Useful Philosophy

Summary

What does philosophy look like when it's actually lived out, day to day, rather than just debated? This compilation of short reflective essays applies practical wisdom to everyday character and relationships, tracing every insight back to Yahweh as its true source.

- Useful Philosophy: happiness and fulfillment should depend as little as possible on external circumstances.
- Friendship: true friendship is measured by its usefulness and mutual benefit, not by conformity or pretense.
- Natural Beauty: a reflection on a Mozart performance used to argue that all genius and artistry ultimately trace back to Yahweh's gifting.
- Vanity (Parts I & II): hair-care products and automobiles used as case studies in culture's obsession with image over substance.
- Character, Nobility & Silence is Golden: three short essays on perceiving others without judgment, on quiet integrity over public display, and on the discipline of restraint.
- Natural Compassion: a closing meditation on Mark 4:12 and the difference between merely hearing and truly perceiving with the heart, calling readers to feel Yahweh's compassion for a hurting world.

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Useful Philosophy

Useful Philosophy

The essence of any useful philosophy is that a man should live so that his happiness and fulfillments shall depend as little as possible on external things. Such being the case, we come to our own feelings. Commonly, confusion over responsibility reigns. Action seems to many to follow feelings. But really, action and feeling work harmoniously together.

Even when we re-act to another's actions with feelings of our own, we are in reality and by definition, experiencing our very own actions. And by regulating our actions, which are under the more direct control of the will, we can indirectly regulate our feelings, which are not. In short, blaming others for our feelings is like pretending to be able to excuse our actions by claiming them to be mere re-actions to another. It is irresponsible, and inconsistent with any useful philosophy.

Friendship

The true essence of friendship shall be its usefulness. A wise and prudent man shall choose his friends so that this usefulness is unique and manifests with or without his approval. Otherwise, he shall not be choosing friends, rather judging people. Since he knows he is unable to judge with certainty, this choice is easy. Commonly, the choice is averted by an eagerness to be with others under the pretence they have some magical ability to "make us feel good"; a pretence often bolstered by a sharing of "similar interests".

Such a pretence obviates the great advantages of our uniqueness, and requires by definition, uniform conformity. It is more often a display of insecurity and fear of being unique, than it is evidence of a useful friendship. Only when one is perfect, may one wisely judge that he does not need the useful advantage of a distinctly unique friend – one very different from himself in most every way.

Natural Beauty

A simple stage with five men and five stringed instruments presenting to about twelve hundred patrons. A Celebration called "Mozart-Week" in Salzburg, Austria, 1990. In reverent silence to the ensemble, we found our emotions being played upon. We listened, we wept, we smiled and we wept some more. All twelve hundred of us marvelled that music without any words could convey such a powerful moving of our emotions.

I thought perhaps the beauty of it all was because the instruments were such perfect extensions of the impartial players. Then I thought perhaps the beauty of it all was really because the players were such impartial extensions of the perfect instruments.

But no, it was more. The humility of the players and the purity of their love for the music set down by the true artist decades earlier was miraculous. A wonderfully gifted child somehow wrote music that has endured and remains beyond the talents of even the greatest artists of today.

I realized the true beauty of it all, was not because of what any man knew or was capable of, rather it was purely because of the foreknowledge of Yahweh. Only Yahweh could know that when perfect music was expressed by perfectly tuned instruments that were managed by perfectly impartial technicians, that the true listeners would enjoy perfect emotional participation.

Only Yahweh could gift the young child with such understanding that enabled him to write perfect music. Only Yahweh could gift the craftsmen with the skills necessary to create the perfect instruments. Only Yahweh could gift the technicians with the perfectly impartial, perfect skills so necessary to play those instruments. And only Yahweh could gift the listeners with the emotions that could so joyously appreciate it all.

The original genius, the true Artist, is Yahweh; Musical Conductor Extraordinaire! Naturally!

Vanity - I

The vanity of human nature is a fascinating thing. Consider hair care products. Marketing experts have capitalized upon our vanities, and created multi-billion dollar products for pre-shampooing agents, shampoos and hair cleaners, basic conditioners, revitalizers which are not to be mistaken for mere conditioners, colours, tints which are not colours, frizz controllers, anti-static formula, hair spray, hair gel, setting gel, straightening agents, curling agents, de-tangling formula, hair *(food)* therapy formula, shine enhancers, body enhancers, texture enhancers which are not hair-body products, split end formula, colour sensitive products in each category, hair dryers, hair curlers, hair curling solutions, hair crimpers, curling irons, and heat sensitive products in each category, and most amazingly, special treatment products for chemically sensitive hair. The money spent, not to mention the vast time shopping for and applying all of these things, evidences vain priorities.

It demonstrates a cultural acceptance of the vain concern for the image, rather than the substance of the package; a state of our culture without defence, regardless of an individual's most noble effort at trying.

Character

The true essence of character shall be its perception. For perception to be true, it must look without judgment beyond the temptations of the obvious. To see without judgment, and to thereby perceive, one must fully accept what is viewed without partiality. Any temptation or desire to change what one sees when one looks, is a bastardization of one's perception, and is akin to fantasy. Or put simply, what is in your view is what you must see, your perception of it however, is subject to opinion. How you regulate your opinion is a measure of your character.

A man of character, will look upon another with unfettered acceptance. What others may fantasize as dislikes or personality flaws, are accepted by the man of character as challenging opportunities for his own growth. He knows he is responsible to control that which resides within and to accept that which is outside of his control. Therefore, by all means everyone and everything is acceptable and well liked.

Vanity - II

The vanity of human nature is a fascinating thing. Consider modern automobiles. Marketing experts have capitalized upon our vanities, creating "cars", designed to reflect the "image" of the owner. The average consumer spends well over one third of his income on cars, whether sporty cars, sexy cars, muscle cars, family cars, suburbanite cars, utility cars, sport-utility cars, executive cars, limousines, luxury cars, touring cars, racing cars, economy cars, limited edition cars, custom personalized cars, middle class cars, or cars designed for elderly drivers. All of these cars come with personal choices of hundreds of colours, fabric or leather covered seats, smoking facilities, dual vanity mirrors, "appearance" packages, "convenience" packages, and sometimes, even built-in safety features. None of the cars are designed to really last and the styles are changed in order to provide a "dated" look to any that do. Car companies admit that it only costs about one eighteenth of the price of a car to produce it, but in a free economic society where the "consumer" is boss, that's just the way it is. The success of this manipulation evidences vain priorities. It demonstrates a cultural acceptance of the vain concern for the image, rather than the substance of the package; a state of our culture without defence, regardless of an individual's most noble effort at trying.

Nobility

There are no truly Noble thoughts that remain unspoken, nor Noble deeds which remain undone. The true measure of Nobility lies not in the relating of blood, but rather in the eloquence of the expression of words and in the sincerity of the deeds done.

A poor man, who knows how to conduct his manners and deeds in silence if needed, in isolation if necessary, and with his dignity, integrity and honour intact, is capable of expressing the most chivalrous character – a truly Noble man to the core. Whereas it has become popular for many of lesser character, to seek for the recognition of their desired Nobility rather than the evidence of their true character.

Proclamations of superior bloodlines, displays of material accomplishments, philanthropic gestures designed as rehearsed public presentations and various other glamours, are sought to immortalize the

desired image rather than the true substance of the package.

Sadly, the audience, our society, has degraded to the point of actually preferring this type of shallow behaviour, as evidenced by its overwhelming support; a state of our culture without defence, regardless of an individual's most Noble effort at trying.

Silence is Golden

- When a man of character can think of nothing positive to say on a topic, he will remain silent. It is without doubt known to him, that the negative thoughts he was tempted to speak were but mistaken in any event.

Natural Compassion

- "Seeing they may see and not perceive, And hearing they may hear and not understand"! *(Mark 4:12).* The Messiah spoke these words to explain why He used parables, which in part, was "To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of Yahweh; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables" *(Mark 4:11).*

The parables in fact were all very fully explained, yet nearly everyone still misses their meaning, even to this day. Perhaps focus should be placed on "the peace of Yahweh, which surpasses all [human] understanding, [which] will guard your HEARTS and MINDS through the Messiah Yah'shua" *(Phil. 4:7).* For when a man, Simon by name, did not understand the gift of His Holy Spirit, he was admonished with a reason for his misunderstandings: "for your heart is not right in the sight of Yahweh ... and pray Yahweh if perhaps the THOUGHT OF YOUR HEART may be forgiven you" *(Acts 8:21,22).*

So it is that our thoughts do not all emanate from our minds! Some in fact emanate from our hearts! Thus it is with our hearing also. If we hear with the same heart that we generate our thoughts with, then we may not "hear" the truth, even when it has been spoken to us! In fact, we are told quite simply that the things of Yahweh will be very hard to explain "since you have become dull of hearing" *(Hebrews 5:11).*

Notice it says dull of "hearing" not dull of "understanding"! Remember, for "hearing they may hear and not understand"! For when speaking of man's heart, Yahweh says through Jeremiah "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;" *(Jer. 17:9)*. And again in Matthew "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. THESE ARE THE THINGS THAT DEFILE A MAN" *(Matt. 15:19, 20)*. "Do you not know that you are the temple of Yahweh and that the Spirit of Yahweh dwells in you? IF ANYONE DEFILES THE TEMPLE OF Yahweh, Yahweh WILL DESTROY HIM. For the temple of Yahweh is Holy, which temple YOU ARE" *(1 Cor. 3:16, 17).*

Yahweh lives in you. Yahweh has gifted you with the very life you live. Yahweh knows your every thought, of both heart and mind. Yahweh cries out in heart-felt agony over your own deceitful heart! It is the deceit of the heart that causes all of the pain and suffering, the death and agony, the torture, the wars, the starvation, the abuse, the excesses of this world that are justified by the excuses of mankind!

New-Agers, pious religious believers, deceitful politicians and people in general, fall back on platitudes surrounding their myths of some "universal" power or force that seems to be uniting the minds of millions around the world. They boast of new scientific discoveries, modern advances and accelerated human potential due to these mysterious universal forces being at work! Indeed they are correct.

What has accelerated is the totality of all of this disastrous human behaviour at a rate unparalleled by anything except the equally staggering disintegration of the collective human consciousness. Only calloused minds; numb to the realities of life, could find "progress" in what the world has endured.

Yahweh is love. Yahweh FEELS! Those few that truly know Yahweh, also feel deeply and compassionately about the world's wrongs. They, and Yahweh, do not see these events as progress, but rather as evidence of a firmer resistance to the compassionate nature Yahweh gifted us all with. And Yahweh feels what you feel –He KNOWS what you feel! If it is not embarrassing to feel good about the world we have made for ourselves, it should be very much so!

It should be embarrassing to face Yahweh and admit to being one of these human beings that have collectively failed so miserably. It should be embarrassing to face Yahweh and not have anything to say to justify your position. No excuse, no reason why you just went along with things, or why you did nothing in the way of prevention.

We are of all things, pitiful in our endeavours to be kind, caring, loving, compassionate human beings. We are lazy and irresponsible, and we lie, cheat, plunder, loot, steal, rob, murder, war, fight, abuse, and take for granted everyone and everything on this planet, and justify ourselves in this "progress" as it is "just the way things are", as if "things" have created the circumstances!

Close your eyes and FEEL! Feel the pain, the anguish, the distrust, the scepticism, the fear, the hurt, the anger, the uncertainty, the relentless pressure of "success", the hunger, the thirst, the starvation, and you know what, you just may find yourself crying! Yahweh is!

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