



## THE LOTUS FLOWER BLOOMS IN THE MUD

**G**rowing from the mud at the bottom of ponds and streams, the exquisite lotus flower rises above the water and is usually white or pink with 15 or more oval, spreading petals, and a peculiar, flat seedcase at its center. Sometimes I feel like "church folks" need to be reminded of the mud they grew from before they bloomed into the lotus flowers that they think they are. Now that may sound a little crass, but let me expound a little if I may.

If you have read any material on this website, you will know that I am a person who likes to be real with people. I also like to surround myself with people who are real. Hmmm... what do I mean by "real?" Well, Webster's definition of real is genuine, bona fide, to be valid, to be true, etc. My meaning of the word real in association with people is someone who does not fake and act like they are something that they are not. Someone who has flaws and has been around the bin a few times and does not mind you knowing. Someone who can understand me and where I come from. Someone who will not judge me and the things I have done or the things I have been through. Someone who will not laugh and smile in my face and as soon as they get in the car, pull out their cell phone and gossip about me. Someone who is REAL!

There are many church folks who believe they are as pure as the driven snow and that their flower bloomed in their mother's womb. God may have predestined our future in our mother's womb, but in no way were you born from perfection. We were born into sin only to be re-born in the Holy Ghost. None of us are righteous, no not one. We strive for perfection, we strive for perfect holiness, but there is only One who is perfect, One who is pure, and One who is righteous, and that is the Holy One, the Great I Am, Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, Jehovah Jireh, Jehovah Nissi, the Prince of Peace, the King of Kings, the Bright and Morning Star, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Moses, Mary's Baby, my God, your God, the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost! Yes, there is only One who can judge. God did not send His son to condemn the world... so who are we to condemn the world? Oh and yes, that applies to preachers too. There is a minister who airs every week on a local radio station that really has it in for preachers or the like. Some people think he is hard on them, some people think he is unfair, and some people think he is just down right crazy. I do not think or believe that he is crazy. As a matter of fact, I believe in what he is trying to do, but maybe he is going about it in the wrong way. Now, will he accomplish the mission that he said God put before him? That is not mine to judge, but I do know that you can catch a bee quicker with honey than you can with vinegar. Sometimes, those in leadership positions come across in such a way that the flock feels beat up on when leaving the physical building of the church. I am a firm believer that God's people need to be chastised from time to time, but we must also learn to let God be the One who is

doing the chastising. God does use pastors, ministers, those in leadership to bring forth a Word of chastisement, but He has also ordained his people to be a light to each other and to encourage one another. Personally, I like to encourage people, but be real at the same time. I cannot encourage you with one side of my mouth and judge you with the other. So, let me take you back to the mud where the lotus flower was seeded, grew, and eventually bloomed.

Living for Christ is a daily commission. It is not something that comes and goes. If you want to live for Christ, you have to work at it because satan is EVERYWHERE and he is in EVERYBODY. He does not care who he uses to deter you, to distract you, or to detain you. He is out seeking whom he may devour and who he is going to attack next. Satan is sitting next to you right now with his index finger on his chin trying to figure out what he can do to divert you from reading this any further. Recognize the influence that satan has around you. It is there, but we serve a more powerful influence and that is Jesus Christ. Let me let you in on a secret. When you know you are under attack, you should also know that you MUST HAVE been doing something right. Now, the mud that you came from was your foundation. Sometimes, you have to GO THROUGH something in order to GET TO something. God does not use anyone who does not have a testimony because your testimony can help save someone else. Therefore, as you wallow through the mud and begin to grow, there are many obstacles that will come your way and there are many things you have to endure, but it is not the trial that you need to worry about, it is how you go through the trial. You must find Jesus in the trial. You must find faith even the size of a mustard seed in the trial. You must keep pushing on while you are in the eye of the storm because on the other side comes the sunshine and the blessings. You just have to get to it. Push through the mud and the miry clay, just keep reaching upward, and then your pedals will begin to bloom one by one and finally the bloom becomes full and beautiful. That is the joy of going through a trial. If you let Jesus guide you through it, you will come up smelling like a rose and as beautiful as a "lotus flower."

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