



THE MASTER'S COTTAGE

A PRAYER JOURNEY. **ENCOUNTER JESUS.** LEAVE CHANGED.

THE DOCK OF REFLECTION



Your next stop in the garden is to dangle your feet in the emerald green pool at The Dock of Reflection. You look down into the pool and instead of seeing the likeness of your face that you're accustomed to seeing in the mirror, you see the face of Jesus. This is how God sees you if you've trusted in His Son.

However, it can be a daunting task to apply the same principal to others especially if they unknowingly exasperate you by their vast differences in thinking and doing. Maybe they don't mean to aggravate you; they're just *different*. It's easy to think that different equals wrong, and sometimes the person irritating you has done nothing wrong at all! Sometimes we lack empathy for those that are different.

We also struggle when we see all the warts and flaws that make difficult people...*difficult*. What about the vile person - the one who actually is in the wrong - that hasn't trusted Christ as their Savior? Is that person easy to love? How does God want you to respond?

It's hard to pray for people we don't understand. God sees through a different lens, so grab His lens and take this time to stare into the pool...through His eyes. Let God show you how to love the ones who cause you the most grief. Be willing to let Him show you a new perspective, and better ways for you to respond in the most difficult circumstances...after all, you are the one person that you can change.



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Have you ever been exhausted by a difficult person? People often have differing views and that can make it extremely challenging for you to understand them—and sometimes, impossible to love them. But is it really impossible? Think about murderers, child traffickers, abusers and the like. Does God love them too? We must rely on our foundation of grace before we can further build on this concept. Remember the grace you've been given? Was God's forgiveness a free gift to you? Isn't that same gift extended to everyone? In our limited capacity to comprehend, we simply cannot predict whether a person will (or will NOT) accept the free gift of grace and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. Only God can do that.

But maybe the person you're struggling with isn't obnoxious at all, and certainly not a vile murderer! Maybe this person exasperates you simply because you don't understand them. Perhaps your exasperation isn't because of their behavior, but because they just think differently or make choices in a different manner than you would. This person isn't necessarily wrong, they're just *different*. What we need most in these difficult situations is a proper perspective, so God—in all of His grace—reserves a special place in His Garden to help you with this.

While in the garden, take time to sit and pause at The Dock of Reflection. Dangle your feet into an emerald pool of water. Just as you would cast skipping stones across a pond, cast your cares upon the Lord, because He cares for you (1 Peter 5:7). As you release these irritations to the Lord, listen to His advice on how He would deal with that person(s). Your temptation might be to ask God to change the aggravating person; but if you lack empathy for someone else, it is more likely your fault rather than theirs. Maybe you need to give grace to that person as God does. Maybe you simply need to gain a fresh perspective—His perspective. Ponder His Scriptures as you begin this conversation with Him.

As for the vile person, know that God is sovereign. Man is not. Isaiah 46:10 tells us that God has declared the end from the beginning. He can see the future. He also knows all of our thoughts (Psalm 139:2). God simply knows ALL things. To the contrary, mankind is limited. 1 Corinthians 2:11 illustrates that one man isn't able to know another man's thoughts. The point is this...you simply don't know what is in a man's heart and if God has plans to change or save the person who causes you most grief. But what you do know is that every person has the opportunity to make the right decision, and it is God's will for "everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him to have everlasting life..." (John 6:40) Trust God and leave His will in His hands.

As for the blissfully unaware irritator, know that you can't control their thoughts or behaviors. So go ahead and make the decision to change yourself in this situation. That is one thing you can change. "Rejoice in the Lord always... **(SHOW GRATITUDE)** Let your gentleness be known to all men... **(BE KIND)** Be anxious for nothing, ...let your requests be made known to God **(TRUST HIM)**; ...if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things **(FILTER YOUR THOUGHTS)**." (Philippians 4:4-8) Further, "...be strong in grace...endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ **(YIELD TO HIS STRENGTH)**." (2 Timothy 2:1, 3-4) It sounds so simple...but it really does boil down to you making consecutive choices to do these things. Trust God in the process!

The Dock of Reflection was provisioned to give you guidance when your viewpoint hinders your ability, and maybe even your desire, to act as an extension of His hand. Be the reflection of Him to others. Ask God to change your thinking about difficult people. Perhaps you will find compassion for them while dangling on the dock.