

Gleaning In The Fields Of Light

“Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you? You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. And you covet something and cannot obtain it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts.”

—The Epistle of James

By Ken Woodley

If only we could control the weather.

Were we able to do so, Hurricane Florence never would have reached the East Coast. We would have squelched it into a gentle breeze in the mid-Atlantic.

If we could control the weather, no hurricane by any name would ever blow, nor any tornado twist.

There would be no floods.

There would be no droughts.

And not a blizzard in sight.

The weather would be perfect. The temperature ideal.

We would save so many lives and free everyone from all weather-related anxiety. No home would be destroyed. No property damaged.

We'd allow just the right amount of rain to fall, and at just the right time for crops and wells. A few picturesque snowflakes might be nice on Christmas Eve, but not enough to spoil anyone's plans.

But, the world's weather is far beyond our control and we watched the huge swirling mass of Florence drawing closer and closer, a monstrous nightmare we could do nothing about.

The feeling of helplessness was overwhelming.

But not all of the world's weather is beyond our ability to shape and change.

Other storms are very much within our power to prevent or control:

The hurricanes inside us.

The tornadoes we twist into the lives of others.

The floods of anger.

And droughts of love.

Our emotions can truly wound or certainly heal.

We are instruments of small, personal wars or catalysts of family and community peace.

Our words can be swords or plowshares.

And that choice is always ours. We, alone, decide.

By recognizing the gathering clouds of our own “bad weather,” we can discern that, Hey, I might respond angrily here, or selfishly; I might throw down a lightning bolt if I’m not careful.

Yes, we can stop our own storms before they thunder.

And we can make certain there is never a Hurricane Me by opening our souls to the love of God and letting the Lord’s “weather” fill our hearts before we speak or act.

As the apostle James goes on to say in his epistle, following his warning about the source of human conflicts and disputes:

“...The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.”

There are no mandatory evacuation notices when we forecast God’s love. And no states of emergency.

