

MAY 2025



GOD'S RIGHT HAND

The words “right hand” occur 166 times in the Bible so it is no accident that this term has significant meaning.

The right hand of God signifies: God's power. God's protection. God's presence. God's saving power. And, God's mighty works.

God's right hand is symbolized in many Scriptures, as in Exodus 15:6:

“Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power, your right hand, O Lord, shatters the enemy”.

Just prior to Moses' death He blessed Israel with this blessing:

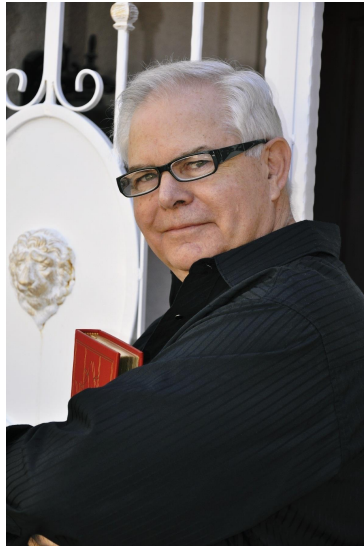
“The Lord came from Sinai and dawned from Seir upon us; he shone forth from Mount Paran; he came from the ten thousands of holy ones, with flaming fire at his right hand” (Deuteronomy 33:2).

When the Bible refers to the right hand of God, it is symbolic of those qualities listed above, as well as His ruler-ship, authority, sovereignty, blessing, and strength.

It's reassuring to know that the God who loves us will always be there holding us in His right hand. ♦

A FEW THOUGHTS ON ENDURANCE

by DAVID ST. JOHN



"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with endurance the race that is set before us."
(Hebrews 12:1)

Years ago, in high school, I was a "harrier" – a Cross-Country runner. We were called harriers after the breed of hound that is specifically bred for hunting hares across all sorts of terrain.

The courses I ran were 2.5 miles in length and consisted of everything from flat ground to hills; gravel or grass; and dirt or, on a rainy day, slippery mud. Our running season was primarily in the fall and winter, so weather conditions included rain, sleet, and snow. I never had a meet cancelled. And the courses varied from very tedious runs around a football field, to runs on trails, rambling through a state park or around a lake.

I wasn't a fast runner. That's why I never even thought of being a sprinter. But I did have endurance. And that was often tested. At the starting line, my mind was clear and my vision for the finish line was secure, but after a mile or so, I would start to entertain thoughts of quitting.

That is why this verse from Hebrews means so much to me. It reminds all of us to run with endurance the race set before us. Not with speed, but endurance. Life as a Christian requires that endurance because of the battles we encounter along the way, just as a cross-country runner often has to battle against wind and rain or soreness and pain.



Why do we need endurance?

To fight against the effects of sin: Though we

want to live Godly lives, the battle against our fleshly desires is right there beside us.

Romans 7:15-17 – *"I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me."*

To get through trials: They will come, but we are told that they are ultimately for our good.

James 1:12 – *"Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love Him."*

To experience discipline: As we go, there are times we will experience the consequences of sin.

Hebrews 12:8 – *"If you are not disciplined – and everyone undergoes discipline – then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all."*

(continued on next page)

So it comes down to this: We are to run the race with full assurance of faith, knowing that the prize has already been won for us.

When I ran cross country, I wasn't fast. I never came in first. I never won a prize. But I had endurance. My prize was the satisfaction of knowing that I stuck to it, and I finished.

Hebrews 12:2 - *"We fix our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfected of our faith. For the joy set*

before Him, He endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of God."

We are to look to Jesus who is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. We don't run the race alone. He is cheering us on, encouraging our endurance, but not from the sidelines. He is right there with us every step of the way. ♦

LOVE



Love. It's a small word. With big consequences. But we treat it too lightly. We say "I love you", "I love to travel", "I love Friday afternoons", and "I love chocolate". Same word, with many shades of meaning.

The ancient Greeks knew how to be more specific. They had four different words for four different kinds of love.

The first is **STORGE**: It means empathy. It means having a fondness for someone based on familiarity or a family bond. It's the kind of love your Aunt Sue might have for you, or you for your cousin Bob. There's a saying that you can choose your friends, but you're dealt your relatives. This is the relative kind of love.

Then there's **PHILIA**: A Philia kind of love is friendship. It's the kind of love shared by two people who share common interests, values, or activities. The love you have for your BFF is Philia. The opposite of Philia, by the way, is Phobia – but that's another story.

(continued on next page)

The third kind of love is EROS: Erotic love. This kind of love has two faces. It can lead one toward sin and evil when misdirected, or it can be a fulfillment of one's Christian duty as in a marriage.

Then there's the tough one. The Queen Mother of Love. AGAPE. Unconditional Love. Self-less Love. Godly Love. This is the love that goes against all of our selfish desires and requires us to love even the unlovable, or to love when we just don't feel like it. AGAPE is love in action. AGAPE is so against our human natures that it is the kind of love that has to be commanded by God. In the 13th Chapter of the Gospel of John, Jesus says, "A new commandment I give to you; that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another."

Think about that. Just as Jesus loved us. We are to love one another. It's not easy. And we can't do it on our own. In order to fulfill this over-arching commandment, we need to turn to the One who commanded it, and who will empower us to do it. ♦



MY DEAR GOD

My dear God I love You
with all that I do
And hope I may please You
by being Yours true!

I love You alone
through laughter and tears
And into Your service
I dedicate my years.

Humbly I pray
to You every day
To give me the right things
to do and to say.

And knowing You hear me
and will answer too
My thoughts and my words
are dedicated to You.

My dear God please help me
to love You much more.
Please make my life heartsick
and body sore

So I may suffer gladly
And know Your pain
My dear God I love You
Please make me a Saint!

Poetry Corner

Aurore Leigh Barrett
From Collected Poems, 1968



ART SAFARI

May's Masterpiece: "Flaming June"

by David St. John

My eyes never tire of gazing upon one of my favorite paintings, "Flaming June", painted in 1895 by Sir Frederic Leighton.

How could I not love it? With the elegant pose of the sleeping woman, curled up in a rose-like shape. With her gossamer-thin dress and its countless rippling folds. With the bright orange shades that glow so brilliantly as they emanate from her dress. And with her dreamy languishing pose, arms totally relaxed, as her long, auburn locks and matching wrap cascade luxuriously around her.

The artist, Frederic, Lord Leighton, was one of the leading artists of his age. He was a painter and sculptor. He specialized in mythological subjects where mood and physical beauty and color took precedence over story or moralizing. In his time, he was compared to Michelangelo.

"*Flaming June*" was first begun as a motif to adorn a marble bath in one of Leighton's other works, *Summer Slumber*. He became so attached to the design that he decided to create it as a painting in its own right.

"*Flaming June*" disappeared from view in the 1930s and was rediscovered in the early 1960s. It was put up for auction shortly after, during a period of time known to be difficult for selling Victorian era paintings. It's hard to believe that it failed to sell for its low reserve price of \$140.

Shortly thereafter, a young Andrew Lloyd Webber saw it for sale in a London antiques shop for £50. He wanted to buy it but his grandmother said "No, I will not have that Victorian junk in my flat". And she refused to lend him the money.



For a long time, the painting's large gold frame was considered to have more value than the painting itself.

It was eventually purchased in 1963 by the governor of Puerto Rico, Luis Ferré, for about \$1,000 when paintings of this style were still painfully out-of-fashion. He wanted to make it the centerpiece for a new museum in his city of Ponce. Today it is known as the "*Mona Lisa* of the Southern Hemisphere."

All along, art experts were aware that there was a preparatory drawing done by Leighton, as it had appeared in an 1895 art magazine.

Also there was a painted study he had done prior to creating his masterpiece.

It is known that Leighton was inspired in some of his pieces by Michelangelo's sculpture, "Night", which he had sculpted for the Medici chapel in Florence (1526–1531). And "*Flaming June*" was no exception. ♦

THE ARTS:

Movie Recommendation

