

## Recognizing the Treasure Within You

By Whitney Stager, M.S.

I read a story the other day that I would like to share. The message has a theme that many of us have heard before. At the end of the story, however, I will pose some questions to help us think about it a little differently.

*One day a man was exploring caves by the seashore. In one of the caves he found a canvas bag with a bunch of hardened clay balls. It was like someone had rolled clay balls and left them out in the sun to bake.*

*They didn't look like much, but they intrigued the man, so he took the bag out of the cave with him. As he strolled along the beach, he would throw the clay balls one at a time out into the ocean as far as he could. He thought little about it, until he dropped one of the clay balls and it cracked open on a rock. Inside was a beautiful, precious stone!*

*Excited, the man started breaking open the remaining clay balls. Each contained a similar treasure. He found thousands of dollars worth of jewels in the 30 or so clay balls he had left. Then it struck him. He had been on the beach a long time. He had thrown maybe 10 or 20 of the clay balls with their hidden treasure into the ocean waves. Instead of thousands of dollars in treasure, he could have taken home tens of thousands, but he had just thrown it away!*

It's like that with people. We look at someone, and we see the external clay vessel. It doesn't look like much from the outside. It isn't always beautiful or sparkling, so we discount it - just tossing it back to the sea. We see that person as less important than someone more beautiful or stylish or well known or wealthy. But we have not taken the time to find the treasure hidden inside that person.

There is a treasure in each and every one of us. If we take the time to get to know that person, and if we ask God to show us that person the way He sees them, then the clay begins to peel away and the brilliant gem begins to shine forth.

The following questions help bring the focus of this story on ourselves, instead of others.

- 1) When have we looked at ourselves in the mirror and wanted to throw our selves into the sea?
- 2) What beautiful gems do we have on the inside that we bury behind the clay?
- 3) What gems do we have that could stand a good polish?
- 4) What pieces of clay need to be picked out and wiped away?
- 5) What would Jesus say to you right now if he were looking at you?
- 6) What does Jesus see behind the clay?
- 7) What would happen if we ask God to show us the way He sees us?

Let's ask Him right now.

Dear God, sometimes I feel like a ball of clay. I don't look or feel worthy of You or of others. Please help me to see myself as You see me. I know that I am a beautiful gem in Your eyes. Thank you for loving me just the way I am. Amen.

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