

## “The Dove vs. the Pigeon: Learning the Sensitivity **of** the Spirit”

I've never been a lover of birds until recently. Let me explain. As a vet, I had a few bad experiences with birds early on. It's not that I didn't particularly have affection for them, I just didn't know much about them. Vet school majored on creatures with hair not features. Birds don't act sick until they were half-dead and most are hypersensitive, so with that combination I had too many die in my hands shortly after I took them out of their cages. More times than not there was a child standing right there having been assured by their parents that I was going to make Tweedy all better. My partner in practice had similar experiences with birds so as soon as God blessed us with a new associate, all patients with feathers were his. So for over twenty-five years I have for the most part ignored birds until recently. My new found affection and observation of birds started this spring. Here's my bird story that has actually changed my life. On a random Thursday morning (5/22/08), I pulled out of my driveway headed to Panera Bread for cinnamon crunch bagels. I remember exactly where I was on Wentworth Drive when a guest of James Dobson's Focus on the Family radio show was telling a story about a dove. Dr. R.T. Kendall was retelling a story from his book 'Sensitivity of the Spirit'. A missionary couple who had moved to Jerusalem had a beautiful turtle dove living in a nest in the eave of their upstairs flat. They began to notice that every time they raised their voices or there was the slightest disturbance whatsoever, the dove would fly away. It would take her a long time, sometimes even days, to come back. As long as things were quiet and peaceful she would stay right there. The couple just loved having her in view- she was so beautiful and peaceful. One day the husband asked his wife if she wanted the dove to stay. Of course she responded affirmatively. He quickly replied, "Then we are going to have to adjust our lives to her, because she is not going to adjust her life to us." Dr. Kendall went on to explain that the dove in this true story is an analogy to the Holy Spirit in our lives. The Holy Spirit is unchangeable- we will have to learn to adjust our lives to Him because He will never adjust His life to us. He described some characteristics of the dove and then went on to compare the dove to pigeons, both members of the same bird family they are anatomically exactly the same but in every other way completely different. As the dove represents the Holy Spirit in us, the pigeon represents our uncrucified flesh. This analogy was so powerful that by this time I'm sitting in the parking lot of Panera Bread hanging on every word. This was definitely a message and an analogy I needed to hear. It bounced around in my head for two days and then that Saturday I was prompted to do a little research on more details about doves and pigeons. I wrote some very "rough bullet notes" which I will interject at this point. You'll soon see that this story just continues to write itself with no effort on my part. Excuse any repetition of what's already been said; it will only help cement this analogy into your mind.

### Notes on Doves & Pigeons (5/24/08)

- Both members of family Columbidae/used somewhat interchangeably as anatomically they are identical but total opposites in every other way
- Pigeons: domesticated, in cities, parks, ugly-vile-they take over, scavengers, in New York City called "flying rats", they eat junk, become a daunting adversary to most big cities, a nuisance, they love noise, will crawl all over you to get food- they will eat anything!
- Doves: symbolic of Holy Spirit in the New Testament, they are wild and are symbols of peace; quite differently they eat only seeds and fruit-they will not eat junk; they will fly away with the

least bit of disturbance; very sensitive, tender, gentle; will not readily descend on someone and if they did they will fly away with the slightest noise or movement

- Spiritual analogy: The unrieved Holy Spirit is the dove; you are walking in His fruit (of the Spirit) when He is not grieved-present with you-like Him descending down upon you. The moment you grieve Him, He flies away. The sinful thought, the sinful word, anything not of Him-any act of the flesh or evil, He flies away. He is tender, gentle....easily moved by the least wrong. When present you are walking in peace, joy...on the other hand, the pigeon will light on you and you can't get him to leave. Pigeon religion- not the real thing. It's the counterfeit Holy Spirit. Looks like a dove but not the real thing. A pigeon in dove's clothing.
- I heard this analogy from Dr. R.T. Kendall on Focus on the Family (5/22/08) and ordered his book to get more insight. I'd like to do a lesson with this analogy- cultural Christians vs. true followers of Christ or counter-cultural Christians. The South is full of pigeons and doves. The doves are shot for sport and the pigeons are fed in the park. Isn't this interesting?? The pigeons are getting fatter and fatter-eating junk, anything, filth, refuge, dirty stuff, they don't care-they are pigeons-anatomically and scientifically just like doves but culturally and socially totally and completely different.
- How many times a day do I grieve the Holy Spirit in me? How many times does my personal dove have to leave me (not physically leave me because He can never leave me or forsake me, but He can withdraw the blessing (by-products) of His presence, the fruit- of love, joy, peace,etc. and His power. What is worth losing those for even a moment? When will we learn to stop grieving Him as we do? He has feelings....He is a person...I've never thought of Him like this before. The gift of the Holy Spirit-an alive invisible person living in me filling me up constantly with His fruit and power *when I'm not grieving Him*.
- My verse for the year (2008) is Psalm 16:8- "Because the LORD is at my right hand, I will not be moved." There are so many verses about not being moved or shaken. When we choose to be moved or shaken (mentally, emotionally), meaning we are choosing to think with the mind of the flesh, the dove flies away. We have grieved Him and He has to leave. He is inactivated in us. The fruit and power are gone. It's so easy to give Him-to bring Him sorrow. He is a person-the invisible person of the Holy Spirit living in me. Oh, how I act like He is not around sometimes. I grieve Him over and over and over but the Father is so merciful over and over and over that He keeps restoring me. I don't want to grieve Him anymore. Father, make me more aware of your Holy Spirit's presence moment by moment.
- To get the dove to descend upon you, you must be quiet and still (in your soul) for a long time. A few seconds won't do it. It must become a way of life for you. The still is in your mind. No more striving allowed (Psalm 46:10). You must want companionship and fellowship with the dove more than with people. You'll never please the dove and the world. The dove won't descend upon a crowded out loud heart. Peace be still. Intimacy with the dove requires silence of there soul.
- Most of your friends are satisfied with "pigeon religion" because they have never experienced The Dove. One minute with The Dove will change your life. You will become addicted to His peace and nothing else will ever satisfy. You will become homesick for heaven. Pigeon religion worshippers think they haver the real deal. It's like Coke-Zero. It's not the real thing. Pigeon religion is a deadly substitute. "Depart from me, I never knew you...Oh, that you were hot or cold-because you are lukewarm I am about to spew you out of my mouth!" That literally means vomit.
- \*\*\*5/26/08: I wrote the above bullet point this weekend after hearing the analogy on Thursday. This morning (Monday) I walked out of my side door and guess what was sitting on top of Taylor's car roof - a beautiful dove! Another was onto of the garage roof. They immediately

flew away when they heard me. I get to work and guess what's in the first cage in our hospital ward- a pigeon with the following note attached to the cage door:

*Dear Dr. Griffin,*

*I got hit by a satellite truck in Columbia, South Carolina. I got stuck to the air conditioning intake on top of the truck and was trapped there, spread pigeon, for 400 miles until the driver finally stopped in Montgomery for the night and pulled me loose. Someone told me YOU could help me so he brought me here. PLEASE don't let me die now. My leg needs to be fixed. Help me. Please!*

*Pigeon*

- The resilience of this pigeon illustrates the perfect analogy to our flesh. IT IS HARD TO KILL! Our flesh is strong- it lines right up with the enemy. Our flesh or carnal nature will always be with us to some degree. We are born with this Adamic nature- the only remedy is to invite the Holy Spirit to come in and take over and little by little begin to slay the flesh every time it rises up. It will scream to be rescued just like this pigeon in the above true story. Please fix me!! It doesn't die easy. You just can't pray it away- you must war against it as an act of your will. "I have been crucified with Christ"... "take up your cross daily"... "die to yourself"... the examples in scripture are endless. The battles rages... the "war" as described in Galatians 5. But praise God that "greater is He who is in you" so that you can win this war moment by moment IF YOU CHOOSE TO FIGHT. The dove is worth it! The dove and the pigeon will not co-exist.

As I've retyped the above bullet points from over six months ago I'm still amazed how God has orchestrated every detail concerning this dove vs pigeon story. I'm seeing some things I missed in May. With any analogy or parable the Holy Spirit will give each individual specific insight for them in the season they are in. I started out saying that it was a random Thursday-with God nothing is random. That Thursday just happened to be 5/22. For those accustomed to my teaching 5/22 is huge to me. To me it represents the Spirit-from Galatians 5:22, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace...." My husband and I set our alarm clock for 5:22 each morning. It's a visual reminder that we can choose to get up and feed our Spirit or hit the snooze and continue to feed the flesh (which is probably screaming to go back to sleep). Now you've got to just know that God was showing off when He allowed me to see the two doves and then the pigeon back to back on that Monday morning after writing on Saturday that I wanted more insight into this analogy I heard for the first time on that Thursday. I've been in that same practice for 37 years and never before has there ever been a pigeon brought in. When I read the note from "Pigeon" to Dr. Griffin I knew I would be writing about it and teaching it one day. Just a few months later I accompanied my husband to the Chicago Marathon where I was surrounded by as many pigeons as runners. Observing the pigeons interacting with each other was priceless in my understanding of their traits. Unlike doves who are not territorial and will not fight each other, the pigeons were incredibly territorial and defensive. They would attack each other for no apparent reason. The analogy became cemented in me as I spent time observing both pigeons and doves. Maybe I'm weird but this analogy just works for me. By learning the sensitivity **of** the Dove I am learning to be more sensitive **to** the Dove. I'm slowly learning to adjust my life to Him as He will never adjust His life to me. Remember that for years I got away with ignoring the creatures with feathers. This dog and cat loving vet has fallen in love with The Dove. I'm learning to stay as far away from "pigeon religion" as possible. Fall in love with The Dove. He is worth it!!

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