



REFLECTIONS

March 18, 2018

**"Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned.
Forgive, and you will be forgiven."**

Luke 6:37

Life Experiences

Whatever it is we first see in people seldom tells the whole story. So, I wonder about people whose introduction to me arose from their misbehavior of some kind. Is there more to the story than the one I witnessed, the one that defined their character in my mind? Randall made me think about that one day.

Though the memories are faint and details thin, I think my introduction to Randall came from a distance when someone advised me to stay away from him. And since I had no reason to associate with this older kid who ran with a group quite apart from mine, he was easy to stay away from.

Still I witnessed his antics and heard foul words flow from his mouth while passing by him in the high school hallways. It was enough for me to heed the warnings to stay away.

But as life went along, I found myself trying out for the baseball team only to find that Randall wanted to play the same position. It took little time for me to recognize that he was a better shortstop than I was, so rather than compete, I opted to play second base instead. Of course, those positions work closely together so we were required to practice together regularly.

Randall and I never became fast friends, or even friends at all off the ball field. But I did find another side of him. From time to time his warm friendly smile and encouraging words to me left a different view than the one first presented. So, I think about Randall when I find myself looking disdainfully on a person who steps on the toes of my values system. I think of Randall's life in contrast to mine and the differences in the way we experienced it.

We all see the world through the lens of life experiences. Life, the way each of us experience it, isn't the same for anyone, but life experiences frame the lens by which we interpret it. Life experiences establish the patterns for responding to it. Together with propensities that define our personalities, life experiences drive us to actions that exert energy or withhold it; to fight or flee, to laugh or cry, or to seek attention or hide from it. They provoke us to do bad things for whatever reason, or to speak encouraging words to someone we don't know very well.

Wrong doing is never justifiable. But I know it helps when we try to understand the culprit better, remembering we are guilty too. Understanding helps one to forgive.

And to forgive is what Jesus tells us to do.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

www.reflectingthesavior.org

Permission is hereby granted for reproduction and redistribution of this edition of *Reflections* provided all applicable copyright laws are properly observed.

Your comments are welcomed and encouraged. Richard may be reached at richard@reflectingthesavior.org.