



REFLECTIONS

July 15, 2018, Refreshed from September 24, 2006

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

John 16:33

A Condition or a Sentence

A young man passed by to pick up an order of hamburgers for his family. Carrying the tray to his table, there seemed to be something unusual about his hands. A closer look revealed thumbs on each hand but complemented by only three fingers. One finger on each hand was disproportionately wide as if two were webbed into one.

The young man displayed no concern nor physical limitation from his birth defect. He seemed unaware of his condition or that something might be different from everybody else.

In contrast, many of us complain almost daily of new pains to our aging bodies. Stiff backs, joint pains, and weakening eyesight combined with treatments for abnormal blood pressure, cholesterol, or glucose readings heightens awareness that "old age ain't for sissies. Further, we want everyone else to know about it!

A lunchtime conversation with Dr. Dianne Komp several years ago helped put everything in perspective. At the time, Dr. Komp practiced pediatric oncology on the faculty of Yale Medical School. When asked how she helped children cope with the emotional aspects of a potentially terminal illness, she answered, "The children are an inspiration. They see their disease as a condition. Adults view it as a sentence."

We all must cope with life challenges. Sometimes we are born with them as the young man with malformed fingers; sometimes they are acquired from some life changing events like an accident or the onset of a debilitating disease; and aging adds challenges of its own. We can't do much about the changing situations life brings. But we can choose how we accept them—a condition or a sentence.

One option views trouble as a life sentence. The other takes heart in the state of being and becomes an inspiration to the world.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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