

separated

Reflections
by the Pond

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I HAVE LOST COUNT OF THE TIMES I have scratched my head and wondered aloud, “Why, God, did you leave me in this awful flesh? Either bring me home, or purify whatever is left, but why leave me wrapped in this weak, easily tempted, straying, miserable flesh?!”

By the *reasoning* of our flesh, God’s design to leave His children, with the indwelling Holy Spirit, to do battle the rest of their earthly days with their earth-bound self seems wholly illogical. After all, couldn’t we accomplish so much more in His name if we weren’t so often sidetracked or tripped up by our fleshly weaknesses?

On occasion, however, we are favored with a glimmer of *His* reasoning, which, when all is said and done, is the only reasoning that matters.

At the end of last week something crawled inside me and died. Coughing, sneezing, runny nose, muscle aches, headaches, feverish chills—all combined to leave me feeling like something one would scrape off the bottom of one’s shoe. Dog meat. Worthless. Limp as a week-old mackerel. Part and parcel of this condition is a general sense of lethargy and ennui. The mind no longer operates—as if every bit of gray matter between the ears has been removed and replaced with a wad of soggy cotton.

In this state the mind and body drift aimlessly, meaningful thought or activity seem hopelessly out of reach. Even the prayer closet seems to be encased in lead; stringing together words for a coherent sentence becomes sweat-inducing labor, and we wonder if God is still up there somewhere. We are numb. Detached. Isolated.

Bingo.

Behold, the Lord’s hand is not so short
That it cannot save;
Nor is His ear so dull
That it cannot hear.
But your iniquities have made a separation
between you and your God,
And your sins have hidden His face from you so
that He does not hear.

Isaiah 59:1-2

Father God likes to make His point with illustration—Jesus did it all the time. And here is just one reason He may have left us with this nagging reminder of our previous life—this despicable, uncomfortable flesh.

Sitting in one’s prayer closet, struggling to piece together a coherent thought with a mind wrapped in cotton wool and a cold virus coursing through one’s veins... Cease striving and listen. Listen closely. With His patient, quiet voice the Lord speaks:

Do you see, My child? Do you understand now? This is what life is like for those without Me. At best, they struggle to understand Me, but to no avail. At worst, they are numb to My glories.

But My child, this is also what it feels like when you disobey Me, when you turn away from Me. When rebellion, like a virus, takes over, it insulates you from Me. I have not moved. I am still where I always have been. But sin in your life clouds your thoughts, leaves you listless, impotent.

Sin removes the vocabulary of our communion, child.

And so I will give thanks for this passing illness, for it has illustrated with painful clarity the price of disobedience.

