

Spiritual Soup

By Kurt Venables

Gems in the Gravel



Sometimes I feel like I'm traveling through life at a hundred miles an hour. Sometimes I feel that my life is like a glass sitting in the sink under a running faucet- already overflowing as more stuff continues to pour in. The pace of life today sometimes seems supersonic. Maybe it's always been this way. I don't know. I can't comment on the pace of daily life 100, 1000, or 100,000 years ago. I have a wife and two kids, ages 5 and 3. I work a full time job (which is sometimes more than full time), and I go to school at night as I work toward my master's degree (electrical engineering at VA Tech). Add to all this a seemingly endless supply of mundane tasks, like lawn mowing, home improvement, auto repair, picking up toys, etc. Of course, I also produce the Spirituality & Community web site and magazine. Sometimes it's difficult to find time to just relax.

Yesterday was Saturday, and sandwiched between mowing the lawn and running out to pick up some dinner was a walk down to the end of our road with my little boy Blaine (he's the 3 year old). We live out in the country on a gravel road. It's very quiet, there's a lot of open space, and there's only a couple houses past ours as you travel down to the end of the road. We recently bought a fish for Blaine's room (a Beta). The poor thing was in a bowl that was completely empty. We were walking down the road to find some rocks to put in the bowl so that Rainbow (the fish) would feel more at home.

We were looking for "gems". We found white quartz crystals, black rocks marbled with different colors, yellow ones, and sparkling ones impregnated with shiny flecks.

Walking down the road with Blaine, I was struck by one of those flashes of recognition that sometimes happens. I was reminded that life is like that walk. While much of life is hard work, sacrifice, and a seemingly endless string of tasks, the good times and the special moments are what make it all worth it. And sometimes it takes work to find the "gems" in our lives. We need to work to overcome taking things for granted. We need to work to recognize the priorities in our lives- family, friends, health, passions, and, of course, spirituality. The things that if all else in our lives vanished, we would still be fulfilled, we would still be truly happy. Filling our hearts with the Light helps us to be mindful of the important things in life, for the Light sanctifies what might otherwise seem ordinary, like the tiny motes that glisten in a sunbeam- or like the gems picked out of the gravel by a three year old boy.