

Steward Life

LESSON 32



STORY

Tibo of the Hanza tribe in Tanzania was leading an expedition of Americans through the bush. Kurt was following Tibo a few steps behind. Suddenly Tibo froze in his tracks—Kurt followed the example without knowing the reason—he just did it. Then Kurt saw it—a bird in a low tree flapping its wings and calling out. The bird suddenly became quiet and Tibo whistled back to the bird. It flew a few trees further and sat quietly. Tibo again whistled to the bird. On it flew, tree after tree, leading the group on through the bush. Finally it came to rest high up in a large tree. Tibo dropped his machete and took his fire stick, bent down and, twirling the stick in some dry leaves, built a small fire and roasted the end of a branch until it smoldered. Scampering up the tree, Tibo approached what we could now see was a large nest of bees. He jammed the smoldering stick into the opening on the bottom of the nest, driving out the bees. He then reached up into the nest and pulled out many pounds of honeycomb—filled with sweet honey (and bee larvae!) which he taught us all to enjoy.

INSIGHT OUT

The bird is called “honey guide” by the Hanzas, and no wonder. The scientific name of the bird is “indicator bird.” The Americans on the trip would never have noticed the bird. But the Hanzas were taught to be aware of the bird and its ability to lead people to honey.

There are indicators in our lives every day. As a steward—a person with “new eyes” to see God’s grace and blessings—you can train yourself to be aware of indicators of God’s gifts. Instead of a bird, He gives you a Spirit (which, incidentally, did come in the shape of a dove at Jesus’ baptism) to guide you. See John 16:13.

In the Old Testament God was working in the same way to guide Israel (Exodus 13:21). Psalm 48:14 says God will never stop guiding you.

Sometimes the guiding is not so gentle.

S T O R Y

Frank was in tears. He was doing a good job hiding it from the rest of the congregation, but it wasn’t easy. The pastor’s message about what Jesus suffered for him was really getting through. Perhaps for the first time, Frank really felt that God had forgiven him. He always knew it, but this time he felt it. That Jesus would lay down His life—that GOD would die for him—hit him in his eyes of faith, and his eyes were running over.

Eight months ago Frank lost his job. He was discovered embezzling funds from the bank. He remembers the day clearly—his boss coming across the lobby to his desk with one policeman and the bank examiner and saying to him, “Sorry, Frank, but your career is over!” Then the public and private shame began.

But the church stood by him. Not to defend his actions, but to help him recover. The kindness of so many as he faced the publicity. The help they gave his wife and children. The way they supported the family through the financial crisis that followed, as he repaid all he had taken plus the fines.

Fortunately he had been discovered early—before he had done irreparable damage to the bank or his future. After counseling, Frank realized that he had wanted to be caught, because there were things in his life he didn’t think he could deal with. His action was really a cry for help. He was personally out of control.

Now, sitting in the Wednesday Lenten service, he realized how God had led him through this valley. The initial event was like God hitting him in the head with a baseball bat. But the love of

Jesus had come through others to him.

God, through a traumatic event, had pointed him in a new direction—to a new life. In response for what God in Christ had done, how could he not be thankful? How could he not be tearful?

EXERCISE

If you have a baseball bat, go get it. Lay it on the floor in front of you. As you look at it, think of at least one time in your life when it felt like God had hit you in the head with a bat. How has God re-directed your life since then? How has the Holy Spirit been your “indicator bird?” Where do you imagine God will guide you yet? As you live your StewardLife, look with eyes connected to your heart, and see God’s Spirit active in your life with blessings and gifts.



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