

This newsletter is a little different than those I have sent out thus far. Those of you who are well acquainted with me know that two of my greatest loves in life are psychology/theology and woodworking. Quite often I am asked how I ever ended up with a passion for such totally different things. On the contrary, I see vast similarities between woodworking and counseling. They both require vision, patience and humility. I recently stumbled across an article I wrote a few years back. I would like to share it with you.

P.E.G. AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

A green, unseasoned piece of wood--totally useless to the woodworker. One could try to work it, but its new shape would not hold. It would crack and warp and would be nothing more than waste, not even fit to burn. The wood is unworkable because it has not been properly seasoned. It is unstable because it is still heavy with water and other earthly elements. Even when the water is removed (actually, it can never become totally water-free), wood is still somewhat unpredictable, but will at least hold its shape after being worked and will be of value to its worker.

We are often like green wood to God. We are full of the elements of the world. In this form, we are useless to the One who wants to work with us because we are too unstable to hold a useful shape. We can profess to be something and try to form our own shape, but it will not hold because we are not properly seasoned. We are amorphous and we crack and break apart.

However, to the woodworker, there is a process known as Poly-Ethyl Glycol (PEG) treatment. Here, we introduce a new element to the unseasoned wood. We saturate the piece with PEG. For weeks the wood, looking for further earthly nutrition, hungrily soaks it into its pores. As a result of the **process**, the amorphous elements within the wood are displaced and replaced with PEG. PEG adheres to the pores of the wood and provides the piece great stability and amazing lightness. The piece of wood may now be worked into a useful shape. Its stability comes from within. Although its outer surface is still vulnerable to earthly elements, the wood demonstrates value and integrity, which emanates from the inside out.

The Holy Spirit of God and the human life are analogous to PEG and an unseasoned, green piece of wood. As trees are grown on earthly elements, we also are raised on the influential elements of the world. This fact of life appears to be inevitable.

But there comes a time when we want to harvest and

utilize the tree for our responsible pleasure and good, as God intended it to be. But once again, if the tree, or wood is unseasoned, or still green, and full of the elements of the earth, it is of no use to us, even though we are quite aware of its unlimited potential.

Likewise, there comes a time when God calls us to His service, for His pleasure and good, as it was intended. But as long as we are heavy-laden with the elements of the world, no matter how willing we believe we are, we aren't useful to Him and cannot hold the shape to which our Godly Worker calls us. We simply are not seasoned properly to hold the form God has in mind for us according to His divine plan.

A tree, harvested for human use, left alone takes years and years to season sufficiently enough for us to be able to utilize, and will still be somewhat unstable.

On our own, we can struggle for years, clinging to the worldly elements that provide us with spurious security. Unfortunately, even with time, unlike the tree, we will probably never be properly seasoned and ready to take our Worker's shape.

However, be encouraged, if we use the gift of God, His Holy Spirit, and saturate our lives with this miraculous stabilizer, we too can become ready to take the useful and pleasing shape that God has intended us to.

As Christians, we must soak and imbue ourselves with the Holy Spirit of God. It is not enough to simply get our feet wet. We must submerge ourselves in the Word and in the presence of the only One who can give us definition. Through this, and only through this, will the worldly elements within us, to which we cling so tightly, be displaced and replaced by the Holy Spirit of God. Through this **process**, we can experience an internal solidarity and an inexplicable lightness of being that our worldly-filled minds cannot fathom. It is by the Holy Spirit treatment of God that we will come to know our purpose and begin to actualize the potential that God sees in our unseasoned condition.

Though our outer shells will still be vulnerable to the elements of the world, the structure within us will be stable, held together by the miraculous power of God's Holy Spirit. And the purpose, value and peace that this brings will enable us to live without the fear of worldly contaminants.