would make me like someone else—to add the flavor of chocolate, or the fragrance of roses when I am neither a dessert nor a blooming flower. In other words, I have found it difficult to accept who God made me to be without trying to be something different—or more—or less.

One of life’s great challenges is to understand our recipes and to stay in spiritual shape. I think it is a life long search to discover our own ingredients, a challenging test to accept them to be who we are, and an endless struggle to keep the portions in proper balance. With the experiences in life, the balance may change a little; but the mixture will still be special and still unique. And with it comes the commission to use that special recipe to God’s glory. He doesn’t ask us to be anything different, or more. But He certainly expects us to be nothing less.

“You are the light of the world,”

Richard +

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