

FROG'S RAINY-DAY STORY and OTHER FABLES



A Guide for Discussion Leaders

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This guide is offered as a resource for the facilitators of discussions of the fables in *Frog's Rainy-Day Story and Other Fables*. It is meant to serve as a supplement to the quotations that follow each fable in the book, as well as to the discussion questions at the back of the book and the "Burrowing Deeper" discussion questions at <https://FrogsRainyDayStory.com/study-guide>.



Faithfully yours,
Michael Dowling, Author

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Frog's Rainy-Day Story

In the fable, the letters want to be important. We humans naturally want that, too. But we are truly important only when we are fulfilling God's purpose for our life.

The prophet Micah wrote, "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8). Jesus said, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." The apostle Paul said to the people of Athens, "For in him (God) we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28). And Paul wrote to the church at Rome, "For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin" (Rom 14:23).

When we fail to submit to God, we will naturally look for other ways to validate our worth. Everywhere we look, we see people striving for power, money, recognition, and other worldly things. Even good things like Christian ministry and family can become idols if they take precedence over God and are pursued apart from God. All of us are vulnerable to this fatal temptation.

The following thoughts by CS Lewis from his book *The Problem of Pain* are wonderfully relevant to this fable:

"They wanted, as we say, to 'call their souls their own.' But that means to live a lie, for our souls are not, in fact, our own. They wanted some corner in the universe of which they could say to God, 'This is our business, not yours.' But there is no such corner. They wanted to be nouns, but they were, and eternally must be, mere adjectives."



Duck's Wrong Turn

Starting in the Garden of Eden, man has wanted to be God rather than worship God. Like Duck, we have a natural desire to do our own thing. We want the freedom to choose.

In today's culture, with its extreme emphasis on tolerance and equality, anyone who says that Jesus is the only way to God risks being labeled intolerant, narrowminded, judgmental, and even hateful. It is very common to hear people say that all religions are equally valid, and that any spiritual path followed with wholehearted devotion will lead to God. Followers of Jesus are to know God's commandments as presented in the Bible and obey them.

Duck didn't need to go to the trouble to change the sign. He could have simply waddled off in the direction that he wanted to go.

This is what is happening in our culture. People who make ungodly choices are not satisfied with simply having the freedom to do whatever they want. They need to have others to agree with them so they will feel good about what they are doing. To justify themselves and legitimize their choices, they demand that laws, public opinion, and other "signs" in our culture be changed to affirm their thoughts and actions.

The rainbow is one of the many signs in our culture that is being changed. It originally was a sign given by God signifying that he would never again destroy the earth by a flood. But it has been distorted by some into something far different, and many are being led astray by it.

The word love is another sign that is being changed in our culture. A few years ago, to love others meant to care for them and do what is best for them. In today's culture, to love others means to affirm them and agree with them. Lack of affirmation is viewed as unloving.

If the sign that Duck changes doesn't get changed back, others who come along later could go down the wrong path. In the fable, choosing the wrong path is dangerous. In spiritual matters, choosing the wrong path can be eternally deadly! As more and more "signs" get changed away from godly values in our culture, people's lives get more and more endangered.



Pig's Unpopular Play

In the fable, Cow, Hen, and Goat place tremendous emphasis on rights, tolerance, equality, and fairness. But how tolerant and fair are they? Because they demand their own way and totally reject Pig's contributions, the play doesn't happen.

When there are no ultimate standards, things fall apart. When the highest value is toleration, the result is disintegration. "Cancel culture" can happen even in a barnyard!

Goat says, "Cow needs to feel good about what she wears. That's only fair." It's good to be fair, but fairness can also be used as a weapon. Making decisions based on fairness gives power and control to those who claim the right to decide what's fair.

In the fable, Cow, Hen, and Goat place a great deal of emphasis on feelings. This also is a characteristic of our present culture. But we know from God's Word and our own experience that feelings are not always accurate indicators of reality. When feelings are the ultimate standard, truth is relegated to a subordinate status, and a "victim mentality" can dominate.

Cow, Hen, and Goat do not like Pig's script. They want complete freedom to do and say what they want. But without the script, there can be no play. Likewise, we humans cannot live without scripts in our lives. All our laws are scripts. Imagine what driving would be like without rules of the road.

The U.S. Constitution is a marvelous script, but it can become an idol if it is exalted above God. For example, some try to misuse it to promote freedom **from** religion instead of freedom **of** religion.

The most important script of all is the Bible. Whether people realize it or not, and whether they like it or not, we all are accountable to God's Word. Like Cow, Hen, and Goat, we humans have a similar rebellious streak. But when we submit our life to Jesus, we desire God's will before our own.



Turtle's Favorite Turtle

In this fable, Turtle tries to overcome his lack of self-confidence by puffing himself up. To help boost his self-esteem, he recites affirmations. It is good to think positively about oneself, but attempting to boost self-esteem by reciting positive affirmations and relying on other self-help methodologies ultimately doesn't work.

In John 3:16 and other places in the Bible, we read that God loves us so much that he sent his only Son, Jesus, to die for us, so that we might have eternal life. When we know that God loves us this much, and we are mindful that we are created by God in his image, we do not need to puff ourselves up.

Turtle struggles with an identity problem. Many people in our present culture do the same. Apart from God, attributes like race, gender, and wealth, become the most important defining characteristics.

Turtle is so focused on himself that he has virtually no ability to be a friend to Grasshopper. Love of self also interferes with our ability to love God. The philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche gave us a perfect example of this sinful attitude when he said, "There cannot be a God because if there were one, I could not believe that I was not He."

Our true worth is found only in relationship to God. Scripture tells us to die to ourselves and live for Christ. "I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me," wrote the apostle Paul (Galatians 2:28). Jesus said, "Whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me" (Matthew 10:38). God's love is revealed in passages of Scripture such as 2 Corinthians 5:21: "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."



Owl's Problem

There's nothing wrong with an enjoyable vacation, positive recognition, material success, etc. But none of these things brings lasting happiness. They all depend on circumstances, and circumstances always change. In the fable, Owl thinks he is an expert on happiness. But when Mole decides to change advice givers, Owl goes into a slump because his happiness depends on circumstances.

It's not unusual to hear a well-meaning parent say, "I just want my child to be happy." Happiness is what most parents want for their children, and it's what most people want for themselves. But happiness can never be attained by focusing on it.

A person who focuses on his own happiness will invariably become preoccupied with self. Focusing on self leads to misery and ultimately to eternal destruction. Jesus said, "For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it." Focusing on happiness can also lead to wrong choices in life. And when happiness is the goal, sacrificing for others and joyfully persevering in trials become next to impossible.

Joy, unlike happiness, does not depend on circumstances. It is a gift of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22). When the apostle Paul was suffering severe trials and in prison, he wrote to the church at Corinth, "In all our troubles my joy knows no bounds" (2 Corinthians 7:4).

The Westminster Confession of Faith says that the chief end of man is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever. This brings true joy. We can increase our joy by knowing and serving God and his only Son, Jesus Christ.



Rabbit's Foxy Guest

It is good to be nice to others, but we must also be wise. Rabbit's excessive desire to be nice causes him to be foolishly naive. In our current culture, because of guilt or other reasons, a great many people tend to be more interested in being nice than in being wise and truthful.

The Bible tells us to love our neighbors as ourselves. But our culture has redefined the word "love" to mean "affirm." In our current culture, those who affirm the behaviors and choices of others are considered loving, while those who uphold biblical standards and object to certain behaviors and beliefs are often labeled intolerant and even hateful.

Our culture places a great deal of emphasis on feelings. But feelings are not a reliable guide. Our thoughts and actions should be judged by God's Word with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is good to be nice, but it is more important to be loving. Christians are called to speak the truth in love. Sometimes the truth does not feel loving in the worldly sense of the term.

In the current cultural environment, where many people feel they have a right not to be offended, truthful speech can sometimes be regarded as hate speech. In some situations, people who violate "speech codes" or say other things that are considered offensive can be severely punished.

Many people think that truth is found by looking within oneself, so that each person can possess a different version of truth. We can see in the fable how this kind of relativistic thinking results in confusion. The Bible says that grace and truth came through Jesus Christ (John 1:14). Anyone who tries to build on another foundation is building on sand.

In the fable, Rabbit loses her house. If we allow muddled thinking and excessive, guilt-driven compassion to take over our culture, we could end up losing much more. These are perilous times for our nation.



Miss Hen's Boyfriends

Miss Hen says she wants to get married, but her first two suitors do not meet her expectations. Expectations can be a barrier to any relationship. They can kill a marriage.

We can see from Miss Hen's rejection of the third rooster that she really doesn't want to get married at all. But instead of being honest, she invents excuses to justify her behavior. We all tend to act like Miss Hen in certain situations. The moral of this fable may shed some light on why we do this.

In Scripture, we read about how some people made excuses and unreasonable demands to justify their unbelief in Jesus. For example, in Mark 8:11-12 we read the following:

"The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him. And he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, 'Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation.'"

If Jesus had performed a sign, it's doubtful that the Pharisees would have believed in him. Today, we hear excuses like, "I can't believe in a God who would send some people to Hell."

In Mark 15:29-32 we read the following:

And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, 'Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!' So also the chief priests with the scribes mocked him to one another, saying, 'He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe.' Those who were crucified with him also reviled him."

It's doubtful that those who mocked Jesus were looking for a reason to believe in him. We can be thankful that Jesus stayed on the cross.



Moth's New Friend

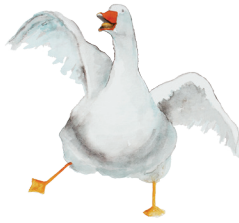
Like Moth, we humans have a natural desire to be independent and self-sufficient. We don't like to feel weak or to be perceived as needy. But as we read in 2 Co 12:1-10, Christians are strongest when they are dependent on God.

Initially, Moth had no interest in thinking about God or God's creation. Many people are like this. They are totally absorbed by the things of this world. They deny that God created the world and is even today active in it.

The apostle Paul addressed this issue when he wrote the following:

"For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse" (Romans 1:19-20).

When we know God, we naturally marvel at his creation and honor him. Initially, Moth had a sour disposition. He had no interest in being Spider's friend. By the end of the fable, he has been transformed by Spider's love and by his awareness of his own needs.



Gander's Day

In the fable, Gander's chief goal is to satisfy his own desires. To some extent, we all are like Gander. We would like to be able to do exactly what we want every day. We don't naturally like it when we must adjust our schedule and priorities to suit the needs of others. Like Gander, we like to plan our days and have everything go according to plan.

But the apostle Paul says, "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Philippians 2:3-4).

In James 4:13-15, we read the following:

"Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit'—yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.'"

Just as Gander blamed the king for shutting him out of the castle, we humans have been shifting blame and making excuses ever since Adam blamed Eve for "making" him eat the forbidden fruit. We do this to make ourselves look good in our own eyes and the eyes of others. But if we have accepted Christ as our Lord and Savior, we don't need to earn our own righteousness because Christ's righteousness has been imputed to us. "Who will accuse God's chosen people? God himself declares them not guilty!" wrote the apostle Paul (Romans 8:33).

In the fable, Gander is distracted by the carnival. If the carnival hadn't distracted him, something else would have. Perhaps it would have been lunch with Goosie at the club, shopping, or counting his money.

Think about what distractions threaten to keep us from doing God's will. Most of us spend many hours a day in front of the TV, on our smart phone, or doing other things that really don't matter. As a culture, we are amusing ourselves to death, to use Neal Postman's phrase. Blaise Pascal says in his book *Pensée's* that to diminish the pain of boredom we fill our lives with distractions.

Just as Gander was invited to a feast, followers of Jesus are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb of God. Followers of Jesus are the Bride of Christ. his Church,

"Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, 'Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready.'"

Revelation 19:6-7