

## ***Float Like A Butterfly***

- Venus Laney

What is it about the butterfly that is so intriguing? As far back as I can remember I have been in awe of their beauty and the delicate dance of their graceful flight. So much so, that as a child, I would spend hours trying to capture them. I guess I thought that having something so precious in my possession would somehow make me feel more delicate and beautiful myself. I'm sure our mailman was caught off-guard more than once upon opening our mailbox. That was the only place I knew to keep them...my mother never would have let me bring one in the house.

I'm still fascinated by them. But recently, it's gone beyond an appreciation of their aesthetic beauty. With each sighting in the last few weeks, I've gotten the compelling feeling that God has been trying to show me something through them. I've had an overwhelming sense of blessing in each of these moments – different occasions from an outdoor wedding, a mid-day walk, to a Sunday afternoon playing with my 2 year old daughter....watching her clumsily chase after one in flight. It wasn't until my ride to church Sunday evening that it all began to make sense to me – seeing the many cocoons in the treetops reminded me of how much these creatures embody the stages of our Christian walk.

The more I read about the butterfly, the more excited and inspired I became about the many similarities. The life cycle of the butterfly has 4 stages- the egg, pupa (caterpillar), larva (cocoon), and adult (butterfly). Of course the egg would symbolize our spiritual birth. This is the only stage that we experience only once. The others, I believe, repeat and recur during different seasons in our walk. Let me explain...

During the pupa stage as a caterpillar, the most important goal is eating. This is the animal's main focus and spends most of it's time seeking nourishment. God's word is the most important requirement for growth as a Christian. It is the bread of life. *"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."* (Matthew 4:4). We learn more about God and His will by reading His word – without it, we will spiritually starve. While this should be a daily requirement, there are times in our walk when we are just HUNGRY! During these times, we can't seem to get enough of His word.

Then it's time for the cocoon. Oh- there are so many wonderful visuals during this time!!! Not the least of which is the requirement for the caterpillar to find the appropriate place – he must then securely anchor himself to the spot. This is so true for us – we must be anchored in Him and His word. *"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."* (John 15:5). Also important to notice during this time is that the pupa is considered INACTIVE. While there is much going on inside, it is a **hidden** work. God is busy creating and preparing on the inside of this protective state. He shelters us and strengthens us while He is doing this work inside. But, I feel that it is so important to someone to notice that it is not only ok to be inactive during this time, it is required!!! No beauty can be seen now, but without this time, it could never develop.

When the time is right and the pupa has developed, the butterfly will then emerge from the cocoon. It is a bit of a struggle at first, but then the world will see what has been happening inside that covering. I also found it significant that the butterfly is extremely vulnerable when first hatching – it is not able to fly until it flexes its' wings a bit and pumps blood through them. When we are just beginning to step out into our calling, we **MUST** be on guard and covered by His blood in prayer. *"The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy"* (John 10:10). The devil wants to steal your seed – he does not want to see this ministry for the Lord take flight. Cover everything in prayer and do not let it be taken from you.

At the glorious moment of flight, we can finally see the beauty and wonder that was intended for the butterfly from the beginning. What seems so fragile is able to go great distances – some butterflies migrating thousands of miles! Their main purpose at this point is to pollinate. Our job

is to further the kingdom – spread the good news of His gospel!!! However you are equipped and gifted to do this – whether through preaching, singing, encouraging, witnessing, this is the main goal!

While on their mission – people are blessed by the beautiful colors of the butterfly's wings. Do you know what's so marvelous? The color is not produced by pigment. It is actually created like a prism as the light passes through their transparent wings. It's God's light shining through us that makes us so beautiful to this world!

Right now, at this very moment, we are each in one of these stages. Each one is equally important and must be completed before proceeding to the next. As I mentioned before, with the exception of the birth, most of us will enter them more than once. *“Be confident of this. He who began a good work in you will continue to perform it until it's perfectly complete” (Philippians 1:6).*

Where does God have you now? Are you filling up preparing for your next flight? Are you in a moment of isolation allowing Him to develop you in His secret place? Are you soaring on the wind beautifully fulfilling your mission of the moment? Whatever place you are in, behold its' own special beauty and importance before moving on to the next! And don't deny others the blessing of one day seeing it fulfilled!

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