

The Pure Flame

In the tranquil village of Greenwood, surrounded by lush forests and crystal-clear rivers, lived a young man named Thomas. He was known for his kind heart and deep devotion to God. Thomas spent his days working in the fields and his evenings in prayer and meditation, seeking to live a life that reflected God's goodness.

Thomas had a mentor, an elderly monk named Brother Elijah, who had dedicated his life to the service of God. Brother Elijah had a gentle yet firm presence, guiding Thomas with wisdom and love. One day, as they walked together by the river, Brother Elijah spoke to Thomas about the importance of keeping the spiritual flame pure.

"Thomas," he said, "look well to the ground on which you stand. Keep a watchful eye upon every working of nature, and take care that nothing human, earthly, private, or selfish mixes with this heavenly fire within you. Your mind must be free, universal, and impartial, loving all goodness and practicing every virtue for its own sake, because it is of God."

Thomas listened intently, his heart absorbing the wisdom. Brother Elijah continued, "Do not covet the light for yourself, nor long to communicate it to others for selfish reasons. Seek only that God's will may be done, and His goodness brought to life in you and them. For there is no goodness but God's, and His goodness is alive in you only as far as the good you do is done in and by the Spirit that makes God good."

Thomas pondered these words deeply. He understood that true goodness came from a pure heart and selfless intentions. He dedicated himself to living by these principles, constantly examining his thoughts and actions to ensure they were free of selfish motives.

As the years passed, Thomas became a beacon of light in Greenwood. His selfless acts of kindness and unwavering

faith inspired the villagers. He helped those in need, listened to the troubled, and spread love and compassion wherever he went. Thomas did all this not for recognition or praise, but simply because he felt the divine fire within him guiding his actions.

One harsh winter, a devastating storm struck Greenwood. Homes were damaged, and many villagers were left without food or shelter. Thomas immediately sprang into action, organizing a relief effort to provide aid to those affected. His tireless efforts brought the community together, and soon, the village was abuzz with activity as everyone pitched in to help.

Despite the hardships, Thomas remained calm and focused, his faith unwavering. He knew that God's goodness was at work through him and the villagers. As the storm passed and the village began to rebuild, Thomas's selfless actions left a lasting impact on the hearts of the people.

Brother Elijah, now very old, saw the fruits of his teachings in Thomas. He knew that the young man had truly embraced the pure flame of divine goodness. On his deathbed, Brother Elijah blessed Thomas and imparted his final words of wisdom.

"Thomas, you have kept the flame pure and allowed God's goodness to shine through you. Remember always that it is not by your strength, but by the Spirit of God within you, that you have done these things. Continue to walk this path, and you will inspire many more to find the divine fire within themselves."

Thomas nodded, tears in his eyes, and vowed to honor Brother Elijah's legacy. He continued to serve Greenwood with humility and love, his life a testament to the power of a pure heart and selfless faith. The story of Thomas and his pure flame spread far and wide, inspiring countless others to seek the true goodness that comes from God.

Stay grounded and be mindful of nature's workings. Ensure that no human, earthly, or selfish desires mix with your spiritual fire. Keep your mind free, impartial, and universal, loving all goodness and practicing every virtue because it reflects God's nature. Do not seek light and/or wish to share it for personal gain but aim solely for God's will to be done and His goodness to shine in you and others. True goodness comes from God and is only alive in you when your actions are guided by the Spirit that makes God, GOD.

A rest so deep

In the stillness of surrender, hearts find peace, A quietude where earthly troubles cease. To the Life of Christ, our souls we give, in Christs embrace, we truly live.

Desire not the fleeting joys of earth but seek the treasures of eternal worth. In Christs will, our restless minds find rest, in God's love, our spirits are blessed.

Reason's light may guide us for a while, but only in Christs grace, we reconcile. Total surrender, the path we tread, to the guiet soul, by Gods Spirit led.

No creature's touch can disturb this calm, in God's presence, we find our balm. A rest so deep, no storm can shake, in Christs peace, our hearts awake.

To behold the Wisdom in God's own Light, to see all things in vision bright, untouched by sensory, pure and clear, in Christ's embrace, we draw near.

The Lords words, a beacon, guide our way, in truth and love, we humbly stay. "Without Me, you can do nothing," Christ said, In God's grace, our souls are fed.

Look not the fleeting, earthly gain, but in Christs presence, peace sustain. In surrender, find the truest rest, In Gods light, we are blessed.

A Rich Testimony

A rich testimony disconnects from the constant noise of social media and reconnect with God, providing evidence of positive outcomes:

1. Spiritual Fulfillment and Inner Peace

 Evidence: Studies have shown that regular engagement in spiritual practices, such as prayer, meditation, and scripture reading, can significantly reduce stress levels and promote mental wellbeing. Rich's mornings spent in quiet reflection allowed him to find solace and a deeper connection with God, leading to a profound sense of inner peace.

2. Improved Mental Health

• Evidence: Disconnecting from the constant barrage of social media can reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression. A study by the University of Pennsylvania found that limiting social media use to 30 minutes per day resulted in significant reductions in loneliness and depression. Rich's choice to disconnect and focus on scripture and journaling likely contributed to better mental health and overall happiness.

3. Enhanced Focus and Productivity

 Evidence: Without the distraction of social media, individuals often experience improved concentration and productivity. By dedicating his evenings to reading and reflection, Rich could focus more on his work as an entrepreneur, producing high-quality thought that brought joy to his customers.

4. Stronger Relationships

• Evidence: Spending less time on social media and more time in meaningful activities can improve relationships with friends and family. Rich's deep, meaningful connections with his close-knit community were strengthened by his intentional living and presence. His gatherings became a source of support and joy for many.

5. Increased Community Engagement

 Evidence: Disconnecting from virtual networks and engaging in local community service can foster a sense of belonging and purpose. Rich's volunteer work at the local shelter Men's group only helped those in need but also enriched his own life, creating a positive feedback loop of giving and receiving.

6. Spiritual Growth and Guidance

 Evidence: Regular engagement with spiritual texts and practices can provide guidance and wisdom for life's challenges. Rich's grounding in God's word allowed him to navigate life with clarity and purpose, serving as a beacon of light and inspiration for others in his community.

7. Emotional Resilience

• **Evidence**: Developing a strong spiritual foundation can enhance emotional resilience, helping individuals cope with life's ups and downs. Rich's faith provided him with the strength to face challenges calmly and confidently, knowing he was guided by a higher power.

8. Influence on Others

 Evidence: Rich's lifestyle and contentment had a ripple effect, inspiring others to seek a similar path.
 His story of disconnecting from the noise and reconnecting with God served as a powerful testimony, leading others to reconsider their own lives and choices.

By intentionally disconnecting from social media and seeking solace in God, Rich not only improved his own life but also had a lasting positive impact on those around him. This evidence highlights the transformative power of faith and intentional living in a world often dominated by discontent and confusion.

The Loud Whisper of Stillness poem

In a world of constant noise and haste, where time slips by without a trace, A soul finds peace, a sacred space, In the quiet whispers of divine grace.

He turns away from screens so bright, and finds his solace in the night, with scriptures read by candlelight, He feels God's presence in his sight.

While others chase a fleeting gleam, He follows a more timeless dream, A life where faith and purpose teem, And God's love flows like a gentle stream.

Each morning starts with humble prayer, each evening ends with whispered care, in journals filled with thoughts laid bare, He meets with God, a sacred pair.

In stillness, where the world is mute, He finds a peace profound, astute, A heart that seeks the absolute, With God's guidance as his root.

And in this calm, his spirit grows, Beyond the grasp of worldly woes, A contented life that softly shows, God's love in every path he chose.

For in the noise, a truth he's found, that peace in God is most profound, A life in faith, where hearts are bound, In harmony, where love's the sound.

Passion

1. Embracing Uncertainty

Life is inherently unpredictable, and trying to control every aspect can be exhausting and unfulfilling. Embracing uncertainty allows us to be more adaptable and open to new experiences. Instead of fearing the unknown, view it as an opportunity for growth and discovery.

2. The Power of Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the practice of being present and fully engaged in the current moment. It can help reduce stress, improve focus, and enhance emotional resilience. Try incorporating mindfulness practices into your daily routine, such as mindful breathing, meditation, or simply paying attention to your surroundings.

3. The Ripple Effect of Kindness

Small acts of kindness can have a profound impact on others and create a ripple effect that spreads positivity. Whether it's a smile, a kind word, or a helping hand, your actions can inspire others to pay it forward, contributing to a more compassionate and connected community.

4. Finding Purpose in Passion

Pursuing what you are passionate about can lead to a more fulfilling and meaningful life. When you engage in activities that align with your interests and values, you experience a sense of purpose and joy. Consider exploring hobbies or career paths that resonate with your inner desires.

5. The Strength of Vulnerability

Vulnerability is often seen as a weakness, but it actually requires great strength and courage. Being open and honest about your feelings and experiences can deepen your relationships and foster a sense of authenticity. Embrace vulnerability as a way to connect with others on a deeper level.

6. The Interconnectedness of All Life

Recognizing the interconnectedness of all life can lead to a greater sense of empathy and responsibility. Our actions impact not only ourselves but also the people and environment

around us. Cultivating a sense of interconnectedness can inspire us to make choices that benefit the greater good.

7. The Art of Letting Go

Holding onto grudges, regrets, or unrealistic expectations can weigh us down. The art of letting go involves releasing what no longer serves us and making room for new possibilities. Practice forgiveness, acceptance, and gratitude to free yourself from past burdens and embrace the present.

The message of "grace alone"

The phase lost without God's help. It emphasizes that sinners cannot save themselves and that only Jesus Christ's sacrifice can redeem us. "Grace alone" means being accepted by God despite our flaws. "Christ alone" means our righteousness comes only from Jesus. "Faith alone" means that any goodness in us is because God has declared us good out of mercy and justice for Jesus.

Sin has had a high cost throughout history, from Adam and Eve losing Paradise to the Jews losing their city and children. But the true cost of sin is seen in the immense sacrifice God made by giving His Son. This sacrifice illustrates the doctrine of human sinfulness in the Bible.

The message of "grace alone "illustrates the doctrine of human sinfulness in the Bible" means that the passage explains and provides examples of how human beings are inherently flawed and sinful, according to biblical teachings. Here's a breakdown:

- Total Dependence on God's Grace: Humans are completely lost and incapable of saving themselves without God's grace. This highlights our inherent sinful nature and inability to attain righteousness on our own.
- 2. **Christ's Sacrifice**: The passage emphasizes that only Jesus Christ's sacrifice can redeem us, underscoring the severity of sin. Christ's sacrifice is seen as necessary because human sinfulness is so profound that nothing less than the Son of God could atone for it.
- 3. **Historical Consequences of Sin**: The examples of Adam and Eve losing Paradise, the Jews losing their city, and other historical consequences

- illustrate the widespread and devastating effects of sin throughout human history.
- 4. **Ultimate Sacrifice**: The greatest example of the cost of sin is God giving His Son to be sacrificed. This demonstrates the extreme measure needed to address human sinfulness, showing how serious and destructive sin is.
- 5. **Human Depravity**: The doctrine of human depravity means that every aspect of a person is affected by sin. This passage explains that humans, on their own, cannot achieve righteousness and need God's intervention.

In summary, the passage illustrates the doctrine of human sinfulness by showing that humans are inherently flawed, highlighting the immense cost of sin, and emphasizing the necessity of Christ's sacrifice for redemption.

He that believeth shall not make haste

Isaiah 28:16 says, "He that believeth shall not make haste," meaning that those who have faith won't feel rushed or overwhelmed by time. Many of us constantly feel like we don't have enough time, as though time controls us.

In our modern world, we've tried to master time. We wear watches, check clocks, and use technology to keep track of every second. We've created extremely accurate clocks and numerous gadgets to save time, trying to cram more into our days. If someone invented a way to get the benefits of eight hours of sleep in just two hours, they'd be celebrated as a hero, finally defeating time.

Despite our attempts to save and control time, we've become slaves to it. The peaceful, unhurried life is gone, and we constantly check our watches and schedules. Our lives are dictated by the relentless ticking of the clock, especially the loud alarm that wakes us every morning.

If there's a symbol of our age, it's the act of clocking in at work. Soon, we might not even need to do that manually as technology advances. In ancient times, people made offerings to gods at temple doors. Today, we pay our respects to the clock, which tracks our every move. Our attempts to save time have ironically made us more controlled by it than ever before.

Overcoming Doubts

Yes, confidence is indeed an integral part of faith. Faith involves a strong belief or trust in something or someone, often without direct evidence or proof. This belief naturally brings about confidence. Here are a few ways confidence is related to faith:

1. Trust and Assurance

• **Confidence in God's Promises**: Faith involves believing in the promises of God.

This belief gives a person confidence that God will fulfill His word, even in uncertain circumstances.

2. Overcoming Doubts

• Confidence to Face Challenges: With faith, a person gains confidence to face life's challenges, trusting that they are not alone and that God is with them, guiding and supporting them.

3. Inner Strength

• Confidence in Personal Strength: Faith can provide an individual with inner strength and self-assurance, knowing that they are part of a greater plan and have a purpose.

4. Acting on Beliefs

• **Confidence to Act**: Faith inspires people to act on their beliefs with confidence, whether it's helping others, making moral decisions, or pursuing a calling.

5. Positive Outlook

• **Confidence in the Future**: Faith often brings a positive outlook on life, instilling confidence that things will work out for the best according to God's plan.

6. Community and Support

Confidence in Community: Being part of a faith community provides individuals
with additional confidence, knowing they have a support system of like-minded
individuals.

So, confidence is not only a part of faith but also a result of having faith. It empowers individuals to trust, act, and face life's uncertainties with assurance and strength.

