

Recently a friend of mine has taken up doing Tattoos. She is still practicing and so she does it for free. She always makes sure that the people who come to her are aware of her ability or lack thereof. Overall, she knew that sooner or later she would have to be confronted with critical opinions. And yet when one comment arrived, she lost control of her emotions. Hurt and almost vengeful she discussed the matter with her opposing critic, accusing her of sabotaging her success.

I think we can all relate to the feeling that overcame my friend.

Our senses notice something and almost as soon as the brain has processed it, it sinks into our emotions. It stings and burns. At times we believe it's unbearable. We have exposed ourselves. Been vulnerable. The consequence of that is usually that we are seen by other people and that however has the inevitable effect of judgement.

That is the feeling of human testimony. Even when the words are positive, it can move us into a space of dependence. The danger of any words are the reactions that follow. We have the possibility to stay calm but often we try so hard to cover our shame, we don't realize when we shame others. We mask our hurt feelings by saying you're worse.

At this point I should clarify what testimony means. In courts of law, it describes all statements under oath.

Generally, one could define testimony as a written or spoken statement, that is decided to be true.

It feels set in stone. Inflexible. Encaging. When we are confronted with judgement our logical rational thinking often hides away from us and we automatically without question believe that these statements are true and incredibly important. That is what our passage is trying to tell us. We value human testimony, we take it seriously, even though God's testimony encompasses the truth.

God's testimony is a different kind to the one of humans. It is the testimony of life. Eternal life for us. Life encloses all things and beings. You can trust that you exist. That you're alive. And God is allowing you to live. Whatever that may look like.

However, if we live, we will undoubtedly make mistakes. This is unavoidable. We will be beginners, learners over and over again. We will have to handle people's judgements and categorization, because human brains are wired that way. They automatically categorize as a means of making sense of the world. Our egos throw in a little judgement on this path of wanting to know things.

Deeper down into ones being though is God's judgement, God's testimony. And all it says is yes you are life. I gave you life because I deem you worthy of life. As I do all.

In this space we are all of the same worth. We all consist of the same attributes. We can be one in God's testimony. Realizing this can be extremely liberating. If we only have to trust that we are alive and we are worthy of this life and of the possibilities it grants us, life is easy. It's an affirmation that can motivate a person to be oneself and trust in God.

I do want to acknowledge the fact, that when we do forget this and we shake and stumble, that we remind ourselves of compassion. To be strong all the time and have unshakeable faith is unrealistic and so I suggest to be kind when you or others in one's circle begin to react to other people's words.

Even our human judgements are something that god has given space and time for, otherwise it probably wouldn't exist. The question arises of the practical use of human judgement. I've come to the conclusion that we learn from these situations. The great thing about life, about messing up is that we take on board what we need and analyze what we don't to become wiser and surer of our faith. This path entails ups and downs. But only by ups and downs can there be mountains and only then can there be views from the top, where one has to stop and stare at the wonders of nature.

It is human to be unsure, to be angry, to feel disappointed or mistreated. All we can do as bystanders or when we are consumed by these emotions, is remind of the unshakeable worth of soul.

Also, we so often dramatize the accusations and see the negative so much clearer than the positive.

My friend soon realized all the people who were satisfied with her work. Who support her and believe in her ability. She soon found that this was more significant and also much closer to the truth.