

The Rose Bush

As one gazes upon the rose bush, we recognize that the beautiful blossoms in the garden are cut and taken to adorn the dinner table or another prominent place in the home. What strikes us is the reaction of the rose bush. After all, the rose bush, obeying God's commandment, put forth the beautiful blossom that had been abruptly taken away. The plant's reaction is to promptly heal the cut on the branch, though the end of the branch will probably not produce again; the rose bush, then, continues to grow other branches and produce more beautiful blossoms. If the blossom had not been cut off, it would have withered quickly and not been a desirable table decoration. The rose bush has many other tormentors in aphids, mold, too little or too much water, not enough sunlight, wind and other natural occurrences. Branches are accidentally broken or pruned. Again, the rose bush continues to grow and blossom as God directs it.

How often do people not react as the rose bush? When a difficulty arises, they wither and resist growing. When one of our "blossoms" is gone or a "branch" is broken, we tend to assume that the entire body is wilted and there is nothing left.

If the sole focus is the blossom on the pedestal, then the bush is ignored. The blossom is from the bush, so denying the bush would deny the source, the needs and the life of the blossom. Further, when the blossom withers and is discarded, then it is as if nothing remains or will come again.

The possibility of not putting the blossom onto the pedestal is tantamount to denying God's glory in the blossom. It is no different than denying the fruit on a tree. God's glory, whether as a beautiful blossom or food for the body, should not be ignored.

If the blossom was on the pedestal and the bush were appreciated, then true appreciation of the whole rose is lived. Putting the blossom on the pedestal includes appreciation of the bush, which includes the blossom's need of water, sunshine, nutrients; further, the appreciation includes the needs of the bush for protection from aphids, mold and other tormentors. The whole bush is included with the blossom on the pedestal.

People are much the same way; the beauty of a person is their heart and soul and, as the rose bush, they are quite pleasing to the eye. The whole person must be appreciated else there is not true appreciation of the beauty; appreciation will fade quickly. As with the rose bush, continued nurturing, nourishment and support are needed to bring forth growth, health and beauty.

No one likes being pricked with a thorn or branch of a rose bush. It is a painful experience. In relationships with people, being pricked is painful, too. We forgive the hurt from others just as we do not blame the rose bush. When we hurt someone with our broken branches and thorns, we apologize and ask forgiveness. Like the rose bush, we need to be pruned of the broken and dead branches; unlike the rose bush, we can let our thorns fall to the ground.

The Holy Bible says that we should lift our hurts and fears up to God. This is natural because He, who created all, can heal and protect us. Consider other scripture that says we should give offerings to God; the sacrifices of the people of Israel were an unblemished animal and the first fruits of their crops. Why would we not offer the best of God's creation of

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ourselves? That, which we place on the pedestal, is our offering to God; it is the God given good and beauty in us, our best. God knows the whole of each of us and He accepts the whole of us.

When someone lifts us up and places us on a pedestal, they are appreciating the good that is in us. Placing us on the pedestal is, also, praising God for the good and beauty, which He put in each of us. All too often, this is necessary because we see only our broken branches, thorns and the multitude of torments. Even the healthy branches are covered with leaves and are often shadowed, so we cannot see. Through love and friendship, the focus of our attention is corrected to include our beauty from God.

It is right to appreciate the good that we are today. It is equally right to place on the pedestal the good and beauty that each of us can be. This challenges each of us to be the better person that we can be instead of being satisfied with the beautiful blossoms of today, which will wither before tomorrow. In love and friendship, we place on the pedestal the not yet achieved greater good, the more beautiful person that is in each of us; we should do this with ourselves as well.

Each of us has branches, which need pruning, and thorns; with time, more branches and thorns will need to be addressed. We shed those, which we can, but some linger. With love and friendship, most of them will be removed. For those that remain, we ask forgiveness. In all, we ask for God's mercy and His Hand to remove the branches and thorns that are hurtful; when they hurt others, we are hurt, too. Though dead branches and thorns are with us and tormentors plague us, we know that God shall bring forth blossoms in His glory through us.

Our goodness and beauty from God is quietly placed on the pedestal to appreciate the whole person. In this, others live their love for the person that one is and lovingly support the person that he will become. In love and friendship of the whole person, the broken branches and thorns are tenderly removed, so one may grow and blossom as he should.

God made us. In friendship and love, let us praise God and truly appreciate the beauty of His creation, the blossom as well as the bush, the heart and soul as well as the body.