



Scottie Wisdom & Faith

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Scotties and inner peace

It was a beautiful cool, crisp and sunny day; perfect Scottie-dog weather. We were just back from a long off-leash hike in a gorgeous section of giant old-growth ponderosa pines. I walked three miles. The Scotties ran six miles as they gave everything they had to exploring each rock, fallen tree, and old stump in the surrounding forest. Now they slept. Feeling safe and loved, they were the picture of peace and contentment.

My post-cancer spiritual journey is largely about finding inner peace. I've met a few people who demonstrate that quality in their everyday lives: it seems to be rare. Inner peace is probably the most precious thing anyone can gain in one lifetime. I'm making progress. I know there is a lot of work ahead.

In past Psychology 101 classes instructors often presented a perception exercise in which the lecturer drew a circle on the board that had a small section missing. Students immediately looked at the missing section. They wanted it completed, connected to the rest of the circle.

We are almost hard-wired to focus on incompleteness in things and people. Few would be content with the fact that only 98 percent of the circle was there. We are also impatient with people who don't live up to our standards. In other words, we are quick to judge things and people.

Sometimes as a hiring manager I would point to my water glass and ask an applicant the question: "Is the glass half full or half

empty?" One's life perspective became instantly evident with a quick answer. Some people fervently argued for half empty.

Inner peace exists when a person reaches true wholeness in spirit. They have learned how to accept the imperfections of this world and they have mastered the ability to always find the beauty in those imperfections. That is to say they have learned how to stop judging everything and everyone as either "good" or "bad."

Inner peace means you don't get upset when your car won't start and you have an important appointment. You simply accept the situation and look for an alternative solution. You demonstrate inner peace when everyone is running away from the sound of a gunshot and you look around to see if someone needs your help. Inner peace means you are truly glad for your neighbor with his beautiful new car even though you couldn't afford one like it.

Wise instructors of the world's great religions have been teaching us for eons that inner peace is available

to everyone and in fact is already right inside us. All we have to do is become whole; easily said but not easily done.

How do we get there? Prayer and meditation are two of the most important steps. Through prayer we ask for wisdom, guidance and forgiveness so that we can find the road which leads to inner peace.

We must learn to forgive. Forgiveness is actually the most important condition. We need to forgive ourselves for being less than perfect and we must forgive others for being the same. Put another way, the road to inner peace is a road of letting go: letting go of artificial limitations, letting go of negative thinking, letting go of selfishness, letting go of judging others, letting go of hate. The road to inner peace is also a road to gaining: gaining self-awareness, gaining unlimited love for others and ourselves, gaining a caring and helping attitude.

Inner peace is a habit. Many of us have become conditioned to panic when things don't go right. We're

accustomed to getting mad when things don't go our way. We build these habits upon a lack of wholeness. The reactionary habits reinforce our emptiness. Fear is the fundamental problem. We are afraid we won't get what we want or we'll be seen as not good enough in someone's eyes. Often that fear is completely unfounded. This is where self-awareness helps. Once we accept that we are not perfect — nor is anyone else — we learn to strive to always do our best and know that tomorrow we can be ever better.

God loves us and accepts us with our imperfections. Jesus said that we could reach His level of spirituality. That gives us our goal. Now we can begin accepting and pursuing that goal knowing we can get better every day as we work at it. We begin gaining wholeness and peace as we walk the Road-of-Getting-Better-Every-Day.

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." John 14:27.

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