

Struggle Is an Aspect of Life from *Meditations of the Heart* by Howard Thurman

Again and again we seek to escape from the struggle of life. It is perfectly normal to long for, yea, even to seek some quiet retreat from the struggle in which we engage constantly. One need hardly be ashamed of such feeling and desires. Sometimes the struggle has to do with the matter of searching a living, of keeping alive with some measure of dignity and decency. Often it has to do with a total series of relationships, personal or impersonal. Or again, it may have to do with the fight for life against the ravages of some insidious disease. In its most dramatic form it may have to do with some inner temptation, some profound battle or the will to do with one's own spirit that which seems to be right, when some easier way looms large on the horizon.

The interesting thing to remember is, one's own struggle is individual but it is not unique. All of life is involved – in fact, struggle is an inescapable aspect of life itself. A friend described the emergence of a sea gull from its egg. The process took many hours. There was the incessant pecking away at the shell from the inside. The rhythm of the sound was interrupted by occasional noises of apparent distress and anguish. But always from the inside. Then the bird emerged, wet, bedraggled – it did not get dry from many additional hours. One has seen a butterfly emerge from its fibrous prison house. What struggle, what tempestuous effort!

The struggle of man seems to be more marked because man knows that he is struggling, which means that he must struggle even as he abides the thought of a struggle – a double portion. This double struggle is underscored by the difference between the private ends of the individual and the impersonal purposes and forces that surround him. But there is always strength for struggle. The sure knowledge of the fact gives wings to the spirit even when the struggle is deepest. It is the insistence of religion that the God of life and the God of religion are one and the same. Implicit in the struggle, which is part of life, is the vitality that life itself supplies. To affirm this with all of one's passionate endeavor is to draw deeply upon the resource available to anyone who dares to draw upon it. The aliveness of life and the power of God move through the same channel at the point of greatest need and awareness. What precious ingredients!