



guidelines for living

a 5 minute message

February 21, 2018

LESSONS FROM A GOOSE

Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 6:1-2

They are larger than ducks but smaller than swans, and bird watchers have identified more than 130 varieties of them. Geese, however, which mate for life have almost human characteristics in the way they relate to each other and protect each other. Flying almost as high as a Boeing 747, migrating geese can rise to an altitude of 29,000 feet or 12,000 meters.

A friend of Guidelines sent me the following information under the heading, "Lessons from Geese." These facts about geese and the lessons we can learn from them are much too good to put in a file.

Fact #1: As a goose flaps its wings, it creates an "uplift" for the birds that follow. By flying in a "V" formation, the whole flock adds 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew alone. Think of that—an increased flight distance of up to 71%. What's the obvious lesson? Nobody gets where they are without teachers, parents, and mentors. Jesus taught that the discipling—the training—of others is life's greatest task, not simply climbing the greasy pole of success to get ahead of the next guy. Working together instead of against each other allows geese and their human counterparts to go much farther and to soar higher.

Fact #2: When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of flying alone. When that happens, a goose quickly moves back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front of it. What's the obvious lesson? There's no room for independence in life or in a family. We're all dependent on each other, and by recognizing that and respecting the interdependent relationship, you go further faster and easier and accomplish far more than trying to go the distance alone.

Fact #3: When the lead goose tires, it rotates back into the formation and another goose flies to the point position. Smart? Much smarter than their human counterparts whose egos are so huge that they refuse to let another provide leadership. Surveys indicate that involvement in church offices is counterproductive to spiritual growth in the majority of people. Why? It's simple. Ninety percent of the work in any church is done by ten percent of the people. So after a while, they are burned out, ready to quit, and often drop out entirely. The same thing is true of the leader who refuses to let another lead, fearful that he will lose his prominence.



guidelines for living

a 5 minute message

Fact #4: Geese flying in formation honk to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

Just how researchers know this isn't quite certain. I'm not sure whether they are encouraging or blowing their horns to get them moving, but I never cease to watch geese in flight and listen to their distinctive honking and marvel at their grace and symmetry. I do know one thing: Encouraging each other is so important when it comes to increasing production and a sense of well-being. Whether it is your child, an employee or a friend, encouragement can make the slight difference between success and failure.

Fact #5: When a goose gets sick, wounded or shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help and protect it. They stay with it until it dies or is able to fly again. Writing to the Galatians, Paul said, "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:1-2). Humans, however, tend to shoot their wounded instead of nurturing them and helping them work through their problems.

Fact #6: Geese mate for life in a powerful bonding which defies understanding. Who said that animals and birds are dumb? In many cases their instincts and even compassion far exceeds those who stand on the ground and watch them fly overhead. As it turns out, what's good for the goose is good for us, too.

Resource reading: Galatians 6:1-10