

PATIENCE IS A VIRTUE

Growing up it seemed there was seldom a day that went by that there was not a phone call or knock on our door from a person with an abandoned baby bird or an unidentified snake. There was once a call from the local police department asking if my dad would give a home to a pair of Mallard Ducks whose wings were clipped. So, Dad dug a small pond in the corner of our back yard for Mr. and Mrs. Mallard and they laid and hatched twelve ducklings that we kept until they were old enough to take to College Pond for release. We raised hawks, two skunks, Sweet Pea 1 and Sweet Pea 2, that had been “de-scented” by my dad and Doc Scoby, the local veterinarian. My mom would set her alarm to remember to give bottles to a den of motherless coyotes that we raised in the back yard. Our boa constrictor, Cynthia, was well known in McPherson because Mr. Colyn would ride his bike to school with her around his neck. And once they got to school, Cynthia would spend the day sleeping in the old wooden chalk tray in his science room. All six and one-half feet of her. The home economics teacher was never a fan of the conservation teacher or the many animals in his classroom. But I don’t think it was because she didn’t like animals as much as she didn’t like opening her desk drawer to find a turtle, snake or other critter that Mr. Colyn had placed there so he could hear her scream when she opened her desk drawer. I didn’t know until much later that it was not common or ordinary to be in charge of raising mice to feed Cynthia or helping my dad “mount” a bird to hang on the classroom wall. In fact, I was his official “eyeball popper outer!” My sister’s didn’t like the job and well, I would do most anything to please my dad.

In a Bible study lesson, I was asked to name which of the fruits of the spirit is the most needed in the world today. I wrote patience. That caused me to think about the patience displayed by my dad. For teaching purposes, he often would take a series of photos of an animal. Once, he found the nest of a Great Horned Owl that was just at the right height to photograph. So every day for weeks we would drive miles into the country to the “owl tree.” Dad would slowly creep up to peer inside a big tree hole to take pictures of the four baby owls that had hatched from the four eggs. The series showed how one little owl wasn’t going to make it because Mrs. Owl just couldn’t feed four little ones. I cried to my dad to please let me raise the starving one, but he said, “No, Leslie, that is Mother Nature doing her work.” And that was the lesson he wanted to teach his students through his slide series. Mother Nature knows how to take care of things. It was the same lesson when the baby birds that couldn’t be saved became the supper for Herk, the Swainson’s Hawk or for Cynthia.

Every one of our grandchildren has heard and can repeat the line, “Patience is a virtue.” Patience IS a virtue and it is one I still need to cultivate in my life. The Greater Sabetha Community Foundation was donated a space downtown and it will take some time to become what it needs to be. It will take the generosity of some people to help fund the remodel as well. So, as you walk by the old True Value building, please have patience. In the meantime, look at the “Serving Sabetha Strong” plaque dedicated to those who have exhibited many fruits of the spirit in their lives that have then benefitted our town our town in some way. The character traits of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control lead to greatness. The board of GSCF desires to bring more greatness awareness to our community, but it will take patience.