

CONVERSATIONS WITH
BROTHER LAWRENCE
WATER, WATER
EVERYWHERE



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Water, Water Everywhere

The following is a short talk that I remember Brother Lawrence giving shortly after returning from a trip back to his hometown. The visit was not all he had hoped it would be. In fact he was a bit more introspective than he usually is. However, that is not unusual when what we remember is different than what is.

It is said that the human body is made up of 90% water. From the time we are conceived until we are born the baby is surrounded by nurturing fluids. Consequently, babies seem to love water. They splash and laugh as their parents try to wash the dirt from their silky skin. We can do without food for extended periods of time but quickly die without water. Humans are forever in need of water.

What do you think you are connected to?

Who do you think you are connected to?

Does it give you hope?

Have you ever seen the ocean? They are a seemingly never-ending supply of water. Or maybe you've seen one of the Great Lakes of North America. Vast stretches of water slipping over the horizon. I've been fortunate to live close to both the ocean and Lake Michigan. Walking along the beach, my feet just submerged in the surf and watching the sun slowly lower itself into slumber is one of my favorite

activities. Sometimes during the day, I sit on a log surrounded by nothing but empty sand, trees to my back and the music of the waves in front of me as they wash ashore. Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh. The sound is so relaxing and in tune with the rhythms of the universe. But large bodies of water are not always soothing. The power of the tides changes the beaches daily. Often the waves crash over the same rocks where just yesterday you sat pondering your place in life. During storms water pours out of the deep, flooding inland and dragging with it trees and debris from damaged dwellings too close to the water to be safe. The power, the depth, the immensity of the water is so vast as to be totally overpowering.

Are you going through tough times?
Do you ever feel insignificant?
Are you threatened with destruction?

Not all of us, however, have witnessed firsthand these bodies of water. Millions of us have no desire to see them; to experience them. They are very contented to be surrounded by fields of planted food; tilled and cared for by themselves and then harvested for their livelihood. Having never been near large bodies of water they nonetheless are connected to them. They build for themselves ponds; small bodies of still water where, from the safety and comfort of their living rooms, they can look out and enjoy their placidness. Sometimes a fountain will be installed, faintly hinting of the whale's spout, a symbol of playfulness in the midst of danger. This is very satisfying to the owners and quenches their felt desire for the source of their beings; a connection with the fluids of their beginnings. But for those of us who have experienced the power of the ocean, these human controlled conditions only frustrate. Ponds or small lakes are too safe;

too serene. We are too big to find satisfaction with them. We become too God-like. In our frail care ponds may stagnate. Lakes grow lifeless without replenishment that we cannot provide.

Are you too comfortable?
Are you merely witnessing the power of faith?
Are you living it?

I've watched large ships journey along waterways towards an inland harbor. These ships had already ventured far upon deep waters. So huge and daring, they slipped along silently, displacing the water into small waves that splashed against the jetty; in small ways imitating the natural power of the ocean. My mind fascinated on being buoyed up entirely by the water's unimaginably huge power; totally surrendered to its whims. Imagine traveling uncharted adventures while knowing you have no control of the circumstances. Oh, how great must be their faith and how grand must be their lives. By comparison this secure earth becomes a chain shackling me from my destiny. All around me stand people happy with their sheltered existence looking pleasingly out on their created imitations. They believe they have too much to lose to live by faith. I, on the other hand, believe I have nothing to lose; at least nothing of lasting value. Does your life shimmer with God's power? What would it cost to live by faith? Compared with what you would gain, what really do you have to lose?

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