



REFLECTIONS

March 15, 2015

**...for all have sinned and fall short of the
glory of God,**

Romans 3:23

Seek Understanding

In his little book, *Leapfrog and Other Things I Remember*, artist Kenneth Wyatt described one of his longings. He writes, “*There’s an old adage that says ‘If we could see ourselves as others see us.’ Well, sometimes I think it would be great if others could see us as we know ourselves to be.*” So, I pause to wonder. Why is there a difference?

One of life’s great desires is to be understood. In my own simple mind, it seems that each of us forms beliefs about those around us, and indeed, those around us form beliefs about each of us. Those beliefs are drawn primarily from behaviors witnessed modified by circumstances known and associations observed. So one’s own behavior forms the foundation for how others perceive them to be.

Yet, again in my own simple mind, what we believe about ourselves is mostly derived from what passes through our minds and is felt in our hearts. Often, thoughts that dart through our minds and feelings that tug at our hearts are not fully revealed by the actions we take. So what we believe about ourselves will frequently differ from the person we are perceived to be. And might the converse also be true.

Understanding one another would offer a giant stride toward strengthened relationships. Understanding does not require agreement, but it does require the willingness and ability to grasp another’s position and the circumstances, beliefs, and emotions that form its basis. It is also helpful to consider the possibility that the position we hold about another person may also have its flaws.

“*The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.*” (1 Samuel 16:7) So, shouldn’t we try to look there also? Don’t we know ourselves by looking into the heart? And isn’t the heart what we want others to see in us?

To seek understanding of another person is an act of love for them. Love reaches beyond the warm, fuzzy feelings we generally associate with it. In fact, warm, fuzzy feelings are not essential to love at all. But the well being of another person is.

Jesus observes, “*By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.*” (John 13:35) To seek understanding is such an act.

And, isn’t that the only way others will ever see us as we know ourselves to be?

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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