

SOMETHING FOR THE NEXT GUY



WHEN I WAS GROWING UP, my dad would often advise me to “Leave some for the next guy.” To the still-forming brain of the young, this was more than a little confusing, since it issued from the same dad who would, like clockwork, tell me to “clean your plate” because of the starving children in China. Just *how* those starving children in China were to be nourished by the few cold peas that tarried on my dinner plate was never made clear to me. But it seemed to make sense at the time.

Little did I know, however, that Dad’s advice about “leaving some for the next guy” was straight out of God’s word.



About every other year we glean a bountiful harvest of field-corn leavings from the field that neighbors the west border of our property. Because of normal crop rotation, the farmer will alternate corn with soybeans. We have little use for the small, whitish globes that are harvested from the dried bean plants, but the corn is quite another matter indeed.

It is customary for farmers to turn their livestock loose on harvested corn fields to consume any corn that has been left behind. Since our neighbor has no livestock for that task, we happily step in to take over the responsibility. After all, any seeds that are left in the field over the winter will only become “volunteers” that will have to be expunged by weed killer during the next season.

So once the harvester has collected all it can, and the heavily laden trucks have headed down the road to the local elevator, we suit up and load our tractor and cart with large bags and empty garbage cans. We then pass down through the tall dried weeds that border our property until we come out onto the cleared field that only hours before had been standing corn.

It is rough work, and calls for heavy boots and leather gloves. What from the road may seem like a relatively smooth field, will actually be, up close, a minefield of deep ruts, tangles of tough corn stalks, and huge clods of dry dirt. Leather gloves are required for stripping the remaining ears from the bent-down stalks, and shucking away the tough, fibrous husks to reveal the naked ear.

The benefit from all this? With a good supply of corn laid in for the cold, snowy winter months, the resident deer, wild turkeys, blue jays and cardinals, and squirrels

Little children, let us not love
with word or with tongue,
but in deed and truth.

1 John 3:18

Reflections
by the Pond

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Do the clouds ever lose by emptying themselves? No doubt, when the cloud has emptied itself out, it is renewed, and still goeth on its course. At any rate, however it may be with the cloud, if it be dissipated when the rain descends, it is not so with the Christian man. God hath a way of giving by cart-loads to those who give away by shovels-full. If we give at that back door, and I do not think we ought to give at any other door, he will be pretty sure to give to us in greater abundance at the window, and at the front door likewise.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon

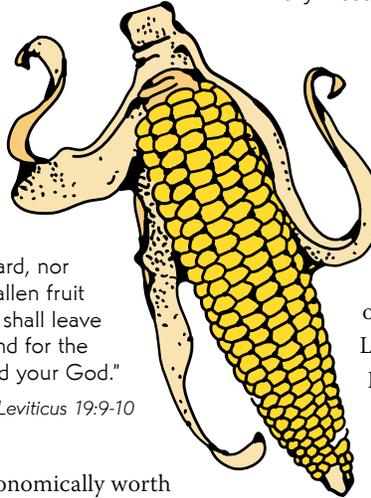
will be fed during a time when it will be slim pickings for much of anything else. And, in exchange, we will have the joy of watching the wildlife right outside our window.



The farmer in his massive harvesting machine may not be doing it on purpose, but he is fulfilling Scripture every year when he harvests his crop.

"Now when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. Nor shall you glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the needy and for the stranger. I am the Lord your God."

Leviticus 19:9-10



Because it is not economically worth his while, the farmer does not go back for every last ear of corn left behind. Thus his harvest gets shared with us—and with, by extension, the many beasts of the field. Perhaps the fawns we see cavorting in the spring are healthier because their mothers were sustained through the hard winter by our and the farmer's nourishing corn.



It is said that the modern, evangelical believer should tithe ten percent. Perhaps. Yet one should not place too much emphasis on that precise amount, for "ten percent" is an Old Testament figure. Quite a different amount is suggested in the New Testament.

So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Acts 2:41-47

The Lord's goodness is not static or moribund, but an active, living thing. Every day God's blessings pour down upon us. Our lives are filled to overflowing, heaps upon heaps of His riches and grace. As the Lord fills us up He expects some of His goodness to flow *through* us to others.

Those who hold tightly to every last morsel, every last grain, every last penny of wealth will find that their treasure has turned moldy in the palm of their hand. We are not to be storehouses, but *conduits* of His bounty.

There is one who scatters, and yet increases all the more,
And there is one who withholds what is justly due, and yet it results only in want.
The generous man will be prosperous,
And he who waters will himself be watered.

Proverbs 11:24-25

The one who shares from his bounty with joy will discover a remarkable result: his coffers will not diminish, but will be steadily replenished from above.

The more we give to others, the more God gives us to give.