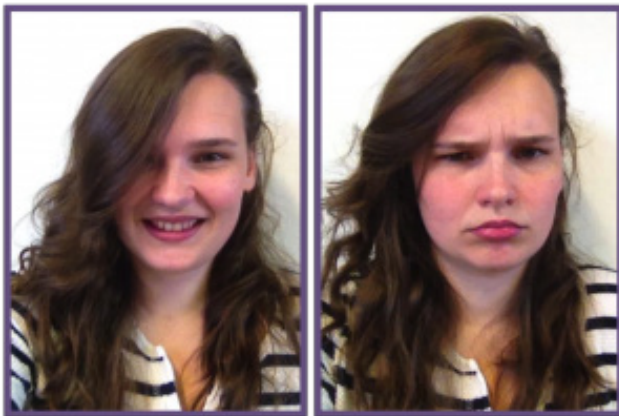




ROMANS Part 115

Chapter 12:14-16

Becoming mutually disposed to one another.



Bless those who are persecuting you: bless, and do not curse, 15 so as to be rejoicing with those rejoicing, lamenting with those lamenting. 16 being mutually disposed to one another, not being disposed to that which is high, but being led away to the humble. Do not come to pass for prudent with yourselves.

If you bless those who are persecuting you, then you can help the miserable wretches through this life by commiserating with their woes and celebrating their joys. Their woes are many, their joys few—those who would persecute a nice person such as yourself—so you’ll be lamenting most of the time, which is much easier. For

me, it’s much easier crying with the miserable, even when I’m happy myself, than to celebrate with the joyful in the midst of some personal funkfest. (It has been said that it takes more muscles to frown than to smile. This simply cannot be true, so don’t let it bother you.) You’ll rarely be called upon to perform the latter miracle (joy in the funkfest), so hang tough. I am assuming that you have the spirit of God within you. Without the spirit of God, you’ll never manage any of this. Without the spirit of God, you will become as the overwhelming majority of people in this world who snap at the slightest irritation, vent their complaint at ridiculous volumes against ridiculous things, and plot their revenge (against truly innocent people) while sweating profusely and drinking sweetened carbonated beverages.

“...being mutually disposed to one another...”

GAUGE THE EMOTIONS OF OTHERS

Enough of that. Now we come upon what we are to do for one another. We are to have a mutual disposition toward one another. This means discerning the mood of a room and the souls therein. Be like water and seek the level of surrounding water. Don’t be too spectacular or too dumpy—unless either spectacularity or dumpiness is the prevailing current.

People who either watch my videos or read my articles are surprised when they meet me in person because, in person, I am calm and relatively quiet. I’m outgoing on my shows and in print because I don’t have to gauge a room or a soul. I’m alone. I emanate what I am at the moment with no human interference. But when I enter an occupied room, I switch my setting to input rather than output. I read and interpret the vibe. I don’t like to make waves, as a rule. I will enter waves, but won’t make them, unless it is unavoidable in defense of the truth. Left to myself, I enjoy calm water. I rarely enter a room

or a conversation carrying a surfboard. I'm more likely to carry a sand bucket and a beach towel. I recommend the same to you. I never imagined that such a disposition betrayed a significant level of the spirit of God within me until I learned to appreciate this verse. Imagine how happy this made me.

HUMBLE, NOBLE WORK

“...not being disposed to that which is high, but being led away to the humble”

I can only testify concerning myself: I love the humble. It is easy for me to celebrate the humble because Scriptural precedent tells me that God speaks through people of low reputation. Those who would snub their noses at the humble miss torrents of wisdom from the high places of God.



I admire people who do work that others disdain. I do not disdain any work. In fact, I have often fantasized about cleaning offices during the night, or driving a truck. This morning, I saw a man mopping the steps of an apartment complex. I envied him. It may have been an angel, this man. This is not why I envied him. I envied him because his work was simple, noble, necessary. I noticed the sounds of the slop as the mop went in and out of the bucket. The man made the steps better looking for other people. There were twenty-two steps. Each step got mopped, one step at a time. When the man (he was a real man) had mopped the twenty-second step, he ceased from his labors. He could then look back



at the steps and see that he had accomplished a great thing, a noble thing. The steps that were once soiled, were now clean.

CATS AND ANTS

I have buried many cats in my day. I used to live on a farm, and people dropped off stray cats. We always helped the cats. We were led away to the humble cats. The worse they looked, the more we liked them and helped them. But cars would hit the cats, and I had to bury many cats. I always cried as I lowered the cat bodies into the hole that I had dug for them. I always spoke to the cats as I lowered them. I would say, “I am no different than you. I, too, will die. You only went first. I have nothing over you.” This made me feel better about the humiliation of death.

What creature is more humble than the ant? Yet within



to better their station. Many are simply trying to be homeless for another day. This is their goal. For many, they have found a lifestyle that suits them. Some of them look sad, but it is not sadness, for the most part, but neutrality. It is an acceptance of what is. I will dare call it contentment. The homeless people have been dealt a hard hand in life, I admit this. The world has screwed them, and perhaps they have screwed others. But they have found a way to beat the system and to screw it at the same time. They eek out a living without paying rent, taxes, life insurance, car insurance, or utility bills.

Not even the police of São Paulo bothered the box people. And there they were, right on Paulista Avenue, which is the “Broadway” of São Paulo, where the well-to-do stroll and strut to kill and conquer.

PRUDENCE

the colonies of ants lies great wisdom—

Go to the ant, O sluggard, observe her ways and be wise, which, having no chief, officer or ruler, prepares her food in the summer and gathers her provision in the harvest (Proverbs 6:6-8).

SÃO PAULO CARDBOARD

I saw people living in cardboard boxes in São Paulo, Brazil. Some of the boxes were very nice. I would stop to look at many of the people in the boxes, because I was led away to them. I was led away to their boxes. You already know that I strive to live simply and to live smaller rather than bigger. Thus, the cardboard boxes fascinated me, moreso than would a multi-million dollar home. Sometimes a couple—a man and a woman—would live in a cardboard box complex. By “cardboard box complex” I mean that maybe two or three boxes had been taped together, covered with blankets and then a plastic tarp. I would gaze inside when I could, and it always looked very cozy inside these complexes. Some box people and box families had pets. The pets always looked content to me.

I am under no illusions—and neither should you be—that very many of the homeless people are actually trying

“Do not come to pass for prudent with yourselves” (Romans 12:16).

Don’t think that you know everything, or that you are the be-all, end-all of either worldly or spiritual wisdom and attainment. You can learn much from a cardboard box person in São Paulo, or from a dead cat, or from an ant, or from a man cleaning steps. If you look for wisdom in humble places, you will find it. If you look for it in high places where people boast about their supposed wisdom, then you will not find wisdom, because it is only supposed. Wisdom will not boast of itself.

Go low and live where wisdom does not boast but actually resides. It is where the humble people are. In God’s economy, the humbled will be lifted up, and the proud abased.

Be in the right place at the right time. —MZ