

Lifelines

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Topic: *The Buttercup Perspective*

The Buttercup Perspective **By Ed Jordan**

My wife, Eniko, gave me the seeds for this week's column. During this time of year, we love to see whole fields of bright yellow flowers. We always comment about how awesome they look. Yesterday she said, "I have a great idea for a sermon or column!" She shared it with me, and now I get to share it with you.

The yellow flowers in the fields of Virginia at this time of year are usually buttercups, and are generally perennials, coming back year after year. Buttercups shine so brightly due to a reflective layer of cells under the first thin layer of cells on the petals, making them characteristically bright. The flowers themselves are quite small, and fairly fragile.

When you look at a buttercup flower, standing alone, it is quite unimposing, and hardly noticeable. Yet when a field is full of them, you can't not notice them. It's hard to take your eyes off of them because they look like a beautiful carpet of yellow, like a vibrant yellow blanket.

Appreciating buttercups involves a certain perspective. If the flower is alone, it seems rather scrawny and unimpressive. Looking at a field containing one or two buttercups is unspectacular. But a field filled with thousands of buttercups is awesome!

When we look carefully at one buttercup, it has its own elegance and beauty, but walking quickly past it makes it seem tiny and unimportant. In various ways, the buttercup perspective is pretty descriptive of Christians. Most Christians standing alone in their field (their life) may not look very impressive, and perhaps even look weak and frail.

Yet some of the most beautiful and amazing people in the world are right next to us, they just don't dazzle us enough to get our attention. Yet they are faithful and true, loving, kind and humble. This is one of the truths we learn from the buttercup perspective. It is not the impact of the beauty, it is the quality of it. It is not the noisiness of someone's presence, but the gentle and sometimes subtle hues they add to life. Whenever you are feeling alone, or ignored, or undervalued, take a lesson from the buttercup. Grow where you are planted, hold your flower high, and give praise to your Creator.

There is another lesson from the buttercup, if you think of the impact of believers and the church in our community and our world. The church is God's idea, it is the family of God on Earth. When we each stand alone, our contributions to God's kingdom can go unnoticed, or we can be inadvertently crushed. What you and I do to reveal God's creative handiwork may be too subtle for some to notice. But when we as Christians come together, stand together, and reflect God's light to those looking at the field (the world), then what we are doing can't be ignored. One buttercup in a field isn't even noticeable; it doesn't change the way the field looks, the way the field is. But when the whole field is filled with buttercups, the entire field is changed. It's hard not to notice all those buttercups! The church is meant to work together, not just as believers each working alone. Working together is how we impact the world around us.

The third major truth from the buttercup perspective is that whatever gets noticed about our lives, it should be identifiable as a reflection of God: His beauty, grace, light, or truth. We are created

to reflect our Creator: “So God created mankind in His own image, in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them.” (Genesis 1:27, NIV).

We don't produce the light, we reflect His light. We don't create the beauty, we reveal God's beauty. We don't espouse human truth which is transitory; we embrace, live and share His eternal truth, timeless truth which has always been true, and always will be true.

Like the reflective nature of buttercup petals, each believer is to reflect the light and glory of God to others so that they can get a new perspective on life. You can call it “the Buttercup Perspective.” As the world gets darker and darker, Christians are to shine brighter and brighter, as Isaiah proclaimed in Isaiah 60:2 (ESV): “For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples, but the Lord will arise upon you, and His glory will be seen upon you.”

Will you help share God's light with others? Will you see your life through the Buttercup Perspective, and join in the beauty of God's work going on around you?

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