

"Feed Them and They Will Come"

by Mel Montgomery

A curious thing has taken place in my back yard that parallels what is happening for me now in ministry.

The back part of the property where I live is surrounded on two sides by wooded areas. A number of animals wander through my back yard at night on their way from here to there. I sometimes sit out on my back deck in the dark, in my porch swing, and silently watch them as they quietly meander past me. I see deer, possums, raccoons, and rabbits on a regular basis, and once in a while, a skunk.

What would seem to be a completely unrelated event took place that has affected the wildlife: my garbage disposal died.

Typical American male that I am, I've put off getting it replaced for two reasons: One, I'm a tightwad--I don't want to spend about \$350 to buy a new one. (A good one). Two, I'm also lazy--I don't want to crawl under my sink, get out my tools, and install it.

In spite of being cheap and lazy, I have been forced to take a stand and decide what to do with the food scraps that we usually put down the disposal. To put food scraps into the garbage can creates an awful stink as we wait for the once-a-week garbage pick up. So, I came up with what I thought was a great idea. After dinner, I dutifully gather up the table scraps, go outside to the edge of my back yard, and scoop them off onto the ground. This provides food for the possums, raccoons, and any other little critter that happens by. We have come to refer to my nightly ritual as "feeding the possums."

For those of you outside the USA or who are unfamiliar with small wildlife, possums are about the size of a small dog. They have short legs, a long snout, and a bare tail. They are one of the few American marsupials, meaning, that they have a pouch like a kangaroo and carry their babies in their pouches while they are young. Possums are nocturnal, which means they come out only at night. Also, they have a curious defense mechanism. If cornered, they drop over and pretend



to be dead. (Here in the USA, when someone is pretending to be asleep, we sometimes say they are "playing possum"). The possum's drop-dead act is so convincing, that they are able to fool many predators.

Possoms are humorous to watch. They wander along in the pitch-black darkness of night, so lost in their own little worlds, that they are quite oblivious to happenings around them. Thus, they have comical delayed reactions to intrusions.



For instance, if you shine a headlight or a flashlight on a possum, he or she will continue waddling along for five or ten seconds, and then suddenly jerk, turn, and notice the light. Possoms are comical and harmless. Possoms are edible, like squirrels, and rabbits. I've never eaten one, but my mother was invited to dinner at a relative's house back in the 1950s, and was stunned to find that they were serving possum. Mom said it looked like a dead rat being served for dinner. Mom and Dad took a few polite bites, complimented the cook, and got out of there as quick as they could. There is a running joke in our family concerning inviting relatives over for a holiday dinner. We say, "Come on over. We're serving possum! Mmmmmm! Mighty tasty!" Then guests feign disappointment when they arrive and find that we're serving turkey or some other "ordinary" meal.

For weeks now, each morning when I have gotten up, I've looked out my back door to find that virtually all of the table scraps were gone. Except for onion peels--possums don't like onion peels. Then I began to notice that the scraps began disappearing in late evening, then early evening, then late afternoon. I knew that this could not be the work of possums, because they come out only at night. After a few days, I discovered the culprit—a young momma cat. She's a cute little thing. As a rule, I don't like cats much—and NEVER in the house. A cat is ok as long as you keep them outside.

As I have continued putting out the table scraps, the cat has become more comfortable around me, and now comes up close by me. She hasn't let me pet her yet, but you can see the fear of me is leaving her. Recently, the cat has begun sleeping on the banister of my back deck, and around dinnertime, she has begun looking in through my back screen door in anticipation of getting fed something tasty. Poor possums. All they get to eat now is whatever the cat doesn't want. I've found out also that she is a "momma" cat because she has a litter of three kittens following her around now.

Whenever I get into the mood to spend the money and time to replace the garbage disposal, I've decided to buy a pet food bowl, and some dry cat food to feed the cat(s) along with a few table scraps.

This analogy demonstrates a spiritual principle concerning ministry:

"Feed them and they will come."

We are seeing phenomenal growth in HIM, and the monthly Holy Spirit meetings are flourishing. Really, the only thing we are doing besides announcing them over this website is to focus on one thing: feeding hungry hearts, and letting the Holy Spirit move. People are responding. People are driving anywhere from two to five hours from Wichita, KS, Dallas, TX, Muskogee, OK, and other locations to get in on the meetings. In the July meeting, a couple flew in from Calhoun, GA to meet me, attend the meetings, and to be prayed for by Sister Elizabeth.

I want to exhort the pastors and ministers who regularly receive my newsletter: Maybe you are in a tough situation, and you are wondering when your ministry will ever grow. We've all been there. You may be in a tough situation. Do like I did with the table scraps, and as we have done with the Holy Spirit meetings--just keep putting the food out there, and when people become hungry enough, they will seek you out. *Feed them, and they will come.* :)

(By the way, we have named the cat "Pickle Britches." We call her "Pickles" for short).

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