

Eric Butterworth Speaks

Essay #21
THE SIZE OF A PERSON

How big are you as a person? So often we say of someone, "He's mighty big." Or of another, "He is so small." Did you know that your attitude, what you think, the way that you regard others, the attitude that you take towards the happenings of your daily life have a great deal to do with your size, whether you are a big person or a small person in your own world? You often hear someone referred to as a big person, but how did he get that way, how did he achieve such a reputation? Simply by being big about the things that mattered, by thinking and acting in ways that proved he was above small, inconsequential things. We hear of another person, "That was pretty small of him." You understand by the phrase that he spoke or acted in a way that was mean and petty, in a way that reflects no credit on him at all.

We are easily able to maintain a cheerful, constructive attitude toward people and events by getting the utmost good out of the spiritual battery that each of us has within. When this spiritual battery is operating at peak efficiency, we make friends easily, we breeze through our work effortlessly and accurately, and we enjoy life to the fullest. But when we let this inner battery run down, when we become careless about our attitudes and our ideas, then our lives become dull and uninteresting and unhappy. At this time we act as though we thought that spiritual teaching was meant only for others, not for us. We become tired and grouchy, short-tempered, we criticize, we gossip, and we spend a lot of time talking about how so-and-so was mean, wrong, or dumb. We get so wrapped up in our own importance that we forget that each person is a child of God. We forget that others are just as entitled to freedom of expression as we are. When someone seems to be discourteous or spiteful to us we blow up and have a lot to say about how small he is, forgetting of course that criticizing him or gossiping about him or letting ourselves become irritated because of him makes us wrong, and thus hurts us more than it hurts anyone else.

Did you ever play the saucer game? First you find an unsuspecting victim, and then you produce two saucers filled with water. The bottom of one of the saucers is filled with soot or lampblack, and the other saucer is clean. Of course the other person doesn't know that, and you give the dirty saucer to him. Holding your own clean saucer in front of you, you go through a rigamarole that your victim is supposed to imitate. You rub your fingers over the bottom of the saucer and then over your face and so on. Of course, your victim gets black all over his hands and face. Well, this is exactly what happens whenever you try to get even with someone, even if you are entirely right. When you imitate him by trying to retaliate with similar words, attitudes, or actions, you simply blacken yourself.

The resentment and irritation that you feel toward another can actually hurt you physically, because it burns within you like a fire. Psychosomaticists tell us that many of the ills that beset people come as a result of resentment. It can be a very serious matter, this attitude of resentment or irritation at someone, because it indicates really what your attitude toward God and life is. Someone once said that you are as close to God as you are to the person you are farthest from. That's a shocker, isn't it? If that is true, and I suspect that it is, how far away from God are you right now?

The remedy for a wrong attitude towards someone or something is really quite simple; you probably know it already. It is simply this--you have to see the good in the person or thing. I so often use the lovely Hindustani word "namaskar" which simply means, "The divinity within me salutes the divinity within you." This enables me to see the good in the person, thing, or event. Even though you know what to do, it may be hard to bring yourself to do it in the right attitude, because you don't know how to do it. Maybe you might like to try what we call the Unit system. This means that you set yourself to accomplish certain results over a specific period of time. This enables you to see the result, to gauge what you have accomplished.

For instance, you can use a thirty day unit. Set for yourself to think a cer-

tain way, to hold certain attitudes for just one month, and see what happens. Have you ever tried for one month to see just how much practical good you could get out of one certain meditation prayer? This would mean letting that prayer influence your thoughts, moods, words, and actions for a whole month. How about trying for just one month to look for the good in every person in every situation you meet. Whenever you meet someone no matter what the situation your first thought will be "namaskar--I salute the divinity with you; I see the good in you; I behold the Christ in you." How about seeing how much encouragement you can give to every person you contact, consciously saying to yourself something like this every morning, "Today, I am going to learn and grow; I salute the divinity within myself, and wherever I go I am going to salute the divinity within all persons and see the good in all experiences." Do you suppose this would make a difference with your friends, associates, teachers, family if you tried to think in this way? Try for just one month doing your own work to the best of your ability, not worrying about what anyone else does.

Remember Jesus says, "What is that to thee; follow thou me." In other words, don't worry about the other person; follow the plan, follow this process of letting the divine flow unfold in you. How would it be if during the month you thought of this every time you became irked by what someone else did. Always there is an easy way and a hard way. Don't make it hard on yourself; you can do it the simple way, the right way by simply using the truth which you already know.

Or you can try to do it the hard way by concentrating on imperfections, disagreements, and how far short of the goal you are, or how the other person is making it difficult for you; you can feel sorry for yourself; you can criticize and condemn and complain. That is not only the hard way, it probably won't get you anywhere. There is always a hard way, but why bother with it? Why not concentrate on finding the easy way, the right way? The right way, of course, is using the principles of Truth, seeing the good in other people, other situations--it is really very simple.

To always see the good in persons and to see the God or good in all situations can be developed to the point where it almost becomes an automatic reaction. A player on the high school football team suffered a leg injury during a scrimmage. Complications set in and the boy's temperature shot up to 106 degrees. The doctors were fearful he might lose his life unless the leg was amputated immediately. But the coach's wife knew the boy only as one of the players on the team. She saw him in her mind, not as a sick boy with an injured leg, but as a healthy player running down the field with life and vigor. The boy's leg began to mend, the temperature dropped, and he was back in school within two weeks. That's the influence of positive thought. The woman seeing the boy as strong and healthy undoubtedly had an influence and an effect on his recovery. She saw the good, and of course good was the result. There is a tremendous healing influence in this kind of consciousness.

"I salute the divinity within you." Maybe you will find it helpful to have a short affirmation, a brief statement of good such as this. This can be disciplined to come to your mind instantly whenever anything appears to be wrong, whenever a misunderstanding arises. What you want is something to put your mental attitude right, and right away!

Know the truth, hold to the good, salute the divinity of the good and God in every situation, work at it and see what happens. Remember that your attitude is all important. What you think, the way you see others, the attitude toward the experiences of your everyday life will have a great deal to do with your size as a person, and the way in which you see other persons and situations, as well as your whole appreciation of life.