

As strange as it may sound, some days I desperately need a warrior God. I know that God is love and God is good. I've read it in the Bible and heard it from the pulpit. Our 3rd Step tells me God cares and the Fellowship witnesses to that healing, holy truth. But on days when I'm not feeling the love or seeing the good; when the care is cold and the fellowship distant; when the demons are screaming and the little strifes of life are conspiring to overwhelm me – that's when I need a wild God, willing to fight to the death so that I might survive. When my spirit feels more like a prison than a garden, I pray for a ferocious force to protect me from fears, real or imagined. I need a God who makes me stop, think, reconsider.

To believe that my Higher Power is willing to go to any length, because He believes I am more valuable than I realize, is probably why I trudge behind Jesus. I'm not a fluffy person, so I chose a sweat and blood Higher Power who knows rejection, pain and the high price which must be paid to achieve deep daily peace. To this day I do not understand that depth of sacrifice, but in truth, I don't need to understand it.

Understanding is probably a misnomer when it comes to the mysteries of 3rd Step faith. Our so-called understanding is more accurately a comprehensible, workable, personal belief. Recovery understanding is actually the length we are ready, willing or able to leap to intellectually before we venture into the realms beyond our ego-swollen brains. Most days I cannot even understand myself, let alone God!

What I least understand is how God can be so many things to so many people. Time has hinted that this may be another of the odd-God workings of our program. God can be whom you need God to be because God is not one dimensional. Even to proclaim "God is Love" the question arises - is that tender love, tough love, or a tenacious fight to the death love? The key to remember is that our beliefs do not change God, our beliefs change us and, in time, the world around us. The only analogy I can offer is that a person can dress and appear in all kinds of different outfits, but underneath - we are who we are to the core.

When people come to me for spiritual direction, I often suggest "Believe what brings you peace and do what gives you purpose", for if you walk between those two guideposts, you will usually be traveling toward the Light. Listening in countless

meetings reminds me that God is most flexible when we are most vulnerable. The Spirit appears when life compels us to accept and see the candle of hope with squinting, tear-filled, desperate eyes. To awaken to our value in the heart of God is the purpose of living a spiritual life. To crawl under His cover of love is courage beyond understanding. In recovery we have a Higher Power who transforms the shreds of our lives into the threads used to bind our wounds or quilt us together.

When we need love, God is love; when we need hope, God is hope; when we need courage beyond our capacity, God appears in bold ways to remind us we are not alone. To experience this wild quilt of Divine comfort is to feel the warmth of amazing grace. No two quilts are the same. Yet as different as they are in design, they share a common purpose – that together we come to know victorious peace. Whether you see God's presence in a field of flowers or a junk-yard dog, each vision is one square in the magnificent Divine quilt of spiritual caring. These radically diverse pieces, when sewn together at a meeting, can give us a sense of safety and love *if* we wrap God's quilt around us. All the Divine Quilter asks is that we respect each other's Spirit square and save room for another soul who, tonight, may stumble in from the cold.

Excerpted from "THE 10TH LEPER CHRONICLES", by Richard Anthony

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