

## Chickens and Church

Hey church! Before we talk about chickens and church, I wanted to say that in our last mid-week message, I presented some teaching on ADHD, and I need to apologize. Many might have been thinking “Where did that come from?” I just want to let you know that I didn’t have an agenda concerning ADHD or ADHD medicines- I wasn’t targeting any specific families in that teaching- the reason behind that subject was that I was assigned it to do a research paper in one of my graduate classes, and I should have explained that reasoning last week. And I made a statement that I want to briefly clarify, I mentioned that *“Concerning matters of physical/mental/spiritual health- I am encouraging that we as believers, would seek first the Lord’s help, prayerfully searching our hearts and minds looking for any disconnect between our lives and God’s word, looking to see what resources and means that perhaps God has already provided naturally in this world, and then lastly prayerfully seek the counsel of doctors and medicine.”*

I want to clarify that I am not advocating for doctors and medicine as a last resort, like as in a last-ditch effort when all else fails. My intent, my heart behind that statement, is that in every area of life-decisions, we as God’s people should make seeking the Lord first priority. When facing decisions, when navigating life’s choices, medical or other- there’s a proper order for believers to follow- a “chain of command” so to speak. We pray and seek the Lord, we evaluate our walk with Him, we look for resources/truth/guidance He has already given, and then we seek the counsel of others. The idea is that we do *all* these things- together- but in that order. I didn’t mean to sound like if you walk up to a horrific automobile accident, that you pray and ask God to heal the injured person, and if He doesn’t, then enter into a time of personal reflection and confession before the Lord, then go find a natural herb in the woods to control the bleeding, then if that doesn’t work, then and only then- call 911. No- call 911! But even in that scenario- yes, pray for the involved person’s healing, and seek the Lord- asking how He might be working in your heart and in the heart of this person through this terrible situation, consider that maybe there *is* something already there that God would have you use to help- maybe you have a first aid kit in your car, or can help flag traffic in order to keep the person safe until further help arrives, etc. My point was: don’t *just* seek doctors and medicine- as a follower of Jesus seek His wisdom and healing, weigh what spiritual lessons He might be wanting to teach through

the situation, and consider some possible means of help that perhaps He has already provided. Cool? Cool.

I have a story I want to share with you that I think serves as a good illustration for us. Recently my family and I got away for a few days at the beach. My mom lives down the driveway from us, and she took care of our dog Layli, and our chickens while we were gone. Each day we let the chickens out of their coop in order to free range, and then we close them up back in the coop in the evening so that raccoons, 'possums, neighborhood dogs, etc. don't eat them. So, my mom was doing this for us, and she called us one day to tell us that Layli had jumped over the fence at her house and had ran back up towards our house. Layli was gone for about 30 minutes, and when she returned to my mom's house, she brought down a chicken in her mouth. I said, "Well, mom, what happened- what did you do with the chicken- was it dead, will it be ok?" And she told me she was pretty confident that the hen wouldn't survive, it was injured and breathing really strangely- gasping for air, and that she had put it in a cooking pot outside. I don't know if she was planning on eating it the next day or what. But I prayed, I prayed something like "Lord, it seems like there is always some sort of drama when we try to leave town, in your mercy and goodness, please don't let it be so this time. Please heal the hen, restore it to health, may nothing be lost or hurt or damaged while we are gone."

Well, the next day mom called me and told me she couldn't believe it, but the hen was up and walking around in her yard, and that she had tried to catch it to return it back up to the others and the coop, but she couldn't catch it, and she had fallen chasing it around. I told her, "I'm so glad it's alive, but don't try to catch it, just let the neighbors know, and we'll be home the next day and we'll deal with it then." I thought in my mind that hopefully it would survive another day and not get eaten by some predator during the night. When we got home, we couldn't find that chicken anywhere. I was almost more discouraged than I was when I had first heard about Layli deciding to run away and chew on a chicken. I thought, "Lord, surely you didn't answer my prayer, healing the chicken, only for it to get eaten by another animal in the middle of the night?" Well, another day and night passed, and mom called to tell us she saw the chicken again in her yard. My boys and I immediately raced down there and for the next hour or so, attempted to catch that bird. It was impossible. Even with the three of us, we couldn't corral it, it would run up into the underbrush, and with every step through the briars and

mountain laurel, it would just take another step away from us. It didn't trust us- we were attempting to save its life, but all it felt was a threat. We ended up fanning out and bush whacking through the thick woods, slowly pushing it closer and closer to our house, until it finally recognized its surroundings, and entered into the coop. Whew- what a saga.

Through this whole ordeal, I couldn't help but see the parallel illustration that Jesus gives in the Bible for His sheep. Jesus is the good shepherd, the one who goes out to find the lost sheep in order that He might care for it and bring it back to safety. ([John 10:11-18](#), [Matt. 18:12-14](#)) In my mind, I related the other chickens to the body of Christ- the church; and myself and my boys as followers of Jesus concerned for one who has wandered off and is isolated. Do we love our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ to that degree, that, if they are isolated from the fellowship of other believers- whether it be by their own choice coming from a place of hurt, or whether circumstances out of their hands have hindered them from regular fellowship- are we willing to pursue them, through the thorns and thickets of life, even as they attempt to avoid us and run away- will we continue to lovingly pursue them, calling them back to safety and fellowship with others? Church- I want to encourage you to be alert and sensitive to the Lord's leading in how He might want to use *you* to minister to someone who might be hurting and isolated.