

The Radiance of His Glory

Recently I visited a Gem and Lapidary Museum while on vacation with my husband. During the tour, we were brought into a curtained booth where we saw a large assortment of rather plain and ordinary-looking rocks behind the glass display case in front of us. Suddenly the lights went out, and a "black light" shone ultra-violet rays on the collection of rocks. The guide explained that the florescent qualities embedded in these types of minerals causes them to glow brilliantly when they are exposed to certain rays of light. I was awed as the ordinary-looking rocks were transformed with vibrant colors that reflected the creativity of their Creator. It was fascinating to see that even when the ultra-violet light was switched off, the rocks continued to give off the colorful radiance for several seconds. We were told that this happens because the rocks "store" some of the ultra-violet light while it is shining on them.

This experience reminded me of the story of Moses in Exodus 34: 29-35. It says that when Moses came down from his encounter with God on Mt. Sinai, "he wasn't aware that his face had become radiant because he had spoken to the Lord." The Israelites were so taken aback by the glow of Moses' face that he had to cover himself with a veil. "But whenever he went to speak with the Lord, he would remove the veil until he came out again...and the people of Israel would see the radiant glow of his face". Two things in particular strike me about this passage. The first is that the radiance of Moses' face correlated directly with the time he spent in God's presence. Verses 29 and 34 tell us that Moses spent time speaking with God, and in Numbers 12:8 God Himself says about Moses, "I speak to him face to face, clearly, and not in riddles!". I think it's safe to assume that while God was speaking, Moses was listening! In the same way, when you and I spend time alone with God we must not only speak our hearts to Him, but listen for His voice speaking to us. He most frequently will speak to us in His word; thus the Psalmist gives us an example to follow: "I have hidden Thy Word in my heart that I may not sin against Thee" (Ps. 119:11). In his book "The Practice of Godliness", Jerry Bridges says "...it is clear that the central idea of the psalmist in 119:11 was that of storing up God's word in his heart against a time of future need." Just as those rocks stored up the rays of ultra-violet light, allowing them to continue to shine in complete darkness, so God's word stored in our hearts allows us to continue shining in a dark world.

The second thing I notice about this passage is that Moses "wasn't aware that his face had become radiant". Isn't that beautiful? He didn't bother checking his appearance in the reflection of a mountain stream on the way down! Numbers 12:3 tells us that "Moses was very humble—more humble than any other person on earth". He had become so utterly God-focused that he was no longer self-focused. When we practice that kind of humility, we allow the rays of God's Light to shine on us in such a way that we reflect the beauty of our Creator. You might think you're just a plain, ordinary person; but that's not what those around you will see as you bask in the Light of God's presence. As David said, "Those who look to Him for help will be radiant with joy" (Ps. 34:5).