



LOVE EXPRESS

EXTRAORDINARY LIVING COLUMN



Cellophane Christianity

By Felicia T. Scott

A few weeks ago, I had a conversation with a friend about his troubled marriage. He shared with me that he and his wife were separated, but in marriage counseling. He quickly added, "But not Christian counseling because all they want to do is throw Scriptures at you. Give me the Word, but be real about it!"

His words were ripe with an anger and pain that stunned me. His words gave voice to a frustration that we as believers deal with daily. How do we reconcile the darkness of our circumstances with the light of our faith? How do we as imperfect people represent a perfect God?

The answer lies in deepening our appreciation of God's grace in our lives. We must come to an understanding of the grace and power available to us through Christ. Though we sing of amazing grace, our hearts have not understood its meaning. And even worse, because we do not understand His grace, we feel forced into a world of pretense. We pretend to have it all together and hide behind Christian phrases that are devoid of meaning. The truth is...we all struggle. Yet somehow, we've been convinced that true Christianity requires perfection. The true power of the gospel is that the Word works--despite our imperfections. Our personal flaws do not weaken Christ's message of redemption and transformation.

Pretending that you are issue free doesn't promote true ministry. True ministry is the result of transparency. Cellophane Christianity is not afraid to be open about the parts of our lives that are still in a process. Sharing our disappointments and questions with people of like faith and vision creates opportunities for practical resolutions to be discovered. Heart to heart ministry changes lives, while pretending only alienates us and keeps us from dealing with our real issues.

Our responsibility is to help each other deal with the "real" as we progress toward the "ideal" expressed in the Scriptures. The ideal is not unattainable, but it is a process. Despite our imperfections, the character of Christ can be achieved within us--but it is not easy. Until we are willing to tell others the process we have undergone to have the Word be made flesh in our character, we are limiting our effectiveness.

Feeling alone in your issues can sometimes be the hardest part of the process. Cellophane Christianity creates a feeling of community and accountability with other believers. We must allow others to be as human as we are. Many of us want a harvest of mercy, but sow seeds of judgment. Being merciful doesn't require that we sacrifice the Word's standards, but rather we allow the Spirit of the Word (*the love of God*) to impact our relationships.

God's power is seen when we allow others to see how He works in spite of us. We don't need to pretend about who we are to protect the integrity of God's Word. Before time even existed, God's Word has stood on its own.

Journaling Challenge:

1. What are you afraid of others discovering about you? Why?
2. How can you destroy its power?

Scripture Keys: James 5:16 & Galatians 6:1-2

Please send your questions or comments to fscott@butterflyworks.net.

Author of the new release *Thrive! 7 Strategies for Extraordinary Living*, Encouragement Coach Felicia T. Scott speaks to audiences across the country about H.E.A.L.I.N.G.TM, personal development and journaling. Scott has been featured in *Heart & Soul* and *Essence* magazines and appeared as a guest on *TBN*. Join her at New Life bookstore (718-739-0707) on Saturday, **November 22nd** for the *Thrive! Journaling Workshop*. Please send your comments to fscott@butterflyworks.net.