



Devotional for September, 2010

Colossians 2:6-23

Perception vs. Reality

Perceptions are not of things but of relationships. Nothing, including me, exists by itself—this is an illusion of words. I am a relationship, ever expanding—Hugh Prather

God has opened up so many doors recently; particularly after reconnecting with a friend from long-ago. During a two-hour conversation one night, both of us realized that perception wasn't necessarily the reality during those bygone days.

Whether a lawyer's daughter or a preacher's kid, family dynamics were not always as perceived. During that chat, my friend said she thought I had it all together - "that I was cute, sweet, smart, lived in a lovely home and had great parents, etc." Things were far from perfect in my house nor were they perfect in hers. We perceived one thing; reality was sometimes another.

It's the same when I recall another conversation many years before. A brother and sister (two years apart in age), raised in the same home, with the same parents, viewed their upbringing through distinctly different prisms. He perceived one thing; her reality was another.

Family dynamics aren't always like the Huxtables (Bill Cosby's show) or Good Times on TV or since we're much older, not like Father Knows Best or Julia either. There are many combinations.

Some of us may have put on a mask to shield our pain, hurt or discomfort from others, but privately we knew our reality. Some of us have worked through it, although those trying times remain etched in our brains. Someone else's insecurities created a chasm between us and the person (or persons) who's supposed to love you unconditionally. And, sometimes, others in the household are either oblivious or feel unempowered to change the circumstances. Or perhaps they're getting their personal needs met, so the rest isn't as important. After all, we were mere children...

Sometimes, we acted out or cried out, hoping to get someone to "hear" and validate us, but alas there may not have been a response - either favorable or unfavorable. We somehow persevered despite those difficulties...we found a coping mechanism, hoping that this too, shall pass.

Prayer: God, we are thankful You hear us. When no one else is around, we pray to You, we cry to You and we have risen above those times because You provided the means to do so. You have set many examples before us and we have only to read and heed Your word.

Our burdens are easier to bear because You are there in the midst of everything that we endure. We thank You for the struggles, because we have grown stronger and are closer to You.

Thank You for demonstrating Your unconditional love repeatedly and for reuniting friends from days gone by. We thank You for being there with us every step of the way! Our reality is strong in You!

In His Love,

Carla

Amen and Amen!