

In Life Together

A mouse looked through a crack in the wall as the farmer and his wife opened a package. "What food might this contain?" the mouse wondered. He was devastated to discover it was a mousetrap! Retreating to the farmyard, the mouse proclaimed a warning. "There is a mousetrap in the house! There is a mousetrap in the house!"

The chicken clucked and scratched, raised her head and said, "Mr. Mouse, I can tell this is a grave concern to you, but it is of no consequence to me. I cannot be bothered."

The mouse turned to the pig and told him, "There is a mousetrap in the house! There is a mousetrap in the house!" The pig sympathized, but said, "I am so sorry, Mr. Mouse. There is nothing I can do but pray. Be assured, you are in my prayers."

The mouse turned to the cow and said, "There is a mousetrap in the house! There is a mousetrap in the house!" The cow said, "Wow, Mr. Mouse! I'm sorry for you, but it's no skin off my nose." So, the mouse returned to the house, head down and dejected, to face the farmer's mousetrap all alone.

That very night a sound was heard throughout the house. It was the sound of a mousetrap catching its prey. The farmer's wife rushed to see what was caught. In the darkness, she did not see it was a venomous snake whose tail was caught in the trap. The snake bit the farmer's wife.

The farmer rushed her to the hospital and she returned home with a fever. Everyone knows you treat a fever with fresh chicken soup, so the farmer took his hatchet to the farmyard for the soup's main ingredient.

But his wife's sickness continued, so friends and neighbors came to sit with her around the clock. To feed them, the farmer butchered the pig. The farmer's wife did not get well; she died.

So many people came for her funeral; the farmer had the cow slaughtered to provide enough meat for all of them. The mouse looked upon it all from his crack in the wall with great sadness.

The next time you hear someone is facing a problem and think it doesn't concern you, remember — when one of us is threatened, we are all at risk. We are all involved in this journey called life. We must keep an eye out for one another and make an extra effort to encourage one another.

Being the salt and light of the earth is part of our identity statement. (Matthew 5:13-16) How we live and showcase the Law of the Spirit of Life given to us through Christ affects everyone around us. Live below the line of privilege and not only will we suffer, others around us may not receive the fullness of life available to them. Live in the fullness of life Jesus provided and others will gain from what radiates from us. His life coming through us is contagious! No one is safe from a blessing!

Practical Applications

As Jesus walked throughout Israel, crowds came to hear what He had to say. People were drawn to Him. In Him they found LIFE! Their hearts were stirred and a desire rose within them as they heard His life-filled words. Instructed by Jesus to go into all the world and share the Gospel, we have an obligation to those around us. How will they hear if we do not speak? How will they learn if we do not teach? God has given us a sphere of influence and we must occupy until He returns. We must be the influencers of the day.

Just as the mouse in the story above needed someone to come alongside him all his friends refused to step in and become part of the solution. Here are a few real-life situations. Read through them and share how you would step into a situation of need. Maybe even role play each situation with different people to see different scenarios. There are no wrong endings, only opportunities on how we can upgrade our responses and be the help Jesus has sent us to be.

1. In the grocery store, you are rushing around to gather all the items on your list when you see a young mom, one child in her grocery cart and three more holding onto the cart. You notice that the items in her cart are ones you have purchased before when money was tight. You smile and push your cart on by.

On the next aisle, you meet her again and notice that she is looking at the shelves and then back at the sales paper. She reaches out to get the brand on sale, and you slightly grimace as you realize she is on a tight budget doing her best to feed her children. Still, you push past her.

Holy Spirit begins to speak to you to talk with her. Talk amongst yourselves and discuss how the conversation might go and what course of action you might take, if any.

2. While getting the daily mail, you notice a neighbor with her arm in a sling. You simply greet her. As you arrive at the elevator to go up to your floor, there stands the neighbor. You engage her in conversation, asking about her arm.

Currently she is unemployed, has no insurance, and fears she needs surgery. She is carrying a heavy bag and sounds like she is in pain.

Holy Spirit begins to speak to you to talk with her. Talk amongst yourselves and discuss how the conversation might go and what other courses of action you might pursue.

3. You have several good friends who are teachers. You have heard them say that nearly a quarter of the children in their classes do not have the proper school supplies. Some of the kids come to school hungry. For some, it is obvious that they haven't had new clothes in a long time, if ever.

You read in the local newspaper about a town nearby and how one person asked others to purchase extra school supplies and then gave the supplies to a school. The wheels begin to turn. What can your Aglow group do? Sign up or walk away?

4. While watching the news, you become aware of the increasing homeless population in your community. Winter is coming and with it extremely cold weather. What are some practical steps that your Aglow group can take to help those living on the streets? Gather supplies? Make sandwiches to hand out on certain days? Ignore it?