

## The Bulwark

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### HOW TO CARVE JUST ABOUT ANYTHING...

Some thirty years ago, I had the occasion to attend a crafter's fair with my wife at Knott's Berry Farm. While I am not a crafter, my wife is and I enjoyed watching her interact with the various artisans. One of which was a wood carver. He specialized in carving carousel horses; some would be used to replace broken horses on merry-go-rounds while others were sold as home décor. He talked openly about the necessity to use bass wood to those who had gathered around him, I turned my attention to another carver. He held in his hand a small bear like figure he was sculpting with various tools. When asked about he goes out the process he said in a manner of fact, "You find a piece of wood, get in your head what a bear looks like, then cut off everything that doesn't look like it." A quip no doubt repeated by wood carvers for centuries, but when you get past the witticism, the dawning of something profound begins to show through.

So it is with us. God looks at us in a manner of speaking as a block of rough wood. He sees in each one of us the promise of what we can be. Hidden beneath the bark, twigs and such like resides the person that God would have use to be. But it demands that everything be carved away that does not fit that image. We are very much a work in progress. Consider the example seen in Isaiah 64:8, whereas in place of a carver a potter is the focus, however the gist remains the same. "But now, O Lord, You are our Father; we are the clay, and You our potter..." (Isaiah 64:8) Blend in also what is seen in Philippians 1:6. "For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus."

We know that we must be the one who takes the tool in hand in order to do the shaping. That tool being the word of God. So in essence God is working through us in order to shape us. This sheds some light on what Paul wrote to the Philippians in chapter two and verses twelve and thirteen, "...work out your

*salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."*

Little by little we begin to take the form envisioned. It is a process that at times is easy and at other times it is most unpleasant. Nevertheless we continue with the process making changes along the way as deemed necessary. Notice what Solomon wrote in Proverbs

16:3. "Commit your works to the Lord, and your plans will be established." The word commit carries with it the meaning of, to obligate or pledge oneself. Can it be said we are fully committed to become, "...conformed to the image of His Son..." (Romans 8:29)

Notice the picture to the left. Take care to see the process. Do you long to reflect that likeness of Christ? In order for that to come about it is imperative to put your full self into the hands of the Master Carver. To undergo a full transformation. "And do not be conformed to this world,

*but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."* (Romans 12:2)

There are two extremely powerful verses that need to be considered as they accentuate powerfully the process of which we have been considering. "Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things have passed away; behold new things have come." (2Corinthians 5:17) "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me." (Galatians 2:20)

What do you see when you look at your life? (wbe)

