



# ***REFLECTIONS***

September 3, 2017

**Your hands made me and formed me;  
give me understanding to learn your commands.**

*Psalm 119:73*

## **Seeking to Understand**

We all seem to suffer from the same desire. We want what we want when we want it. And most of us have a way we want to go about getting it. Everything would work just fine if only everyone else would go along with us. But guess what? Everyone else wants what they want when they want it too; and they have a way they want to go about getting it. Yes, we think, but if we can only persuade others to see it our way, all will be okay. And there we are, on the edge of conflicts at worst, or at best, misunderstanding.

Disagreement is a part of life it seems. We all are seeking something, and we all stand in defense of what we want, have, or believe. Often the stances we take impede the willingness to consider that what we seek may be in error or that there may be merit in an opposing position. But what do we (you) want, really? And why do we want it?

And here is another question. Will your success and mine be determined by something we accomplished for ourselves; or will success come from what benefited others. Might the adversaries with opposing views be the very beneficiaries we should seek to serve instead of persuading them to see things our way?

The questions are deep ones. They reach beyond today to challenge the desires we seek. The questions reach all the way to life's end—to the day when we hope to look back on our lives and say, "I did it." More importantly, the questions reach to the day we hope God looks down at our life's end and says, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Stephen Covey (among others I think) encouraged us to "seek first to understand, then to be understood." His advice inspires openness to another perspective; and it values the other party's opinion. And therein lies the key to it all. What otherwise could be divisive conflict can blossom into a partnership in search of joint solution. And the answer we seek can likely be found in the answer to another question.

What is God's will for our lives?

*You are the light of the world,*

*Richard +*

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