



WITH ALL YOUR MIND

THIS IS ICICLE WEATHER.

During these days when winter is slowly—oh, *ever* so slowly—winding down, the impression one has is that the weather has a split personality. It just cannot make up its mind. Is it late winter easing into spring, or is it still the dead of winter with no hope for spring in sight? Last night our temperatures were below zero; in two days we will be in the fifties. After that, who knows.

In weather like this—cold but slightly warming, sunny days alternating with even colder nights—icicles are born. Temperatures and the rays of the sun are warm enough to melt a bit of the snow covering the rooftops, but not so warm as to accomplish it all at once, causing the slow, trickling runoff of water.

The result can be a house festooned with silvery stalactites dripping and growing during the day, then refreezing ever longer each night. Extending from a few inches to more than a few feet, the dagger-like projections

are beautiful. But that beauty carries a heavy weight, and tests the strength of the overburdened rain gutters.

The wise among us break them off before they get too large, relieving the rain gutters and shingles of their substantial weight. Those of more artistic soul, however, procrastinate, risking potential springtime repairs for a few days of transient beauty.

The vacillation and split personality of the temperatures produce great beauty during the waning days of winter. That which causes sparkling glory in snow and ice, however, can cause a profound ugliness in the believer.



But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.

James 1:5-6



Reflections
by the Pond

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God doesn't expect us never to have questions. His word and ways can stand up to our interrogation and periodic doubts. The word translated "doubts" and "doubting" in the epistle by James means something far more sinister than our contemporary use of the word "doubt." What James refers to as a "double-minded" man is one who has his feet in two camps at once—not someone carrying a few questions around in his heart, but a person truly facing two directions at once.

For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, *being* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

James 1:7-8

Jesus, too, spoke against those running hot and cold with the things of God. He said,

"He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me, scatters."

Luke 11:23



The seed for "double-mindedness" exists in us all—in every believer. The potential is there for any one of us to play false with the Lord, to talk out of the side of our mouth, to say one thing while our heart tugs us somewhere else.

This writer is a fair actor and a fair director. But when I try to do both at the same time, both roles suffer. I do not act as well as I should, because my development of the character is always being preempted by my duties as the director. And my directorial duties are constantly being interrupted by having to play the character up on stage. I am invariably better at each role when it remains undiluted by the other.

For decades women have been told that they can have it all. They can be attentive, nurturing mothers *and* have a successful business career. But too many women have discovered—often tragically late—that this has been a lie. If one wants to perform either of these roles to the best of their ability, one must choose between them.

And if one is to worship and serve the Lord God, one must do it wholeheartedly.

One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And [Jesus] said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment."

Matthew 22:35-38

When we keep our feet in both camps—one in God's kingdom, one still in the world—we end up doing both poorly. Those in the fallen world either snicker at us behind our backs, because we are "one of them," or they openly ridicule us for what we truly are: hypocrites. Meanwhile, because we will not wholeheartedly follow the Lord, we miss out on His bountiful blessings. We miss out on the best of what He offers His faithful children.



The true witness of the believer is his or her constancy. Standing alone, or beside other believers, the Christian is always to stand for the things of God. We are to remain *in* the world, but not be *of* it. We are to be, without apology, different.

"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

Matthew 5:13-16

Every day of our lives we are challenged to stand for Christ. We go to the grocery store, shop for new clothes, get gas for the car, visit with a neighbor over the back fence. Christ calls on us not to run hot one day, then cold the next, but to remain true to Him in every situation.

Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

James 4:7-8

