

# Hateful Hummingbirds

*By Gary Ogden*

You're sitting in a rocking chair on the porch of a mountain cabin listening to the rush of a cold clear mountain stream. All is peaceful and calm. The quietness is interrupted by the hum of hummingbird wings. What exquisite creatures! They are tiny, yet beautifully arrayed in brilliance, able to suspend in midair. The bird comes to an empty feeder and darts away abruptly.

I quickly take the feeder to the kitchen and fill it with sugared water. Moments later the hummingbird returns and sips the sweet nectar. Word seems to spread as other hummingbirds come to the bounty.

But something happens. Jealousy? Covetousness? In humming birds? They start diving at each other, fighting over the sugary treat like treasure hunters over gold. It is unnerving to watch these dainty creatures attacking each other, like fighter planes having "dog fights." It is not a beautiful trait.

Hummingbirds have no morals nor conscience, but people who do often behave just like them. When they see a fellow human being enjoying the "sweet nectar of life" they become jealous, envious, even covetous regarding his good fortune. Such behavior is sensual, devilish and not from God. "But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there" (James 3:14-16).

It's one thing to admire something that someone has: a nice car, house, boat, or other possession, it's another thing to develop sinful attitudes about things and the people who own them. Covetousness is not becoming to a Christian; it is downright ugly! It is the cousin of jealousy and envy, traits that will put us on the wrong side of God on judgment day.

Hummingbirds don't seem to know what it means to share. There's plenty of bounty to go around, but if a fellow bird should seek the nectar, territorial instincts kick in and the aggressive behavior begins.

Humans have to be taught to share. Children, at first, have the "mine" syndrome. They have to learn to share their toys and even the affection of their parents. They must come to learn that they are not the center of the universe and that there is plenty to go around.

Some, it seems, never grow out of the "my," "mine," way of thinking. With them, it's "me," "myself," and "I". They're always thinking of their own interests, rather than that of others. Sharing the bounty never crosses their minds. They don't like it when you have something they don't. They're too much like those beautiful hummingbirds with the ugly traits.

On a more positive note, there are great examples of selflessness in the Bible. Jesus, of course, is the best. He did not have self-interest when He gave up the glories of heaven to come to earth. He came to give, to share, to save. If He had only been thinking of Himself, He would have never gone to the cross. Because of what He was willing to give up, we have it all—spiritually speaking. "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!"

The churches of Christ in Macedonia exemplify the sharing spirit and a selfless attitude. Paul used them as an example to the Corinthians and to all as to what it means to share the bounty: "Moreover,

brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God” (2 Corinthians 8:1-5). When we first give ourselves to the Lord, giving to others follows. Christ gave, the Macedonians gave, we give. That’s the way it works.

Shall I be like Christ and the Macedonians or follow the wisdom that comes from below? Jesus said, “Follow Me.” That’s the better way to go—always.